



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 October is at present free in the diary. But you do not get back until late the previous day & will certainly have much work to do. I doubt whether Mrs G would accept but do not think you should run the risk. A quite quiet word in Melbourne or Mexico expressing your regrets would seem perfectly reasonable. Agree? yes not
I think

22 September 1981

Dear Michael,

Visit by Mrs Gandhi to UK

The Indian High Commission have informed us that Mrs Gandhi wishes to stop in the UK on her way back to Delhi from the Cancun Conference. Her aircraft would arrive at 0800 hours on Sunday, 25 October and depart at 0815 hours the following morning.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs have said that they believe Mrs Gandhi wishes the visit to be private and that it is her intention to spend the day quietly and to see some old friends. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister may wish to consider making some kind of contact with Mrs Gandhi. Mrs Thatcher will of course have seen her both at Melbourne and Cancun and, on present plans, will have arrived back in London from the latter event on the day before (24 October).

We have no doubt that the offer of a meal and a talk with the Prime Minister on 25 October would be very well received by Mrs Gandhi and would be useful in the context of our bilateral relations. It would be an excellent opportunity to review such matters as our commercial interests in India, the Festival of India and the proposed visit by Mrs Gandhi to the United Kingdom next March, as well as other issues. There would be no need for this to be a formal occasion - indeed the more private and informal, the better it might be. Such an invitation would certainly be advantageous, even if Mrs Gandhi were to decline it.

If on the other hand the Prime Minister does not wish to undertake such an engagement on the day (a Sunday at that) after her return from Mexico, you may think we should inform the Indians that Mrs Thatcher is glad to know that Mrs Gandhi will be spending a day here on her return to Delhi, and that while the Prime Minister would have been pleased to see something of

/Mrs Gandhi,



Mrs Gandhi, she believes that Mrs Gandhi wishes the visit to be entirely private. She well understands the latter point, given the fact that both Prime Ministers will have just reached London from Mexico, where Mrs Thatcher looks forward to meeting Mrs Gandhi, as well as at Melbourne. We could add, if you wish, that the Prime Minister will nevertheless telephone Mrs Gandhi during the day. We would also pursue the possibility of a Minister's making a courtesy call on Mrs Gandhi and paying HMG's respects.

It would be helpful to know how you would like us to proceed.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Francis Richards'.

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH



Prime Minister

You will be deep in your Party
Conference speech by this juncture. 22 September 1981

I suggest you explain to Mrs G & Melbourne
or someone that you simply will not be able
to entertain her. Agree?

Kg
Pmt

Dear Michael,

Pmt

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Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON



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23 September 1981

Visit by Mrs. Gandhi to the United Kingdom

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 22 September about Mrs. Gandhi's visit to this country next month. The Prime Minister does not feel able to take on an engagement with Mrs. Gandhi of the kind you propose. She will speak accordingly to Mrs. Gandhi in either Melbourne or Mexico. She would be grateful if you would pursue the suggestion of arranging for a Minister to make a courtesy call on Mrs. Gandhi while she is here.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 October 1981

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ms
Dear Michael,

*Prime Minister.
To be aware. I am sure
'A' below is right.*

Visit by Mrs Gandhi to UK

I wrote to you on 22 September to ask how the Prime Minister wanted to handle Mrs Gandhi's 24 hour stop-over in the UK on Sunday, 25 October. The Prime Minister asked (your letter of 23 September) that the suggestion of arranging for a Minister to make a courtesy call on Mrs Gandhi should be pursued.

N We have now heard from the Indians that Mrs Gandhi will be in London on Monday, 26 October, not the previous day. The Indian High Commission have emphasised that Mrs Gandhi wants a complete rest on that date. We offered the possibility of a courtesy call by a Minister but they expressed the view that, given Mrs Gandhi's wishes, no such call was necessary.

H In the circumstances we would propose, unless you see objection, not to pursue this matter further.

*yours ever
Rodric Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing St

India

file BK

CF

21 October 1981

Visit by Mrs. Gandhi to the UK

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to Michael Alexander of 20 October. She has noted that Mrs. Gandhi wants to have a complete rest on 26 October, and is content for you to drop the suggestion of a courtesy call by a UK Minister.

WFSR

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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