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OPS

Prime Minister

MB

cc to Madam
Subject PM's Tour
India & Gulf

K.F.

Print - 2/6

May 29, 1981

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

Thank you so much for your letter of April 27 describing your recent visit to India and the Arabian Gulf. I was especially interested in your comments and impressions in view of the recent trip which Al Haig took to the Middle East.

I thought your comments about Mrs. Gandhi to be most illuminating, and I agree she is not a Marxist. Although she has instigated a rather lengthy correspondence with me which I find encouraging, I still remain unclear as to what it is she really is prepared to do to strengthen relationships between India and the United States. I, too, have the impression that Mrs. Gandhi has an exaggerated fear of Pakistan. As you know, we are committed to providing more economic and military help to Pakistan, though we are trying to do this in such a way as to minimize India's fears and Pakistan's concern with its image in the non-aligned and in the Islamic world. We share your assessment that a test of nuclear explosives by both India and Pakistan in the near future would create very serious problems for all of us and further complicate the existing instability in southwest Asia and the Middle East.

Concerning Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, your views generally coincide with those of my administration. We realize that the Palestinian question will need more attention in the coming months. It is our hope that following the Israeli elections we can make progress on this issue. We are committed to giving the Camp David process a good effort, but as I have told you before, we hope to be able to expand the negotiations to include the more moderate Arab states, hopefully Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In this regard, I will be receiving visits from President Sadat, the Israeli Prime Minister, Crown

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Prince Fahd and King Hussein in late summer and early fall. At that point, we will work out in detail specific steps in the peace process and in promoting greater cooperation in defending our interests in the area against Soviet penetration. On both of these matters, we are most anxious to continue to work closely with your government and with the European community in establishing common policies towards all Middle East' questions.

Again, very many thanks for your letter. I hope that we can keep up a correspondence between us on matters of mutual concern.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

/s/

Ronald Reagan

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