

33

*12 August 1976*

*Don't rely, as discussed with Mr O'Neill.*

*Para 4 dealt with the V Dept.*

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*W. H. 7/8*

<p>RECEIVED IN          REGISTRY No. 61          13 AUG 1976</p>
<p>FSP 026/508/3</p>

DELHI TL 129

GRS 508

*12 Aug 76*

TELELETTER  
CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

REF 353/23 DATED 11 AUGUST 1976.  
FOLLOWING FOR PERSONAL R J ONEILL, SAD, FCO.

FROM W L ALLINSON, NEW DELHI.

VISIT OF MRS THATCHER TO INDIA.

1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TELELETTER OF 9 AUGUST WHICH ARRIVED JUST AS I WAS ABOUT TO COMMENT ON BRIEFING.
2. ON GENERAL SUBJECTS, WE THINK MRS THATCHER COULD USEFULLY SPEAK UP ON THE PROBLEMS THAT BRITISH FIRMS FACE UNDER FGRA, THE PROBLEMS OF PENSIONERS, ETC, ON ALL OF WHICH BOTH YOU AND WE SHARE THE SAME BACKGROUND PAPERS. WE HAD HOPED SHE MIGHT NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN IMMIGRATION MATTERS, BUT NOTE THAT SHE DOES - ON WHICH MORE BELOW. IN PUBLIC AN EMPHATIC REAFFIRMATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW FOR ALL WHO RESIDE IN BRITAIN WOULD BE USEFUL, AND CERTAINLY, WHEN MRS THATCHER ENCOUNTERS THE PRESS, SHE MUST BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS ON RACE RELATIONS IN BRITAIN.
3. WE ARE SURE THAT MRS THATCHER SHOULD AVOID GETTING INVOLVED IN COMMENTING UPON THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN INDIA. WE DOUBT WHETHER SHE WILL GET ANYWHERE IF SHE MAKES THE USUAL POINTS ABOUT BRITISH JOURNALISTS, BUT NEVERTHELESS WE THINK SHE SHOULD SPEAK UP FOR THEM. ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, WE THINK IT BETTER TO TAKE THE WIDER VIEW, AND DISCUSS AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST, OIL AND ENERGY, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IT WOULD BE FOR HER TO GET INVOLVED IN ANYTHING NEARER HOME - EG. INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, BANGLADESH, ETC. SHE WILL COME HERE WITH A REPUTATION OF BEING A HAWK ON SOVIET AFFAIRS AND OUGHT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF HOW THIS WILL BE REGARDED HERE IN ANY DISCUSSION SHE MAY HAVE ON SOVIET AFFAIRS.
4. WE WERE ALREADY SOMEWHAT CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF TALKING ABOUT IMMIGRATION TO MRS THATCHER AND YOUR TELELETTER GIVES ADDED POINT TO THIS. THE REASON FOR OUR CONCERN IS THAT DISCUSSING IMMIGRATION IN ANY DETAIL NOW POSES VERY REAL PROBLEMS. IN THE PAST - BEFORE THE LEAK OF THE HAWLEY REPORT - IT HAD BEEN OUR CUSTOM TO ANSWER QUITE FRANKLY QUESTIONS FROM RESPONSIBLE PERSONS, SUCH AS PRIVY COUNCILLORS, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND REPUTABLE JOURNALISTS, SINCE THE ONLY CLASSIFIED INFORMATION RELATING TO IMMIGRATION CONCERNS THE NUMBER OF QUOTA VOUCHERS ALLOCATED TO INDIA EACH YEAR APART FROM THAT WE HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO EXPLAIN OUR PROBLEMS AND TO GIVE STATISTICS, DRAWING ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY SUGGEST FOR THE FUTURE. SINCE THE HAWLEY REPORT BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE CLAMPED DOWN. MRS THATCHER IS OUR FIRST SENIOR VISITOR WISHING TO DISCUSS IMMIGRATION AND CERTAINLY ONE WHO SHOULD REASONABLY BE ENTITLED TO EXPECT FURTHER ANSWERS. DO WE TELL HER ALL THE FACTS AND FIGURES THAT WE POSSESS? I HAVE MARKED THIS LETTER PERSONAL SINCE IT IS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSING TO HAVE TO RECORD THAT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR US TO RECONCILE STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS WITH OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE FACTS ABOUT IMMIGRATION. FOR EXAMPLE, DO WE TELL MRS THATCHER THAT MINISTERS WHO SAY WE

ARE CONCERNED NOW ONLY WITH DEPENDENTS ARE TALKING NONSENSE ?  
HOW DO WE REPLY (MINISTERS TEND NOT TO) IF SHE ASKS US IF HAWLEY  
WAS CORRECT IN SAYING THAT 55 PER CENT OF OUR QUEUE CONSISTS OF  
MALE FIANCES ? . HOW DO WE REPLY IF SHE ASKS US TO CONFIRM THE  
ASSERTION THAT THE NUMBER OF HUSBANDS AND MALE FIANCES ' ' SO FAR  
HAS FALLEN SOMEWHAT SHORT ' ' OF THE EXPECTED TOTAL ? I COULD POINT  
OUT OTHER EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS BUT I THINK I NEED NOT LABOUR THE  
POINT. IF MRS THATCHER IS ALLOWED TO TALK TO THE IMMIGRATION STAFF  
SHE IS LIKELY TO EMERGE WITH A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT PICTURE OF THE  
SITUATION, AT LEAST AS SEEN FROM DELHI, FROM THAT PRESENTED  
TO PARLIAMENT. WE THEREFORE NEED VERY CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS IF WE  
ARE NOT TO RUN INTO TROUBLE, ON THE ONE HAND FOR NOT ANSWERING  
HER QUESTIONS OR ON THE OTHER FOR APPEARING TO CONTRADICT PUBLIC  
STATEMENTS.

SIGNED.....W L ALLINSON.

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

11 AUG 1976

Mr Rigney (Migration & Visa Department CL 636)

ok 12/8



IMMIGRATION: BRIEFING FOR MRS THATCHER

1. You will wish to take account of paragraph 4 of the attached tele-letter I have received from Mr Allinson in Delhi, in the briefing you have kindly agreed to produce for Mrs Thatcher on the issue of immigration.
2. I am inclined to think that Mr Allinson is worrying unduly. Mrs Thatcher is far too senior and experienced a politician to make cheap profit out of a briefing from fairly junior civil servants. I think that Delhi will do best to continue to pursue their policy of answering questions frankly, including giving figures, whilst refusing to be drawn into any discussion of past statements by Ministers. They should not, for example, get involved in an argument with Mrs Thatcher as to the exact significance of dependants as opposed to new spouses in the future pattern of immigration; but I do not think that Mrs Thatcher will wish to conduct the meeting in that way. The worst solution will be for the staff in Delhi or Islamabad to appear to be evasive or to have something to hide. The encounter will clearly nevertheless require careful stage-management, and I think it will be best if the participants in the meeting with Mrs Thatcher on immigration are limited to Mr Perris and Mr Rickard, in addition to Mr Allinson and Mr White.

R. J. O'Neill

R J O'Neill  
South Asian Department

12 August 1976

cc: Mr Male  
Mr Hum