

OPS

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL NO. 1664/80 PRIME MINISTER



Prime Minister (2)

Pr

We must keep in close touch.

ms.

New Delhi,
August 27, 1980

Subject on INDIA May 80
Uk/Indian Relations

My dear Prime Minister,

I have your letter of the 13th August. I am glad that you could find time to meet Mr. Swraj Paul. Mr. Paul is a friend but I should like to clarify that he is not a representative of any kind.

I shall gladly meet Lord Greenhill when he comes. We have the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Regional Meeting between September 4 and 8, and President Kaunda of Zambia will be here from 12th to 15th September.

I hope you won't mind my touching upon a rather sensitive matter. It is my own and my Government's desire to improve our relations with the U.K. Unfortunately there appear to be groups and individuals in your country, and perhaps elsewhere, who do not wish this. Anyone in public life has to be immune to criticism and I have long got used to it, but the pattern of reporting on India in the press and media in the U.K., and almost all over the Western world, reveals what seems to be a persistent and concerted campaign of misrepresentation and the deliberate propagation of stories and image-casting which have little, if any, base in actuality.

It is not my intention that you should in any way interfere with the freedom of your press or academic institutions but I thought that I should mention that this is of considerable concern to the Indian people, who are made to feel that the U.K. does not care for our friendship.

The violence that has recently erupted in some areas of India is unlike the communal rioting that we have known earlier. We discern a systematic pattern which could only

be the outcome of a degree of preparedness. We suspect the hands of political personages and an attempt of certain opposition parties to provoke confrontation with Government authority. It is significant that conflict is engineered between sections of the public, specially those who wholeheartedly supported my Party in the elections, and the police forces.

The escalation in petroleum prices and the new international tensions make our own development effort so much more difficult. Public investments for future growth are inescapable. Yet public expenditure has to be curtailed. Our per capita oil consumption is amongst the lowest in the world. Even so we are doing our best to minimize it but because of the very large size of our country and population, the total figure cannot be small. Hence we do not get advantage from the concessions offered by OPEC countries. The restrictive trade policies of the developed nations aggravate our problem.

We follow your news with great interest. Times are troublesome almost all over the world.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Indira Gandhi.

The Rt. Hon. Margret Thatcher
Prime Minister of Britain
London.