



10 DOWNING STREET

14 December 1984

From the Private Secretary

*for Len,*

POSSIBLE VISIT OF INDIAN PRIME MINISTER TO BRITAIN

Thank you for your letter of 12 December suggesting that the Prime Minister should invite Mr Gandhi to visit Britain in June or as soon as possible thereafter.

The only way in which an invitation in June could be fitted in would be to take the dates provisionally allocated for Zhao Ziyang (week beginning Monday 3 June) and use these instead for Rajiv Gandhi. In that event, Zhao's visit would have to be postponed until 16 October.

The Prime Minister takes the view that it would be better to offer the earlier dates to Rajiv in the first place. Could you please let me know whether the Secretary of State agrees with this order of priority. I shall hold up the draft letter to Mr Gandhi in the meantime.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*C.D. Powell*

(C.D. Powell)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

*P.S. It would be helpful to know the answer  
by Monday morning, if possible.*

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Prime Minister

1. The recommendation is that you should invite Rajiv in June.
2. It's a full month, with a State Visit and - tentatively - Zhao Ziyang.
3. But the June dates have not yet been put to Zhao.  
If you prefer, we can still offer Rajiv a date in June and Zhao one in October. It's a question of priority.

Agree June for Rajiv?  
Yes no C.D.P.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 December 1984

Dear Charles,

Possible Visit of Indian Prime Minister to Britain

When the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, thanked the Prime Minister for attending his mother's funeral, he also thanked her for an invitation to visit the UK.

It would obviously help the present state of Indo-British relations if we were able to extend a more formal invitation, with very approximate suggested dates, before the Indian elections on 24 December. This would demonstrate our confidence in Mr Gandhi's re-election, and might win us some goodwill from the Indians (who, as you know, have been threatening economic action against the British interests for our alleged leniency towards Sikh extremists in this country). It would also avoid our having to take a place in the queue which is likely to form for visits by Mr Gandhi once the elections are over.

Mr Gandhi is unlikely to be able to undertake foreign visits before June 1985. If the Prime Minister's diary permits, a visit in June would be ideal; it is from Mr Gandhi's earliest foreign visits that the maximum political impact and benefit will accrue. The French (and, we believe, the Americans) have already invited him in June. But if that timing is not convenient to the Prime Minister, we would recommend that the invitation should be for the earliest convenient month after June.

I enclose a draft letter from the Prime Minister to Mr Gandhi.

Yours ever,

Le Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)  
Private Secretary

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