

Note of a meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi
at 1 Akbar Marg.
at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 3 November, 1984.

Present:

Prime Minister

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi

Sir Robert Wade-Gery

Mr. G. Parthasarathy
(Acting Foreign Minister)

Mr. F.E.R. Butler

D. P.C. Alexander
(Principal Secretary to the Prime
Minister)

Mr. C.R. Garekhan
(Private Secretary to the Prime
Minister)

Mr. Sharada Prasad
(Press Secretary to the Prime
Minister)

The Prime Minister said that she wanted to express her deep sorrow at Mrs. Gandhi's death. She felt that she had lost a dear friend. Her discussions with Mrs. Gandhi had had a special quality.

The Prime Minister added that she deeply deplored the unseemly statements of some Sikhs in Britain following the assassination, and had made a statement condemning them. (Mr. Gandhi nodded his assent.) But these were an infinitesimally small minority, and a great majority of responsible leaders of the Sikh community in Britain had joined the rest of the British people in grief and sympathy with the people of India.

The Prime Minister continued that she was very glad that Mr. Gandhi had taken on the great responsibilities for the Government of India. She hoped to maintain a close relationship with him, and that he would pay an official visit to London as soon as he felt able to do so. He faced a difficult task that day, and there would be difficult problems in the coming weeks; but out of evil good could often come in unexpected ways. She was glad that he had around him some senior Ministers who had worked with his mother, and she gave him her best wishes and those of the British people.

Mr. Gandhi, in a short reply, said that the Indian people had great resilience, and had recovered from tragedies of this sort before. He hoped to be announcing the rest of his Cabinet appointments on the following day. He was very grateful for the Prime Minister's presence, and for what she had said to him.

F.E.R.B.

3 November, 1984.