



British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA
from the Chairman, Stuart Young

cc HQ
FICO.
Press
Office

2nd November 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

May I reply immediately to your letter received this afternoon.

I wish to assure you that the BBC is fully aware of its responsibilities in the most difficult and delicate situation which exists in the wake of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. Both Governors and Management would feel the deepest concern if BBC broadcasts were in any way to have the serious effects mentioned in your letter. I have made extensive enquiries and can assure you that Mr. Chohan has only made one broadcast on BBC since the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi. That was on our local radio station, BBC Radio London, very early on Wednesday morning. On the same day, our Assistant Director-General, responsible for the Corporation's journalism, gave strict instructions that Mr. Chohan should not be invited to broadcast on BBC without special clearance being obtained from him. Such clearance has not been given. Indeed, instructions were issued on Wednesday to all programmes that the wider consequences of any coverage of Indian opinion in this country should be in the forefront of editorial minds.

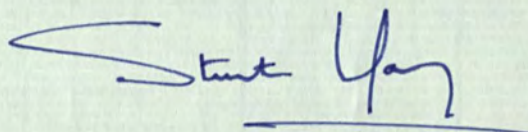
I would add that there has been no lack of coverage on BBC programmes reflecting the widespread revulsion at the violence of Mrs. Gandhi's death felt by the entire Nation.

I offer you this first response to the very serious matters raised in your letter. The Board and I will, of course, be making the fullest examination of all aspects of the Corporation's coverage, which I believe has demonstrated both sensitivity and judgement.

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I appreciate you do not question the BBC's editorial independence, and I can assure you we are aware of the responsibility that goes with that independence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stuart Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'. A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.