

SUBJECT

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T.118/84

CONFIDENTIAL

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DD 301000Z NEW DELHI
GRS 800
CONFIDENTIAL
DESKBY 301000Z
FM FCO 291630Z JUN 84
TO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI
TELEGRAM NUMBER 483 OF 30 JUNE
INFO PRIORITY COLOMBO

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO MRS GANDHI'S LETTERS OF 9 AND 14 JUNE ABOUT SRI LANKA AND THE PUNJAB TROUBLES. GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD DELIVER TEXT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BEARING IN MIND MRS GANDHI'S FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE.

'THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF 14 JUNE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS IN THE PUNJAB. THESE HAVE BEEN ANXIOUS WEEKS FOR YOU, INVOLVING DIFFICULT DECISIONS. I HAVE FOLLOWED CLOSELY YOUR EFFORTS TO RESTORE CALM THERE, AND I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE 'HEALING TOUCH' FOR WHICH YOU HAVE CALLED WILL OPEN THE WAY TO A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR THAT TROUBLED REGION. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FULLY SUPPORT INDIA'S UNITY.

'I WELL APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN ABOUT THE POTENTIAL SECURITY THREAT POSED BY EXTREMISTS OUTSIDE INDIA. WE ARE DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW OUR TRADITIONAL FREEDOMS TO BE ABUSED BY THOSE WHO SEEK TO USE VIOLENCE FOR POLITICAL ENDS. I KNOW THAT CERTAIN REMARKS CARRIED BY THE MEDIA IN BRITAIN HAVE CAUSED DISTRESS IN INDIA. WE HAVE MADE SURE THE POLICE ARE AWARE OF THESE STATEMENTS, AND THEY ARE INVESTIGATING THEM. AS YOU KNOW, THE MEDIA ARE INDEPENDENT IN BRITAIN, AS THEY ARE IN INDIA. THIS MEANS THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTERVENE IN MEDIA DECISIONS, HOWEVER MUCH WE MAY PERSONALLY REGRET THEM.

'I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF YOUR GOVERNMENT'S PERSONNEL AND PREMISES IN THIS COUNTRY. WE FIRMLY INTEND TO FULFIL OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THEM. THE POLICE ARE DEVOTING CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES TO THIS TASK. THEY WILL OF COURSE CONTINUE TO NEED THE FULLEST CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE FROM YOUR PEOPLE.

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'I WAS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR LETTER OF 9 JUNE ABOUT SRI LANKA. THE SITUATION THERE REMAINS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN. WHEN I SAW PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE ON 27 JUNE HE EXPLAINED THE DIFFICULTIES HE FACES IN RECONCILING THE CONFLICTING CONCERNS OF THE SINHALESE MAJORITY AND THE TAMIL MINORITY, BUT SAID HE WAS REFLECTING ON FURTHER POSSIBLE PROPOSALS TO MEET THE TAMIL WISH FOR A GREATER DEGREE OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY. NO DOUBT HE WILL GIVE YOU A SIMILAR ACCOUNT WHEN HE PASSES THROUGH DELHI. I TOLD HIM THAT, WHILE IT WAS NOT FOR ME TO SUGGEST HOW HE SHOULD DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM, I THOUGHT IT ESSENTIAL TO FIND WAYS TO RECONCILE TAMIL ASPIRATIONS WITH THOSE OF THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY, SO AS TO SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS OF ALL COMMUNITIES IN THE ISLAND: AN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH THERE IS MUCH PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC CONCERN HERE.

'THE PRESIDENT LAID GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE TERRORIST PROBLEM IN THE ISLAND. BUT AS MR ATHULATHMUDALI HAS SAID THERE CAN BE NO SOLUTION TO THIS THROUGH MILITARY MEANS ALONE, AND THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT'S RECENT DECISION TO RELAX SOME OF THE MORE STRINGENT ASPECTS OF THEIR EMERGENCY REGULATIONS APPEARS TO REFLECT AWARENESS OF THIS.

'I AM SURE YOU ARE RIGHT TO COUNSEL THE GREATEST POSSIBLE RESTRAINT ON THE TAMIL EMIGRES IN INDIA. THIS WILL HELP TO ACHIEVE A REDUCTION IN VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL IF PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE IS TO PERSUADE THE SINHALESE COMMUNITY THAT CONCESSIONS MUST BE MADE TO THE TAMILS.

'I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE AGAIN, WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAST SENTENCE OF YOUR LETTER, THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE NOT PROVIDING ANY COUNTER-INSURGENCY TRAINING IN SRI LANKA.

'FINALLY, I THOUGHT I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE TO ATTEND THE INAUGURATION OF THE VICTORIA DAM, FOR WHICH WE HAVE PROVIDED CONSIDERABLE AID FUNDS, IN SEPTEMBER. THIS WILL BE ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY IN DUE COURSE.'

HOWE

INDIA - TERRORISM
LIMITED

SAD

MAED

SEC D

PUSD

PROTOCOL D

NEWS D

CONS D

CCD

MVD

NAD

COD

DEF D

ECD(F)

SCT

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST.]

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR WHITNEY

PS/PUS

SIR W HARDING

MR GOODALL

MR O'NEILL

MR EGERTON

MR WESTON

MR RENWICK

MR MILES

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM/HIJACKING

SUB-CONTINENT: POLITICAL

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MR ROGERS

CABINET OFFICE

LT COL JURY D14 MOD

MR C R JONES SAD/ODA

PS/HOME SECRETARY

SIR BRIAN CUBBON HOME OFFICE

MR MONTGOMERY-POTTS B1 DIV

HOME OFFICE LUNAR HOUSE

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