



BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION
NEW DELHI, INDIA

B Ingham Esq
Press Office
No.10 Downing Street

15 October 1984

Dear Bernard

BOMB ATTACK AT BRIGHTON

- 1. You will not wish to be burdened but I attach copies of the editorials on this subject from the four leading newspapers in India. The Prime Minister could take particular comfort from the statement in the Hindustan Times, not always the newspaper most friendly to Britain, that "every one in India will be happy that she was unhurt".

Yours ever

Ronald

Ronald Nash
First Secretary (Information)

cc: R Clarke Esq
News Department
FCO

*P. Hindle Esq
SAD, FCO*

The Powers

The first cuttings (attached) perhaps reinforces John Huppert's plea for a Prime Ministerial comment aimed at India.

John 22/10

15 OCT 1984

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DASTARDLY ACT

The bomb attack on the British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, and other ministers staying in a Brighton hotel to attend the Conservative Party's annual convention is yet another act of mindless terrorism in this age of violence. The Irish Republican Army which has claimed responsibility for the incident has a long history of violence. It has never reconciled itself to the loss of Ulster to Ireland. It was the British Empire's first act of dividing a country on the basis of religion. The people of Ulster are predominantly Protestant while those in Ireland are Catholics. This slender doctrinal difference has given rise to two nations. The primitiveness of the concept of nationhood based on religion ensured a potential for violence. The Irish have fasted themselves to death, shot one another dead and killed innocent people out shopping or gunned down government officials and ministers. In their turn, the British have reacted with cold cruelty towards the Irish nationalists. The deeds of the Blacks and Tans in Ireland remain a shameful memory. The legal murder of Sir Roger Casement is still remembered with a shudder in many parts of the world.

But the point is that acts of terrorism will not reverse what has been done. That is why the bomb attacks by the IRA do not make any sense. What, for instance, is gained by attacking shoppers before a British goods store as happened recently? It is not these people who are responsible for the division of the country. Only a moron will believe that Mrs. Margaret Thatcher can now undo the separation of the two parts. If the Irish nationalists have a case, they must persuade the people of Britain including those in Ulster that a great injustice had been done and that Ireland should be united once again. On the other hand, such mindless attacks on the innocent will only arouse anger and contempt towards them. Individual acts of violence has never produced any political effect anywhere in the world. For Mrs Thatcher, it was a merciful escape and everyone in India will be happy that she was unhurt. But her colleague, Norman Tebbit, was not quite so lucky and was injured. The Indian people have no sympathy for terrorists of any kind and strongly deplore such attacks.

THE TIMES OF INDIA**A Thought for Today***Our lives are universally shortened by our ignorance.*

—HERBERT SPENCER

A Dastardly Act

The self-confessed attempt by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to blow up the hotel in Brighton in southern England where Tory leaders gathered for the annual party conference were staying is a dastardly act of political terrorism. Happily, although at least two people were killed and over two dozen injured, including the British industry secretary, Mr Norman Tebbit, and his wife, the perpetrators of this foul deed failed to accomplish their murderous objectives. The British prime minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, who was at work in her room when the high-intensity, 25-pound bomb went off in the early hours of Friday, was fortunately unscathed, as were her husband, Mr Denis Thatcher, and almost all her senior cabinet colleagues resident in the hotel. But it was a close shave, for much of the hotel was blown to smithereens and came crashing down. Mrs Thatcher's own suite was heavily damaged, the bathroom shatteringly so. The sturdiest response to such despicable actions is to demonstrate that, despite the doers' evil designs, it is business as usual. With a spunkiness characteristic of her and of both her terms of office, Mrs Thatcher responded just so. The conference, after prayers had been said for those who had died or been injured, went on as usual, with Mrs Thatcher delivering the speech she had been polishing up when the bomb exploded.

If the IRA, which put out a statement from Dublin claiming responsibility for the blast and saying it was "against the British cabinet and the Tory warmongers", thinks that such acts of terrorism are going to advance its cause, it is totally out of touch with reality. The Irish prime minister, Mr Fitzgerald, was among the first world leaders to condemn the mass assassination attempt and there can be no doubt that he speaks for the vast majority of the Irish people, Catholic or Protestant, whether living in Northern Ireland or the Irish Republic in the south. In fact, the Irish terrorists are making it difficult through such crimes for even their most loyal supporters at home and abroad to defend their cause. The assassination of Lord Mountbatten, one of their worst "successes", lost them a great deal of support, not least in America where those of Irish ancestry, many of whom are highly influential in American politics (President Reagan is of Irish descent as was President Kennedy), are inclined to support the Irish Catholic nationalists. But they will be hard put to it to continue to extend moral, material and financial assistance to groups which repeatedly deal in murder and mayhem and who think nothing of trying to kill off the whole British cabinet at one go. This is nothing but the politics of murder and those who brazenly practise it in defiance of an outraged world public opinion can succeed only in hastening the defeat of the very cause they are prepared so bloodily to uphold.

15 OCT 1984

INDIAN EXPRESS

BRIGHTON SHOCK

THE escape from injury and worse of the British Prime Minister and many of her Cabinet colleagues in the bomb explosion in Brighton last Friday can only be described as providential. The blast ripped through the high-rise hotel where the entire Conservative government and party leadership was staying in connection with their annual conference. Described as the worst incident of its kind in Britain in recent memory, the explosion is immediately known to have killed at least four persons and injured more than 30 others including the Industry and Trade Secretary, Mr Norman Tebbit, his wife, and the chief whip of the party, Mr Waken. Mrs Thatcher and her colleagues kept their cool and the Conservative party conference was not abandoned.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), which has been fighting for the independence of Northern Ireland from British rule, has claimed responsibility for the bombing. In a statement issued in Dublin, the IRA said that the 45-kg bomb was directed at the "British cabinet and the Tory warmongers". This senseless and dastardly act of terrorism will cause worldwide outrage, as political issues cannot be solved by terror and murder but can only further embitter relations. The IRA has not advanced its cause by this action. National and international terrorism has grown increasingly ugly and menacing, becoming more lethal, more frequent and widespread, and more difficult to contain. It is indeed a sad commentary on the times, and calls for sensible, determined and concerted action both within and among nations.

14 OCT 1984

THE
SUNDAY STATESMAN

With which is incorporated THE ENGLISHMAN—Founded 1828
Published Simultaneously from DELHI and CALCUTTA

DELHI, OCTOBER 14, 1984

Vol. No. CXXV 3006

OUTRAGE AT BRIGHTON

FRIDAY's bomb explosion in the Brighton hotel where Mrs Thatcher, her Cabinet colleagues and other senior members of the Conservative Party were staying, was evidently intended to kill; their escape was providential. The IRA which has dutifully claimed responsibility, obviously wanted more than just to attract attention to its separatist cause. Irish terrorists have got away with one outrageous act after another in recent years; in December 1983 they planted a bomb inside Harrods of London, which killed one and injured over 40 innocent Christmas shoppers. While such brutal tactics might win kudos among IRA followers, they cause general revulsion and make it difficult for advocates of moderation in Britain's Ulster policy publicly to air their views. The public outcry that is bound to be caused by the latest incident will deny those who favour withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland any sympathetic hearing; perhaps even their own conviction will be shaken.

For Mrs Thatcher, this outrage may in fact be of considerable political advantage at a time when she has not been finding it easy to live up to her unflappable image. One embarrassing disclosure has followed another and the pile of these political banana skins has led to her administration slipping up more than once since. It was returned for a second term with a landslide mandate in June last year. Unemployment has continued to soar, each month's figure setting up a new record. This despite the moderate recovery experienced in the West which

seems to have by-passed Britain. But it is her handling of the seven-month-old miners' strike that has earned her the widest criticism. On this issue, as on most others, the Conservative Government's approach appears to have been to talk tough and do little. Even the usually non-political Anglican Church has joined issue—the Bishop of Durham strongly attacking her socially divisive policies and describing the Coal Board Chairman, Mr Ian MacGregor, as an "elderly, imported American".

An analysis of five years of Mrs Thatcher's brand of Toryism—often described as a new version of social Darwinism—would suggest that the greatest casualty has been the national consensus which distinguished Britain from other advanced Western countries. That this consensus has been shattered is evident from the violence that characterizes British society today. If the image of the unarmed, friendly British "Bobby" has been replaced by one wearing helmets, carrying shields and plastic bullets, it is not only because ethnic minorities tend to be more violent than the native British; it is also because of Mrs Thatcher's uncaring policies that seem to justify violence in the eyes of many. It is difficult to admonish or shame a nation into discipline or higher productivity, and Mrs Thatcher's espousal of Victorian virtues is appreciated only by the successful. None of this can mitigate the enormity of the Brighton bomb explosion; but even this thoroughly reprehensible act may be viewed by some as a desperate response to her divisive rule.

THE TRIBUNE
CHANDIGARH.

15 OCT 1984

THE TRIBUNE

THE BRIGHTON OUTRAGE

There ever there was one country in the world where national leaders could walk on the street like common citizens without security guards and other official paraphernalia, it was Britain. But Friday's blast at a Brighton hotel may have changed all that. The providential escape of the Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, underscores the vulnerability of the mightiest in the land to terrorist attacks. Violence in Northern Ireland and the subversive attacks by the Irish Republican Army have been a festering sore for the British Government since 1969. For most of these 15 years, however, trouble was confined to Northern Ireland. The decisive spill-over to mainland Britain may be said to have begun with the assassination of Lord Mountbatten by the I.R.A. in August, 1979. Friday's bomb explosion, which took the life of a Conservative M.P. and three others could herald the start of a regular I.R.A. terrorist campaign on the British mainland. The obvious target would be the unruffled and determined Prime Minister. In September, 1983, Mrs Thatcher survived a similar assassination bid by the I.R.A. during her visit to Canada. As The Times of London points out, "the I.R.A. badly needed a propaganda coup of international dimension after a number of setbacks on the military and political fronts". The national and global sense of relief over the escape of Mrs Thatcher and her Cabinet colleagues from becoming the victims of this outrageous act should be tempered with the thought that British leaders may now have to opt for such American safety devices as bullet-proof cars and vests, armed escorts and round-the-clock security at their residences. All this is anathema to the Briton who loves his freedom, privacy and rights as a social being.

The British Government has many tasks at hand. First of all, it has to start an anti-terrorist campaign of sufficient intensity to bring the criminals to book. Simultaneously it has to insulate the national-level leaders and members of the Royal family from I.R.A. attacks. But more important than all else is the need to start the efforts for a negotiated political settlement of this thorny issue. Talks with the Government at Dublin should be revived. The artificial division of the land into Catholic Ireland and Protestant Ireland has led to disastrous consequences. The recent election of Mr Gerry Adams as the President of Sinn Fein, the political wing of Irish Republicans, gave ample hints to the Government about an impending intensification of terrorist activity. In 14 years of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland as many as 2,304 persons were killed, which was in addition to 370 members of the British Army and 72 civilians who died fighting the I.R.A. on British soil. There is hardly any family in Northern Ireland which has not been affected by the violence. Riots in Ulster have resulted in the largest single displacement of civilian population in Europe during peace time. In terms of money, the cost of the Irish revolt would run into several billions of pounds. The Irish Prime Minister, Mr Garret Fitzgerald, is popular among the people in the north as well as those in the south and he favours a peaceful solution based on the establishment of a confederation of sovereign States. Terrorism needs to be combated with all the force that the Government commands, but Mrs Thatcher will have to move towards a lasting solution to the Irish problem as a whole.