



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

You may like to see this  
first draft tonight.

I have asked for further  
material. This is pretty thin.

A.S.C. 17/11

Dear John,

CHOGM: Prime Minister's Response to address  
of welcome

As requested in your letter of 3 November, I enclose a  
draft of what the Prime Minister might say in response to  
Mrs Gandhi's address of welcome at the CHOGM opening ceremony  
on 23 November.

We have not yet been able to establish how substantive  
Mrs Gandhi's address of welcome will be. The Foreign Secretary  
is not, therefore, in a position to judge how full a reply  
should be prepared for the Prime Minister. The enclosed draft  
provides a basis for further work. We would be happy to let  
you have additional material if you need it.

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P R Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

17/11

John - This isn't  
a speech - there

17 November 1983

is nothing to it -

We shall have to  
start from scratch.  
Mr.

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①

23-29 NOVEMBER 1983

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PRIME MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO ADDRESS OF WELCOME

Draft by Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Madam Chairman, fellow Heads of Government and Mr Secretary-General, it is a great honour and a pleasure to be asked to speak at the opening session of this momentous Commonwealth gathering.

First I congratulate you, Madam Chairman, on the tremendous efforts you and your compatriots, together with the members of the Commonwealth Secretariat, have made in preparation for this meeting. And we all of us thank the citizens of India for the warm welcome we have received. It has been greatly appreciated.

This meeting of the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth is the first in the country of Jawaharlal Nehru, your father and predecessor, Madam Chairman, and one of the great Commonwealth statesmen. Pandit Nehru first realised that there was nothing incompatible about a sovereign independent republic continuing to be a member of the Commonwealth. That realisation paved

the way for the development of the Commonwealth as it is today.

Like you, Madam Chairman, I welcome the countries of the Commonwealth who are represented here for the first time; Antigua and Barbuda, St Christopher and Nevis, both former Associated States of the Eastern Caribbean who has now taken their rightful place amongst their fellow independent Commonwealth countries. May we also send our good wishes to our other new member, the Maldives. Although as a special member of the Maldives are not represented at this meeting, we welcome them to the Commonwealth family. [Brunei also to be welcomed if its future membership (from 1.1.84) is confirmed in time.]

I very much welcome the continued growth in membership for its own sake. But it also means that the Commonwealth has an even better chance of sharing its experience with the wider world. And in particular for demonstrating that cooperation between peoples of different cultures and backgrounds can help to solve world problems. The Commonwealth already has a fine record in that respect. Let me give just three examples. I doubt whether Britain could have achieved the Lancaster House settlement for Zimbabwe without the agreement reached at the CHOGM in Lusaka in 1979. The Commonwealth played a valuable role too in helping to

bring Belize to independence. And we in Britain have reason to be grateful to so many Commonwealth members who helped in different ways when Argentina invaded the Falklands.

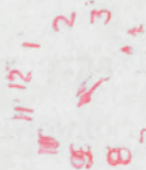
I see the Commonwealth as a unique channel for developing contacts and understanding between the industrialised and developing world. It enables each to gain a better appreciation of the needs and constraints of the other. In particular in the next few days we shall be able to discuss many of the economic and financial questions which concern us all.

We may not reach total agreement. In a body as healthily diverse as the Commonwealth there will occasionally be differences of perception and interest. But the special character of the Commonwealth means that we can conduct free-ranging and free-speaking discussions, without polemic and without bitterness. And even if we cannot reach agreement, we can often point the way. By the end of the week I am confident that we shall all have gained a better understanding of the problems facing each other and the rest of the world.

COMMONWEALTH: CHOCMA: PHS



117 NOV 1983





JKR

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

24 October 1983

CHOGM

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from the Commonwealth Secretary General which inter alia proposes that the Prime Minister should be one of the Heads of Government who should make a response to Mrs Gandhi's address of welcome at the formal opening session of CHOGM on 23 November. I should be grateful for any advice you wish to offer and for a draft reply to Mr. Ramphal's letter.

BF

A. J. COLES

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.