



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 November 1983

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Dear Mr Ramphal,

In your letter of 20 October you were kind enough to say that Mrs. Gandhi and you would like me to be one of those who respond to her address of welcome during the opening ceremony of the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. I gladly accept this invitation.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Mr. Shridath Surendranath Ramphal, AC.,  
Kt., CMG., QC.

RB



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

3 November 1983

CHOGM: Response to Mrs. Gandhi's Address of Welcome

Thank you for your letter of 28 October. This subject was discussed when the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary called on the Prime Minister this morning.

The Prime Minister agreed to respond positively to the Commonwealth Secretary General's invitation to her to be one of those to respond to Mrs. Gandhi's address of welcome at the opening of CHOGM.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for me to receive a draft of what the Prime Minister might say by 15 November.

A. J. COLES

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Prime Minister.



Are you prepared to be one of those responding to Mrs. Gandhi's address of welcome, as Mr. Ramphal suggests?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1A 2AH

28 October 1983

Dear John,

A.F.C. 28/10

I have done it  
time. I doubt the wisdom of  
a third time - especially  
under

CHOGM: Response to Mrs Gandhi's Address of Welcome

In your letter of 24 October you asked for advice on the Commonwealth Secretary-General's invitation to the Prime Minister to be one of those who responds to Mrs Gandhi's address of welcome at the opening of CHOGM. *current circumstances*

The Foreign Secretary's view is that it would be worth the Prime Minister accepting this invitation. On the parallel occasions at the 1979 and 1981 CHOGMs, the Prime Minister was able to touch briefly on the subjects of particular concern to us (I enclose a copy of what she was recorded as saying on these occasions).

The Cabinet Office has already commissioned a speaking note in the briefing for CHOGM against the possibility that this invitation would be made.

In 1981 Mr Ramphal coupled his invitation to the Prime Minister to respond to the address of welcome with a request that she should also lead one of the plenary discussions. On this occasion he simply expresses the hope that the Prime Minister "will help to set the tone for the discussions on the principal agenda items by early interventions". We understand that it is the normal practice to rotate lead speakers from one CHOGM to another, and Mr Ramphal is evidently not intending to ask the Prime Minister to lead on any of the set agenda items on this occasion.

Yours ever,

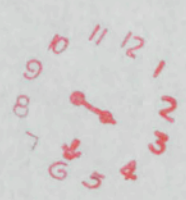
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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28 OCT 1983



1979

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Britain: Mr. Chairman, fellow Heads of Government, Mr. Secretary-General, I too am particularly honoured to speak at this opening session. And it is a particular pleasure, Mr. President, to meet here in Zambia under your chairmanship. You yourself have for many years played a notable role in Commonwealth affairs. Your country is deeply involved in some of the most difficult problems the Commonwealth faces today. I look forward to interesting and useful days in Lusaka, and, Mr. Chairman, to enjoying your very generous hospitality. We are all very conscious too of the unsparing efforts which you have made for our comfort and of the meticulous preparations to which the Secretary-General and his staff have devoted so much time.

Can I begin Mr. Chairman by joining in your welcome for the four Commonwealth countries represented here for the first time, Solomon Islands, Dominica, St. Lucia and Kiribati. And may I say how very glad I am to see Uganda resume her place with us.

Mr. Chairman, you and many of our colleagues have attended Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings in the past. Although I have attended other Commonwealth gatherings, this is the first Heads of Government Meeting in which I have taken part and I look forward to adding, in Lusaka, to my experience of how the Commonwealth works. Together, our countries make up a quarter of the world's population and of its nations. Our peoples come from different religions, races and cultures. They live under very dissimilar political and economic systems. What is it, Mr. President, that brings us together? The first and obvious answer is: history. History brought our nations together in the past. It was a random process and each of us may interpret it in different, and sometimes even in incompatible, ways. Our shared history has given us some common ideas about politics and a common language in which to communicate. No other international gathering of comparable size has these advantages. But shared history and shared language are of little use on their own. And I doubt if any of us come here simply out of sentimental regard for the past. Moreover, it is not enough for us just to exchange views on the issues of the day. It is not enough for the Commonwealth to operate simply as a world-wide communications network. Nor is it enough that the Commonwealth should be merely one of the many international bodies for the provision of economic aid between developed and developing countries—although 90 per cent of our Commonwealth members belong to the latter category. Important though all these functions are, the Commonwealth must *stand* for something if it is to endure.

Our predecessors publicly committed the Commonwealth to the ideals of democracy, individual liberty and equality for all under the rule of law. It is not the exclusive prerogative of any one constitutional system to promote these ideals. They can—as I hope they do—exist within the wide variety of political arrangements under which we have variously chosen to live. But in a world in which these beliefs are under constant attack. I believe that the Commonwealth has a duty to proclaim them, to protect them and to practise them.

Mr. Chairman, you and our fellow speakers have referred to some of the topics which concern us all and which will be central to our discussions this week. First, the world economy. Here the prospects are not encouraging. We face slower growth, rising inflation, persistent unemployment and balance of payments problems. Our difficulties have been made worse by the latest round of oil price increases, and by recent sudden arbitrary action which will affect the oil market and prices. The developing countries will be doubly hard hit. In the first place,

directly; but then, too, because many developed countries will be less able to give help or to provide the expanding markets which the developing countries need for their prosperity. In the short term, we each need to adopt sensible domestic policies, and to make the best use of existing international institutions for economic co-operation. In the longer term, we must find ways of using the world's limited supplies of fossil fuel more effectively and to develop alternative, and preferably renewable, sources of energy. The Tokyo summit was an important step, and our discussions here could take the process further.

Second, I refer to the tragic plight of those caught up in the latest example of man's inhumanity to man: the refugees from Vietnam. Refugees are nothing new to some members of the Commonwealth who have for years grappled with the problems they pose. Now others, too, notably Malaysia, are faced with very heavy social burdens not of their own making. Both the Commonwealth and the world community must constantly focus on the real source of the crisis, which is the policy pursued by the Vietnamese Government. Only if there is a genuine change of policy there can we hope to stop the appalling suffering. In the meantime, we have a practical as well as a humanitarian and political problem to solve. And that is why Britain proposed to the UN that a conference should be convened which would cover all these aspects. The Geneva Conference, at which a number of Commonwealth countries were represented, marked an important first step. But there is much more to do, and it is vital that the international community should maintain the solidarity it displayed at Geneva in following up the decisions reached there.

Now, Mr. President, there is the problem of Southern Africa to which you and our other colleagues have referred. We are all conscious of the ever more urgent need for a settlement of the Rhodesia problem. My colleagues and I have greatly benefited from the consultations we have been pursuing within the Commonwealth and with other African Governments. I am grateful to all those who have given us their advice and have expressed their views so clearly. I shall listen with the greatest attention to what is said at this meeting in Lusaka. The UK has pledged to exercise its constitutional responsibility for Rhodesia. The aim is to bring Rhodesia to legal independence on a basis which the Commonwealth and the international community as a whole will find acceptable and which offers the prospect of peace for the people of Rhodesia and her neighbours. As I said in the House of Commons last week, the British Government are wholly committed to genuine black majority rule in Rhodesia.

The value of these days in Lusaka will lie not only in the outcome of our discussions round the table. It will lie equally, or perhaps even mainly, in the friendships which we are able to renew and in the fresh contacts which we are able to make during our time together. The informality of the Commonwealth style is perhaps its greatest strength. By this time next week there may, I dare say, still remain some differences of view between us, and on more than one issue. But I know, too, that we shall—each one of us—be confirmed in our recognition of the sincerity of purpose of our Commonwealth partners and of their fundamental goodwill and commitment to the Commonwealth's ideals.

*Dr. Kaunda* then announced that the next session would start at 2.45 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11.50 a.m.

1981

MRS THATCHER, Britain: Mr Chairman, fellow heads of Government and Mr Secretary-General: I regard it as a great honour to be asked to speak at this opening session of this great Commonwealth conference.

May I first congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on the immense efforts you and your fellow countrymen, together with the members of the Commonwealth Secretariat, have made in preparation for this Meeting.

Now that we are all together, in this splendid Hall, in the lovely city of Melbourne, which bears the name of one of my predecessors, we are able to appreciate how fruitful those preparations have been. Can we all of us thank the citizens of Melbourne for the wonderful, warm welcome we received as we entered this building. It was greatly appreciated. You have provided us with an ideal setting for our discussions. Now we must ensure that those discussions are worthy of all the hard work that has preceded them.

May I echo, Mr Chairman, your welcome to the countries of the Commonwealth who are represented here for the first time: Zimbabwe, whose affairs I seem to remember occupied rather a lot of our last Commonwealth conference in Lusaka; Vanuatu, which had difficulties but we were able to overcome them; and Belize, which became independent just in time for Mr Price to be with us today. May we send our good wishes to our other new member, St Vincent and the Grenadines, which is not with us but which we welcome to the Commonwealth family.

We meet today as Heads of Government of the Commonwealth for the first time in the Pacific region - in which there are now 11 Commonwealth countries. We meet, auspiciously, in the 50th anniversary year of the passing of the Statute of Westminster, which has come to be regarded as the starting point in the development of a Commonwealth of independent nations. We meet in a country that is one of the founder members, and whose policies and attitudes have played, and continue to play, a most significant part in that development. Indeed, we are all very aware of the ways in which Australia has given a lead in Commonwealth thinking, particularly in the development of Commonwealth regional conferences.

Mr Chairman, when I spoke on a similar occasion at our Meeting in Lusaka two years ago, I said that the Commonwealth must be more than

a meeting place, more than an agency for technical co-operation. What is the use of being a Commonwealth unless together we stand for certain principles? We must proclaim and practise the ideals of democracy, personal liberty and equality before the law.

I think that at Lusaka, at Lancaster House and then in Zimbabwe itself, we showed the world that the Commonwealth can apply these principles, can overcome difficult problems and can give a fresh impetus to democracy. I too am proud that the democratically elected Head of the Government of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, sits with us today. We wish him, and all the people of his country, well.

But, Mr Chairman, the tradition of democracy and liberty has another face, and one we should remember. Whatever our difficulties, it is important for the Commonwealth that in our discussions during these coming days we show the same broad spirit of co-operation and understanding of others' problems that led to our success in 1979.

Mr Chairman, you and others have referred this afternoon to some of the subjects that we shall be talking about during our Meeting. Perhaps I may touch very briefly on one of them.

The prospects for the world economy continue to cause deep concern. And the problems facing some developing countries are a special source for anxiety. You, Mr Chairman, and the Secretary-General, have a particularly close interest in these matters. I hope that our Meeting will provide an opportunity for a thorough discussion of these problems and that it will pave the way for fruitful exchanges at forthcoming meetings such as that in Mexico. But the solution to our problems lies not in the redistribution of existing wealth - there just is not enough to go around - but in the creation of new wealth. And that means taking a practical and constructive approach to these matters.

Of course, our gathering will also provide a chance for us to discuss a number of critical political issues including Afghanistan, the Middle East, Southern Africa and Cambodia. But I do not wish to embark on the discussions we shall be having over the days ahead. Let me just say this: we pride ourselves that our purpose is not peace at the expense of freedom, but peace with freedom. This conference is about the use we make of that freedom; for we know that the victories of peace are as challenging as the victories of war and that they endure longer.

I hope that at the end of our week's Meeting we will look back at our endeavours with the satisfaction of having achieved something useful, and will emerge from it strengthened and confident in the future of our Commonwealth association.