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GRS 250

CONFIDENTIAL

FM NEW DELHI 161130Z JAN 85

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 069 OF 16 JANUARY

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YOUR TELNO 48 : VISIT BY INDIAN PRIME MINISTER

1. ALEXANDER TOLD ME TODAY THAT MR GANDHI HAD NOW REGRETFULLY DECIDED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE TIME TO VISIT LONDON IN JUNE. ACCORDING TO ALEXANDER, HE WILL VISIT ONLY PARIS AND UNITED STATES (I DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE OF PROBING HIM ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN BETWEEN THOSE TWO VISITS OR WHETHER THE GAP BETWEEN THEM HAD NOW DISAPPEARED).

2. ALEXANDER WENT ON TO SAY THAT MR GANDHI WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE IF POSSIBLE TO VISIT LONDON IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR. ALEXANDER'S OWN IDEA, WHICH HE HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED WITH MR GANDHI BUT EXPECTED HIM TO AGREE WITH, WAS THAT A 2-3 DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO BRITAIN SHOULD IF POSSIBLE BE ARRANGED ON HIS WAY TO OR FROM EITHER THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE UN IN NEW YORK OR CHUGM IN THE BAHAMAS. MR GANDHI WAS PLANNING TO ATTEND BOTH THOSE FUNCTIONS.

3. I SAID THAT THIS SOUNDED A PROMISING IDEA WHICH I WOULD EXPLORE WITH LONDON. I HOPED HE WOULD KEEP ME POSTED AS MR GANDHI'S THINKING DEVELOPED (ALEXANDER AGREED). I ALSO HOPED HE WOULD MAKE CLEAR TO MR GANDHI HOW WARMLY MRS THATCHER LOOKED FORWARD TO WELCOMING HIM TO LONDON, FOR PERSONAL AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL REASONS. ALEXANDER SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO DO SO. HE THOUGHT MR GANDHI WAS VERY SENSIBLE OF MRS THATCHER'S PERSONAL AFFECTION FOR HIM, WHICH HE WARMLY RECIPROCATED. HE HAD PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED HER KINDNESS AND SYMPATHY AT THE TIME OF HIS MOTHER'S DEATH. HE ALSO GREATLY ADMIRER HER COURAGE AND WISDOM AS A POLITICAL LEADER.

4. I DID NOT OF COURSE MENTION THE POSSIBILITY OF A LIGHTNING VISIT BY MRS THATCHER TO DELHI IN APRIL.

5. GRATEFUL FOR VIEWS ON PARA 2 ABOVE.

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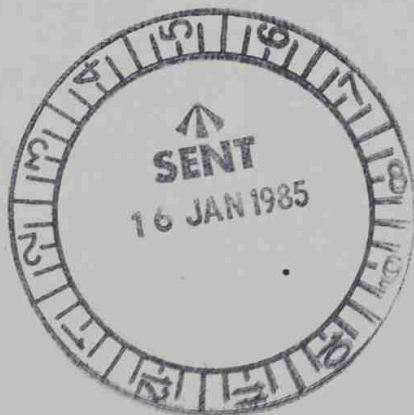
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