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DESKBY 070830Z FEB 85
FM NEW DELHI 070715Z FEB 85
TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY FCO
TELNO 182 OF 7 FEBRUARY 1985
INFO IMMEDIATE ODA, DTII, MODUK (RMD 3)

YOUR TELNO 141: INDO-BRITISH RELATIONS AND WESTLANDS CONTRACT

1. I HAVE STILL NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE DEFENCE MINISTER. MY MEETING WITH GHAREKHAN IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ON 4 FEBRUARY (MY TELNO 167) AND WITH PARTHASARATHY ON 5 FEBRUARY (MY TELNO 175) WERE NOT DISCOURAGING. BUT THEY HAVE NOT YET BORNE ANY FRUIT: THE INDIANS ARE STILL DECLINING TO TALK TO WESTLANDS. THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME LEFT IF WE WANT RESULTS BEFORE WESTLANDS AGM ON 13 FEBRUARY.

2. I SHALL TRY TO SEE THE DEFENCE SECRETARY AND FINANCE SECRETARY AGAIN, BUT EXPECT TO FIND THEM UNABLE TO MOVE WITHOUT A (FURTHER) GREEN LIGHT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER. I SHALL KEEP AFTER THE DEFENCE MINISTER: BUT HE IS CLEARLY PLAYING HARD TO GET. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I THINK I SHOULD NOW MAKE A DETERMINED EFFORT TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. THIS MAY WELL NOT BE POSSIBLE, GIVEN HIS EXPECTED ABSENCE FROM DELHI. BUT I COULD OF COURSE OFFER TO MEET HIM ANYWHERE IN INDIA THAT SUITED HIM: AND EVEN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO SEE HIM MIGHT DO SOMETHING TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN BOTH HERE AND VIA-A-VIS WESTLANDS.

3. IF YOU AGREE, THEREFORE, I PROPOSE TO ASK GHAREKHAN TOMORROW MORNING IF HE CAN ARRANGE FOR ME TO CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE NEXT 2 OR 3 DAYS. IT WOULD STRENGTHEN MY HAND IF I COULD SAY THAT I WAS SEEKING THIS APPOINTMENT ON MRS THATCHER'S INSTRUCTIONS, IN THE LIGHT OF HER CONCERNS WHICH I EXPLAINED ON 4 FEBRUARY. IT WOULD ALSO HELP IF I COULD REFER TO THE AGM AS A SPECIFIC REASON FOR A MEETING IN GOOD TIME BEFORE 13 FEBRUARY.

4. IF I DO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER, I THINK I SHOULD COVER THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN ADDITION TO THOSE IN PARAS 1 AND 2 OF YOUR TUR:

(A) MRS THATCHER'S PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT THE SIKH EXTREMISTS IN BRITAIN AND THE DANGER WHICH THESE POSE FOR INDIA (AND BRITAIN). HER DETERMINATION TO DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP, AND THE IMPORTANCE SHE ATTACHES TO THE CURRENT CLOSE COOPERATION

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(B) HER CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION OF WESTLANDS, WHO HAVE INCURRED EXPENDITURE IN ORDER TO MEET AN INDIAN (DEA) TIMETABLE AND ON THE STRENGTH OF INDIAN ASSURANCES: AND THE DANGER OF THIS LEADING TO DAMAGING CONTROVERSY AT (AND AFTER) THE AGM.

(C) HER WIDER CONCERN THAT UNLESS THE CURRENT DRIFT IS ARRESTED, STRONG ANTI-INDIAN FEELINGS WILL BE GENERATED IN BRITAIN (ON THE GROUNDS THAT WE ARE BEING UNFAIRLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST) AND THAT THE VALUED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL BE SERIOUSLY IMPAIRED.

5. GRATEFUL FOR INSTRUCTIONS BY 080430Z.

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