

PRIME MINISTER

Press Conference and Media Issues

I have arranged for you to meet British press here at the Residence at 6.30 for about 30 minutes. The media have particularly requested to see you.

We have no idea how many journalists will turn up or be able to get here, but we shall record your remarks and play them back to any late enquirers. We shall permit radio and television to record the press conference. I will ask the journalists to concentrate on the funeral and Indian affairs and not on domestic (UK) issues.

I attach at Annex 1 a draft opening statement designed to set the scene and tone.

BBC, ITN and IRN would like short news interviews with you after the press conference but you have little time for them in view of your bilateral with President Zia at 7.30. You will in any case have had a very exhausting 24 hours and there is no advantage to you in giving interviews simply to please the British media, especially when your press conference is being filmed and recorded.

My advice would be to allow me to excuse you on the grounds of shortage of time.

If you do however decide to give radio and TV interviews I shall insist at the outset that each interviewer will allow me to stop him after 5 minutes. Otherwise I fear that crews available will take advantage of this opportunity to interview you.

You should be aware that some of the journalists covering the funeral are cricket correspondents. They have little knowledge of politics and the questions seem likely to concentrate on your memories of Mrs. Gandhi, your emotions on her assassination,

your impressions of the funeral and of course your attendance at a funeral only three weeks after the attempt on your life.

One final point before I rehearse the questions likely to arise: you have a vested interest in getting a few more words on record here in New Delhi condemning the gloating of a tiny minority of Sikhs in Britain. We would emphasise to the BBC the need to broadcast those comments.

(I have asked Jean Caines in London to impress on the BBC the need to keep repeating your words on leaving Heathrow. This is because I have learned from my host in the High Commission that the BBC World Service not merely broadcast Chauhan's inflammatory words on Wednesday, the day of the assassination, but again on Thursday.)

Questions likely to arise

- What you thought of Mrs. Gandhi; how you got on with her; your assessment of her as a stateswoman.
- Your emotions on learning of her death less than three weeks after the attempt on your life.
- Your impression of the funeral; your feelings during the ceremony.
- Your security fears and how security at the funeral was handled.
- Your impressions of Rajiv; your meeting with him today; how you think he will tackle his enormous task.
- The future of India and the Anglo-Indian relationship after Mrs. Gandhi; what do you have to say about Sikh extremists in Britain?
- The level of international representation at the funeral - good or bad; why did you come?

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- Why are you having so few bilaterals - why no meeting with the Russians, Chinese or countries you were to have visited on your Asian tour in September?
- What are your hopes for the England cricket tour; will you be seeing the cricketers?
- Logistics - when do you return (10 a.m. tomorrow); why the rush? - Queen's Speech Debate in which you speak on Tuesday.

Other Media

If we could organise it - and you were willing - you could usefully do two interviews tomorrow morning at, say, 8 a.m. for

BBC World Service
Indian TV or radio

Agree to give these interviews for up to, say, 15 minutes each? Content overall?

BERNARD INGHAM

3 November 1984

DRAFT SPEAKING NOTE : PRESS CONFERENCE

This is a journey I profoundly wish I had never had to make. I counted Indira Gandhi as a personal friend and I mourn her brutal, callous murder.

Princess Anne and I have of course represented the ^{Queen and the} British people and the Government of the United Kingdom at the ceremony today.

We paid our respects to Mrs. Gandhi lying in state this morning - our respects to a great stateswoman, a major world, Commonwealth, and non-aligned leader; the mother of her beloved India. And we have brought the condolences of our country to the Indian peoples.

I am sure I also speak for the overwhelming majority of Indians - Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian and others - living in Britain; how much they feel India's loss, how much they grieve with their fellow countrymen here in India.

The funeral ceremony was a moving experience for me, all the more so, as you can imagine, in view of the events in Brighton only three weeks ago.

But life must go on. India will go on and develop as a great democratic nation.

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It was in that spirit that I saw Rajiv Gandhi this morning to bring him sympathy and, if possible, consolation but also encouragement, support, strength and loyalty in the huge task which confronts him. *I urged him to come to the United Kingdom as soon as he was able.*

My visit is very short but as you know there is the State Opening of Parliament on Tuesday after which I shall open the Debate on The Queen's Address. It is not therefore possible for me to have many bilaterals but I hope to see later this evening President Zia and George Shultz and tomorrow Prime Minister Nakasone of Japan before I leave for London at 10 a.m.

We shall return home still shocked and outraged by Mrs. Gandhi's murder but I am also sure with our ties of friendship with India reinforced.