

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Prime Minister (4)

CDP

HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

17 January 1985



Dear Len,

SIKH DEMONSTRATION - 20 JANUARY

As a result of further discussions between the police and the organisers, I am able to give you an assessment of the prospects for the Sikh demonstration likely to take place in London on 20 January, which as you know was postponed from 13 January.

As I said in my letter of 10 January, the prime purpose of this demonstration is to protest about the deportation from Britain and the Philippines of Jasbir Singh. The organisers are members of the Supreme Council of Sikhs and the Sikh Youth Movement. The organisers have told the police that they have every intention of proceedings with the demonstration although it is clear that they are experiencing difficulty in drumming up support. The police were told that up to 10,000 people might take part but their own latest assessment is that the figure will be no higher than 3,000 and could fall well below that, especially if (as is likely) the weather is bad.

We understand that because of internal wrangling within the Sikh community a number of influential groups who might have been expected to lend them support have failed to do so. Khalistan House remains unenthusiastic about the event.

There is no reason to expect public order problems in terms relevant to the powers under the Public Order Act 1936. It is not known for certain whether Dr Chauhan will take part. The political background mentioned in my earlier letter makes it unlikely, but he might be unable to resist associating himself with it by, for example, seeking permission to speak at the rally. That would not, of itself, raise issues relevant to police powers under the Act.

The arrangements for the demonstration have slightly changed since last week. They intend to have a short rally in Hyde Park before the march begins and the demonstrators will disperse in Horseguard's Parade rather than Trafalgar Square. There will be a small static demonstration outside the Philippines Embassy where a petition will be handed in. A petition will also be taken to Downing Street. It has been agreed with the organisers that five elders will carry sheathed ceremonial swords; no other swords will be allowed.

Whilst it would be unrealistic to suppose that there will be no hostility shown towards the Indian Government, the police remain of the view that the demonstrators will focus mainly on the actions of the British and Philippines Governments. There is nothing to suggest that any counter-demonstrations are planned and the police have no reason to believe that the event will give rise to public disorder.

Should the assessment change significantly before Sunday I will, of course, let you know.

A copy of this letter goes to Charles Powell at No 10.

Yours ever,

Nigel

N A PANTLING

L V Appleyard, Esq.

17 JAN 1985

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