

PRIME MINISTER

VISIT OF MRS. GANDHI: SPEECHES

This visit is still some way away (21-25 March) but the period before it is very busy and I should like to let you have drafts for your speeches in good time. Apart from the usual informal remarks at lunch, there will be two occasions for speeches.

The first is when you open the Indian Science Exhibition at the Science Museum. I am working on the basis that you will speak for about five minutes, mainly on the achievements of Indian science (with a few reflections on what you have seen in India, including the Nuclear Research Centre) and Indo/British scientific collaboration.

The second - the major speech of some 15-20 minutes - would be at the Indo/British Association Dinner on Tuesday 23 March.

Mrs. Gandhi, as guest of honour, will probably be invited to speak first. It would be helpful to have a general steer now on the theme with which you would like to deal. I attach a bare outline. I think it can be made quite interesting when fleshed out in the form of a speech. Are you content for me to work up a first draft on these lines?

I feel that the theme is artificial. The fact is that India is not as interested in us as we are in India.

A.J.C.

24 February 1982

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OUTLINE FOR SPEECH TO INDO/BRITISH ASSOCIATION

MAIN IDEA

There is a special relationship between Britain and India, unlike that with any other Third World country. It is largely unrecognised because its content is more non-governmental than governmental, based on very strong cultural interchange and expanded trade links. But it gives both countries a special insight into each other's pre-occupations. Can this be used to develop a joint effort by a prominent member of the Western Alliance and a leader of the Third World, not to produce common positions (our circumstances are too different) but to reduce world tensions and solve world problems?

STRUCTURE

(a) The formal relationship.

In excellent shape. Your visit to India. Mrs. Gandhi now here. The Festival of India. Government support for expanding trade.

(b) Non-governmental activities.

It is these which make the relationship special. The influence on British life of Indian music, religious ideas, fashions, food. Half a million people of Indian origin now part of our community. Indian writers winning British literary prizes. The Philharmonia under an Indian conductor. Indian film seasons at the British Film Institute.

Conversely, Britain better understood than other Western countries in India: the English language and literature, understanding of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. Plus a host of personal relationships.

(c) Put the relationship to practical effect.

Bridge building between developing countries and developed world particularly necessary in period of world recession, which accentuates divisions. There is scope for an Indo/British contribution to the peace and prosperity of the world. Our efforts over problems like Namibia and Arab/Israel can be more effective with Indian support, as we saw over Zimbabwe.

In the development field, we share an interest in tackling practical issues and not politicking. Cancun. Indo/British collaboration on projects in Third World countries.

We can interpret to you the pre-occupations of the Western Alliance and the Ten. You can help us to understand Third World pre-occupations.

Perhaps we should make a conscious effort to use our many contacts to identify practical solutions to problems. In doing so, we should draw more on the wealth and expertise and knowledge about our two countries which is to be found in the universities, the scientific institutions and the artistic centres of Britain and India which the Festival of India has displayed.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 February 1982

Discussed with F/C.O.

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Dear John,

Mrs Gandhi's Visit: Speeches

Thank you for your letter of 12 February about the speeches to be drafted in the FCO for Mrs Gandhi's visit. We have started work on the speech at the lunch on 22 March and at the opening of the Science Museum exhibition on 24 March. I enclose, as you requested, a brief outline for the speech at the Indo-British dinner on 23 March which you will see takes up most of the ideas in your letter.

Yours ever

John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO INDO-BRITISH ASSOCIATION DINNER : 23 MARCH

DRAFT OUTLINE

Introduction: The Links Between Britain and India

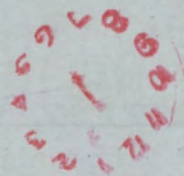
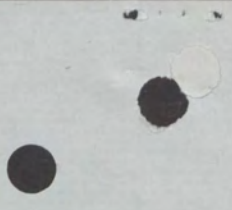
1. Many countries chiefly linked by formal contacts between governments and official bodies. Ministerial visits can then be like isolated landmarks on an otherwise featureless scene.
2. Of course there is a formal side to Indo-British relations. It is necessary and valuable. But those relations are far richer than that. We are linked by personal relationships and shared values, expressed in parliamentary democracy and rule of law. English language makes for natural and easy communication and cultural contact.
3. Relationship has matured. There is now a deep and varied discourse of mutual knowledge and mutual influence between Britain and India. Think of influence here of Indian ideas and Indian objects of extraordinarily varied kinds: music, food, fashions, religious ideas, and of course cricket. Indian Community in Britain a stimulus to this influence which is leading to enrichment of British life.

The Contribution to be made by Indo-British dialogue

4. A relationship of this quality rare among countries that are geographically, climatically, economically, culturally so different. Can make for understanding and international cooperation of particularly creative kind. Enables us in some areas to work together, in others to work in parallel, complementing each other's efforts, in all to understand each other's positions as fully as each of us understands his own.
5. Can work together in the UN; in the Commonwealth; over peacekeeping; on development matters where India, like Britain, not interested in politicking but in tackling practical issues; in fostering Indo/EC relations.
6. Can work in parallel for peace, on reducing tensions dangerous to the interests of us both; you through the non-aligned movement, we through the Western alliance and the Ten. For instance our efforts over problems like Namibia, Arab/Israel, can be more effective with Indian support, as we saw on Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

7. India and Britain, the Indian and British peoples, enjoy a special relationship. Our lives are the richer for it.
8. This relationship can lead to a uniquely valuable political dialogue from which others too can benefit. The better we understand each other and the more closely we work together, the better the chance of a safe and prosperous world in the menacing 1980s.



19 FEB 1982



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 February 1982

MRS. GANDHI'S VISIT: SPEECHES

In my letter of 11 February I promised to write separately about speeches. I note from your letter of 9 February that three are envisaged. As agreed earlier, drafts for all three should reach me by Friday, 5 March.

Speech at Prime Minister's Lunch for Mrs. Gandhi on 22 March

I think the Prime Minister will wish to make an informal speech lasting not longer than five minutes. Her normal practice is to improvise on the basis of speaking notes. I suggest we aim at a draft which is fairly light-hearted, includes reminiscences of Mrs. Thatcher's visit to India last year and her personal interest in the country and then proceeds to a few remarks about the bilateral relationship.

Speech at Opening of Science Museum Exhibition on 24 March

You may wish to discuss with the organisers their ideas about the length and content of the Prime Minister's speech. My own view is that it should last for six or seven minutes. I am inclined to think that the Prime Minister will look for a draft which has a certain amount of intellectual depth and deals, in as lively a fashion as possible, with the achievements of Indian science as well as with British/India scientific collaboration. The speech could no doubt recall some of the scientific aspects of the Prime Minister's programme during her visit to India last year, including her visit to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

Speech to Indo/British Association Dinner on 23 March

This will clearly be the major speech made by the Prime Minister during the visit. I think we should aim at one lasting some 15-20 minutes. I should like to put an outline (i.e. one page of brief notes) of this speech to the Prime Minister next weekend and should therefore be grateful if it could reach me by Friday, 19 February. The important thing may well be to hit upon the right central idea for the speech. My own view, but you may well be able to improve on this, is that the main theme should be the contribution which a political dialogue between two diverse countries can make to dealing with the international problems of the next decade. Within that general context, the speech could perhaps address:

/(a)

RESTRICTED

(a) The cultural relationship between Britain and India

This might be an appropriate starting point, given the importance which the Festival of India will play in Mrs. Gandhi's visit. I hope we can find something interesting for the Prime Minister to say about the nature of the cultural relationship. I have in mind the large range of informal exchanges in the fields of the arts, literature, science, etc., rather than formalised inter-governmental contact. And it may be that a reference could here be made to the contribution made by the Indian community in Britain to British cultural life in the wider sense.

(b) The political and commercial relationship

Here I think we should avoid a catalogue of points but try to go to the heart of the relationship as it has developed over the years. A reference to Nehru and the opening of the Nehru Exhibition may well be appropriate.

(c) The approach to the problems of the next decade

The difficulty here will no doubt be to deal with the problems of detente, peace and development (on which the Indians may expect the Prime Minister to say something) in a way which is both consistent with our own policy but not too unpalatable for Indian digestion.

These are merely my first thoughts. I hope they can be greatly improved upon and I am of course entirely open to suggestions for a completely different framework for this speech.

I have briefly discussed the two main speeches with Christopher Mallaby who has kindly agreed to undertake the drafting of these.

A. J. COLES