



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 September, 1982

Dear John,

Rajiv Gandhi's Call on Prime Minister

/ As requested in Caroline Stephens' letter of 31 August I enclose briefing for Rajiv Gandhi's call on the Prime Minister at 10.00 am on Wednesday 8 September. The briefing comprises:

- (a) Points to Make and Background Note.
- (b) Rajiv's Programme.
- (c) Sonia Gandhi's Programme.
- (d) Personality Note.
- (e) Delhi telno 710 reporting Mr Wade-Gery's introductory call on Mrs Gandhi.

Since the primary purpose of Rajiv's visit is to attend Farnborough, his meeting with the Prime Minister might most productively be used to advance our interest in defence sales to India. We have advised the Ministry of Defence and others to avoid making too obvious a commercial pitch at Rajiv this week, but we see value in the Prime Minister engaging him in discussion on some major items of equipment currently under negotiation with India. Sea King and Sea Harrier are the most important of these.

The Department of Trade are providing a separate brief covering the latest developments on the Orissa Steel Plant project.

Rajiv will be accompanied by his personal assistant, Arun Singh, and the Indian High Commissioner, Dr Seyid Muhammad.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosures to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and John Rhodes (Department of Trade).

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street

CALL BY MR RAJIV GANDHI MP ON PRIME MINISTER:  
10.00 AM, 8 SEPTEMBER 1982

POINTS TO MAKE

Mr and Mrs Gandhi's Programme

1. Hope you and your wife enjoying your visit. You will have viewed Farnborough with a professional's eye. Glad your wife was able to pursue her interest in picture restoration.

Mrs Gandhi

2. Enjoyed her visit here in March. Kind of her to invite me to extend my stopover in Delhi on 29 September. Look forward to seeing her again.

Festival of India

3. Having significant impact on India's image in Britain. Delighted you and your wife will attend closing concert on 14 November.

Indian Affairs

4. You have been an active politician for one year. How do you see your career developing?

Sea Harrier and Sea King

5. Understand Indian Government will be deciding soon whether to buy additional Sea Harrier aircraft and Sea King helicopters. You will have gathered from the Ministry of Defence's Falklands briefing on Monday that both were outstanding successes in South Atlantic.

6. Harriers destroyed 27 Argentine aircraft. Only 5 were lost, none in combat.

7. Sea King performance and reliability essential to success of operation. We decided not to deploy French Puma because had doubts about its ship operating characteristics.

8. John Nott will be discussing availability of Sea Eagle missile when he visits India this month.

## ESSENTIAL FACTS

Festival of India

1. The Festival Finale will be held on Sunday 14 November at the London Coliseum. The programme will be produced by Sir Richard Attenborough and it is hoped that Indian film star Shashi Kapoor will comper the event. The Prince of Wales is unable to attend, but another Royal may attend in his place. Rajiv will represent his mother. He expects to be accompanied by his wife and their son.

Internal Indian Affairs

2. Rajiv has now been an MP for one year. Conventional wisdom in Delhi that his career is slow to take off. He has not delivered what was expected of him. But expectations probably unrealistically high. Could make a mark if he was to attempt to overhaul a rotten and inefficient party organisation. But time is running short. Crucial test will be his ability to select candidates for and win votes at 1985 General Election.

3. On 2 September Mrs Gandhi conducted her sixth ministerial reshuffle since returning to power in January 1980. No Cabinet Ministers sacked and no new Ministers brought into Cabinet. She has simply juggled with portfolios and re-organised certain ministries. Most important change is Mr P C Sethi's move from Railways to Home Affairs, where he takes over from the recently elected President, Giani Zail Singh. Despite earlier speculation there is no place for Rajiv in the ministerial team.

Defence Sales

4. India has already bought 13 Sea King helicopters and 8 Sea Harriers. Decisions on the purchase of a further 20 Sea Kings (value £200 million) and 12 Sea Harriers (£103 million) are expected before the end of the year.

5. Sea King faces stiff competition from French Super Puma, which has been offered with Exocet. Westland's agreement with Pakistan, who met the cost of putting Exocet on Sea King, preclude Westland offering it to India.

/6. MOD

6. MOD believe that Puma, with its high centre of gravity, is not stable enough to be used as a ship borne helicopter. Their view is that Sea Eagle, which also interests the Indians for use on Jaguar, Harrier and Sea King, offers significant advantages over Exocet. Agreement has now been reached within MOD to offer India an export version of Sea Eagle (to a lower standard than for UK Services) in about 1987. Mr Nott will so inform the Indian Government when he visits India 16-24 September.

7. Indian Navy are keen to buy additional Sea Harriers but face opposition from Indian Air Force who have sought to play down the aircraft's achievements in the South Atlantic.

MR RAJIV GANDHI'S PROGRAMME

Monday 6 September

- 1130 Falklands briefing at Ministry of Defence
- 1230 Leave for Farnborough
- 1400 Refreshments and watch flying at Defence Sales Organisation Chalet
- 1630 Return to London
- 1900 Reception at Lancaster House given by HMG

Tuesday 7 September

- 0800 Leave for Farnborough
- 0945-1200 Visit following stands: Westland Helicopters, British Aerospace, Rolls Royce
- 1200 Meet Secretary of State for Defence
- 1300 Lunch given by SBAC President
- 1430-1630 Visit following stands: Smith Industries, Marconi Avionics, Ferranti
- 1630 Return to London
- 2100 Dinner at 1 Carlton Gardens given by Secretary of State for Defence

Wednesday 8 September

- 0930 Call on Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- 1000 Call on Prime Minister
- 1300 Lunch at 1 Carlton Gardens given by Mr and Mrs Douglas Hurd
- 2000 Dinner at Grosvenor House Hotel given by SBAC President

Thursday 9 September

Private programme, including visit to Albery Theatre to see 'Children of a Lesser God'

Friday 10 September

Private programme

/Saturday

Saturday 11 September

1740

Leave London Heathrow by A1 150

MRS SONIA GANDHI'S PROGRAMME

Monday 6 September

1130 Visit National Gallery to see restoration work  
in progress

1300 Lunch at Royal Horseguards Hotel with  
Mrs Judy Blofeld, picture restorer, and others  
given by Central Office of Information

Tuesday 7 September

Private programme

Wednesday 8 September

1300 Lunch at 1 Carlton Gardens given by  
Mr and Mrs Douglas Hurd

Thursday 9 September

Private programme, including visit to Albery  
Theatre to see 'Children of a Lesser God'

Friday 10 September

Private programme

Saturday 11 September

1740 Leave London Heathrow by A1 150

## RAJIV GANDHI MP

Congress (I) member of the Lok Sabha.

Born 1944. Eldest son of Feroze and Indira Gandhi. Educated at Doon School, a tutorial college in London and Trinity College Cambridge (1962-65) where he read Engineering although failed to get a Degree (his friends say this was lack of work rather than lack of ability but he is very sensitive about it). On return to India he took up flying and subsequently joined Indian Airlines as a commercial pilot. In May 1981 he resigned from Indian Airlines to fight the Lok Sabha by-election for Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, the seat held by his younger brother, Sanjay until his death in June 1980. Rajiv was elected on 14 June 1981 by an overwhelming majority of over 80% of the votes polled.

Rajiv Gandhi has been drawn into the political vacuum created by the death of his brother Sanjay, his mother's only trusted confidant. Once decided upon, his entry into politics has been carefully managed and scrupulously above-board: the style is markedly different from Sanjay's. It is as yet unclear what formal role Rajiv will play in the near future - he himself says he will concentrate on being an effective constituency MP - but informally he already has a say in some urgent policy questions and is likely to become more and more his mother's right hand man. Indeed Mrs Gandhi can be said to be grooming him for succession to the extent that he and probably he alone will have her full trust and that she does not tolerate other political rivals.

Rajiv is quietly spoken, courteous and diffident. He is not an intellectual. This may sound unimpressive but it is worth remembering that it is a good description of the way his mother struck close observers in the mid 1960s. He is a good listener and seems sincerely concerned to get to grips with some of India's big national problems. He knows he has a lot to learn and is ready to work at it. Although withdrawn in some ways, he is mentally tough (you have to be in the Nehru household) and likely to be of fairly independent mind. He will, of course, be influenced by some close advisers, but not unduly so and none of his present group have significantly more experience than he has. His great advantages are that he is his grandfather's grandson, his mother's son, that he is decent and an Indian aristocrat and that he is on the way to acquiring an All-India, not a sectional, image.

Rajiv married Sonia, an Italian girl he met at Cambridge, in 1968. She is good-looking, quiet and while not interested in politics, clearly gives him a feeling of security at home. She gets on well with Mrs Gandhi. They have a son and a daughter.