



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 February 1982

Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO
CABINET OFFICE

p.a.
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Jan Robert,

VISIT OF THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER, 21-25 MARCH:
OBJECTIVES AND BRIEFING

1. This will be Mrs Gandhi's first official visit to Britain since she was returned to power in January 1980. She previously paid an official visit in 1973 though she has visited London privately several times since. The visit is in return for that paid by Mrs Thatcher to India last April.
2. Two years after her return to office as Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi is firmly in charge. She has no serious rival either within her own party or among the opposition parties. She dominates the Congress Party and the Government and in practice takes all decisions of importance, including those relating to major industrial projects and defence purchases. She has now got back the zest she lost after the death of her son, Sanjay.
3. The main purpose of the Prime Minister's visit to India was to influence Mrs Gandhi in Britain's favour politically and commercially. It was successful on both counts. The return visit will be of great significance in maintaining the favourable momentum in our relations with a country which is fast becoming one of our leading markets. It will help to develop the rapport established by the Prime Minister with Mrs Gandhi last April. It will offer an opportunity for an exchange of views on international issues at a time when India is beginning to shade her non-alignment towards Western Europe and when she considers that both super-powers fail to take her into proper account. Mrs Gandhi would hope to demonstrate to a wider audience that India has standing in the West whatever view may be taken in Washington.

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4. It could be counter-productive to regard the visit too narrowly as an opportunity for a hard-sell operation in support of the various multi-million projects for which British firms are bidding. British commercial interests will best be served by the improvement in the climate of relations which we hope will result from the visit, especially in Mrs Gandhi's own perception of this country. On the other hand, we hope that the negotiations for the Orissa steel plant contract will be approaching a favourable conclusion and that the Indian Government will be close to the point of decision to negotiate with Britain a contract for the construction of a super thermal power station. Furthermore, done with a light touch, the right word to Mrs Gandhi herself on one or two key commercial issues could pay dividends; we shall identify which these might be nearer the time.

5. The visit will coincide with the opening of the Festival of India, a major programme of concerts, drama, seminars and exhibitions of Indian art and scientific achievement which will run from March to November 1982. For Mrs Gandhi the Festival is important as a means of projecting a modern image of India in the United Kingdom and she is taking a close personal interest in the detailed arrangements. From our point of view we intend that the Festival should remind the Indians of the depth and substance of India's relations with the United Kingdom, which far exceed those with other European countries such as France which is making special efforts to woo her.

6. Since any lengthy discussion of our bilateral relations usually leads the Indians to air their traditional complaints (about immigration, race relations and the imbalance in trade) I suggest that Mrs Thatcher be advised to steer her session of talks with Mrs Gandhi mainly towards international issues. This would also be appropriate since Mrs Gandhi is a prominent member of the Non-Aligned Movement and a world figure. Mrs Gandhi will probably expect to hear Mrs Thatcher's account of the state of East/West relations and will for her part, no doubt, wish to emphasise India's non-aligned position and to explain her views on Indo/Pakistan relations, Afghanistan and North/South economic issues. Commonwealth matters may be on her mind as she is the next host of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.



7. As regards those bilateral issues where we are likely to be on the defensive, Mrs Thatcher will need to be briefed to reply frankly on Indian grievances in the areas of aid (both bilateral and multilateral) and bilateral trade (continuing imbalance and restrictions of specific Indian products). Mrs Gandhi is also likely to raise questions relating to immigration policy, particularly in the light of the recent visit to India by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration.

/ 8. I enclose at Annex A the draft programme for the visit, at Annex B a note of the suggested objectives of both countries and at Annex C a list of suggested briefs. I should add that officials from all the relevant departments will be getting together very shortly to coordinate all the detailed briefing.

7-11-81

Michael Palliser

Michael Palliser

cc: Sir Douglas Wass GCB
HM TREASURY

Sir Brian Cubbon KCB
HOME OFFICE

Sir Frank Cooper GCB CMG
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Sir Peter Carey KCB
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

M D M Franklin Esq CB CMG
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE

Sir Peter Preston KCB
OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Sir Donald Maitland GCMG OBE
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

A J Coles Esq
10 DOWNING STREET



INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO LONDON

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Sunday 21 March

1800 Arrival. Met by Prime Minister. Ceremonial Guard.

Monday 22 March

1100-1200 Tête-à-tête talks between Prime Ministers.
1200-1300 Plenary talks involving Ministers and officials.
1300 for 1315 Lunch given by Prime Minister.
1700 Meeting at British Academy/Royal Society.
2000 Inaugural Concert of Festival of India.
Prince of Wales and Prime Minister will attend.
2215 HM Government Reception at Festival Hall.
Hosted by Minister for the Arts. Prime Minister
will attend briefly.

Tuesday 23 March

0900 Call by Leader of the Opposition.
1030 Event linked to Spastics Society.
1115 Visit to Nehru Exhibition.
1245 for 1315 Lord Mayor's lunch.
1505 Visit 'See India' exhibition at Selfridges.
1630 Opening of Hayward Gallery Exhibition by Mrs Gandhi.
Prime Minister will attend.
1800-1900 Reception by Indian High Commissioner for
Indian Community.
2015 Indo/British Association Dinner. Prime Minister
will attend.

Wednesday 24 March

1045 Meeting with Sir Denis Hamilton and senior
representatives of the media at Government
Press Centre.
1115 Press Conference at Government Press Centre.
1300 Lunch with HM The Queen.
1600 Opening of Science Museum Exhibition by
Prime Minister; followed by Indian Government
Reception at Science Museum.

1745 Meet the Speaker.
1815-1915 Address Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.
PM Private visit to theatre.

Thursday 25 March

To be spent privately.
2200 (approx) Departure.



INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO LONDON

UNITED KINGDOM OBJECTIVES

1. To cement the Prime Minister's personal relationship with Mrs Gandhi.
2. To advance British commercial interests, including defence sales.
3. To improve Mrs Gandhi's regard for Britain as both an influential and^asympathetic Western interlocutor and to strengthen the habit of consultation.
4. To reaffirm our commitment to help Indian economic development through our aid programme.
5. [Defensive] To reassure Mrs Gandhi of our commitment to a multi-racial society in Britain.

INDIAN OBJECTIVES

1. To explain India's non-aligned view point, with particular regard to Afghanistan, to discuss Pakistan, and to probe British and American intentions in the area. Mrs Gandhi is concerned at the Western view that India is in the Russians' pocket.
2. To urge a more responsible British and Western attitude on North/South issues after Cancun.
3. To secure our support for continued Indian access to its traditional 40% share of IDA lending, which is now under threat from American policies and China's accession to the World Bank group.
4. To seek the maximum possible British bilateral aid commitment and reconsideration of our policy of linking aid to specific projects.
5. To demonstrate India's commitment to making the Festival of India a success.
6. To urge us to adopt a more sympathetic approach to questions of race relations and immigration and the problems of United Kingdom Passport Holders in India.



INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO LONDON

LIST OF BRIEFS

<u>Brief No</u>		<u>Lead Dept</u>	<u>In Consultation with</u>
1.	Steering Brief	FCO(SAD)	
2.	East/West Relations (including Poland)	FCO(EESD)	
3.	Arms Control and Disarmament	FCO(ACDD)	MOD
4.	Afghanistan	FCO(SAD)	
5.	Namibia	FCO(SAfD)	
6.	Arab/Israel	FCO(NENAD)	
7.	Regional Issues (including South-East Asia, China, Indian Ocean Peace Zone)	FCO(SAD)	
8.	Indo-Pakistan Relations	FCO(SAD)	
9.	Indo-US and Indo-Soviet Relations	FCO(SAD)	
10.	Nuclear Matters	FCO(SAD)	Dept of Energy
11.	India and the Commonwealth	FCO(CCD)	
12.	North/South Relations (post Cancun)	FCO(ERD)	ODA, Treasury
13.	India and IMF/IBRD/IDA	FCO(SAD)	ODA, Treasury
14.	UK Aid	ODA	FCO(SAD), Treasury
15.	UK/India Trade	DOT	FCO(SAD)
16.	Defence Sales	MOD	FCO(SAD)
17.	Immigration/Nationality	Home Office	FCO(SAD)
18.	Festival of India	FCO(CRD)	
19.	Other Bilateral Issues	FCO(SAD)	
20.	India: political and economic (background)	FCO(SAD)	

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India

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 February, 1982

Visit of Mrs. Gandhi

The briefing meeting has been provisionally arranged for 17 March at 1600. I should be grateful if I could receive briefs by 15 March.

You will doubtless have it in mind already but I think it would be helpful to have, in addition to the usual written briefs for the talks, a separate note on each of the events the Prime Minister is attending, setting out precisely what the arrangements are (timings, who will receive the Prime Minister, who else will be there, etc.) and any background notes which you think will be useful. I have in mind the Festival Hall concert and reception, the opening of the Hayward Gallery exhibition, the Indo-British Association dinner and the opening of the Science Museum exhibition.

I still have to let you know whether Mr. Thatcher will be participating in any of the events. I hope to do this early next week.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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