



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

18 June 1984

EVENTS IN THE PUNJAB

I enclose a letter to the Prime Minister from the Acting High Commissioner about his exchanges with the BBC over the interview given by Dr. Chauhan on 12 June. The Prime Minister spoke briefly to the Acting High Commissioner about this at a reception at 10 Downing Street on 16 June.

I have acknowledged the letter. A reply does not seem necessary, though you may wish to reconsider this once Ministers have reached a decision on whether Dr. Chauhan's remarks are actionable.

CP

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

NR



Pushkar Johari  
Acting High Commissioner.

INDIA HOUSE,  
ALDWYCH,  
LONDON, W.C.2.

Prime Minister

You spoke to him on  
Saturday. I will acknowledge.  
June 18, 1984  
Delay any substantive reply  
until known whether Chauhan statement actionable!

Madam Prime Minister,

It was very good of you to show such sympathetic interest and understanding about recent events in the Punjab and their fall-out in this country when I had the opportunity to talk to you at 10, Downing Street on Saturday. I have conveyed your message of good wishes to my Prime Minister.

2. You were good enough to mention the matter of the most distressing interview on BBC Radio given by Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan on June 12 and I had briefly mentioned to you the very regrettable and unfortunate response that I had received from the Chairman of the BBC about this. You had kindly asked me to send you copies of my correspondence with Sir Stuart Young on this subject which I am now doing.

With respectful regards,

Yours sincerely,

( Pushkar Johari )

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Encl.: Three letters.



P. Johari  
ing High Commissioner

No. 411/AMC/S/84

June 12, 1984.

Dear Sir Stuart,

In the "World at One" news programme on BBC Radio 4 today (June 12, 1984), Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the self-styled leader of the so-called "Khalistan Movement" based in London, was interviewed. During this interview he made the most inflammatory, irresponsible and provocative statements against the Prime Minister of India and against the territorial integrity of India. As you will see from the enclosed transcript, he went to the extent of saying that the Sikhs would 'behead' the Prime Minister within the next few days and that some Sikhs from Britain would be willing to volunteer to do this. To compound the seriousness of this matter, some of these remarks by Dr. Chauhan were in answer to provocatively leading questions posed by the interviewer.

2. I cannot emphasise strongly enough the seriousness of this matter and I am absolutely aghast that the BBC should have thought it fit to permit an extremist and a person who is openly advocating secession, violence and murder, to air his views with impunity. Quite apart from being reprehensible in itself, this statement by Dr. Chauhan, <sup>courtesy</sup> of the BBC, could further inflame communal passions amongst the Asian community living in this country possibly resulting in serious violence and breaches of the peace.

3. I would urge you to look into this matter personally and take immediate remedial action, dis-associating the BBC from the appallingly extremist and violent views expressed by Dr. Chauhan.

Yours sincerely,

  
( P. Johari )

Sir Stuart Young, FCA,  
Chairman,  
British Broadcasting Corporation,  
Broadcasting House,  
LONDON W1A 1AA



Transcript of an interview with Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan on BBC Radio 4 in their programme 'World at One' today (June 12, 1984)

...

We have now to set up this command post in London because this is the only place where I have been staying and I have been keeping in touch with Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale back in Amritsar and his last orders reached me by a messenger and I have to carry out the mission left which has to be fulfilled.

Q What was the message that he gave?

A The message is now to continue this struggle till we achieve independence for the Sikh nation.

Q You want a separate state?

A Definitely, sovereign state, called the republic of Khalistan. Nothing less than that.

Q. How are you going to achieve that in Britain?

A. In Britain we are setting up now Khalistan House which will act as information centre because all the news are blackouted and no right information is coming. Mutiny is taking place in all the towns wherever the Sikh soldiers are. So the situation is becoming very serious and we have to set up the information centre. We have set up the network for getting the right information from India and then we have to pass the message back to the people. We are trying to set up some transmission from somewhere. We are talking to some satellite people if we can buy some time on a satellite so that we can beam even for an hour everyday that to the people in Punjab. Nobody is giving news what is happening ~~ix~~ to the Sikhs everywhere, and what help we shall be sending them and we have sent the message that anybody who will be killed his family will be looked

after by the Sikhs living abroad. Any soldier court martialed and who will leave the Indian Army and join the Khalistan army will be given full pay by the funds raised raised by the Sikhs living both <sup>abroad</sup> Canada, America, England and all over the world.

Q; It does sound rather than the Sikhs living here are inciting fellow sikhs/to defect from the Army.

A. It is not inciting. They have already. It has occurred and it will not stop. The mutiny is always a chain of reaction and no Sikh worth the name of a Sikh can sit just calm at this hour. This is the worst hour in the Sikh history and Mrs. Gandhi has touched the holiest place which we worship. The whole Sikh nation is united. There is no extremist now, no moderate now. All the Sikhs are united, wherever any Sikh is, he is with this cause now and we shall struggle till we achieve our objective.

Q. Do you actually want to see the downfall of Mrs. Gandhi's Government?

A You will see the Sikh history is anybody in the history who has touched this holy place was never left alive and I tell you today you may not call it a prophecy. But within a few days you will have the news that Mrs. Gandhi and his family has been beheaded. That is what the Sikhs will do, I tell you. I am sorry to say that. It will definitely hurt you but it will



happen. That is history, I cannot change that history.

Q. And that will be carried out by a Sikhs?

A By a Sikh definitely, Even at a gathering at Hyde Park corner on Sunday there were ladies who have offered that we are ready to go, young girls born in England, they said. We shall go and we shall do this job, If you give us and assign this job. duty. And that is the tradition. We do not want any sort of violence, any violation of the law here. We want to keep Britain very peaceful, but we shall have to continue this struggle back in the home, that is what we have to do and organise.



2/1/111 (84)  
15/6

British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

*from the Chairman, Stuart Young*

14th June 1984

*Dear Mr Johari*

Recent events in the Punjab now have a double interest for the BBC's audience as an important foreign news story and, on the domestic front, because Sikh demonstrations in this country require some explanation. In this context, it was entirely reasonable to record an interview with Dr. Chauhan and, as you are no doubt well aware, it was only one of a number of items presented by our daily radio current affairs programmes on the subject, including interviews on the "World This Weekend" with the Indian Foreign Minister and the General in Command of the Government's operations in Amritsar.

The aim of this item was to give listeners an idea of the views of Sikhs in this country. I cannot accept that the interviewer was provocative. Having established Dr. Chauhan's claim that Sikhs want a separate state, she observed that his remarks appeared to be an incitement to Sikhs to defect from the Indian army. His comment that Mrs. Gandhi and her family "would be beheaded" was retained, after careful consideration, because it was so revealing about Sikh attitudes. An appeal by Dr. Chauhan for support from Sikhs in Britain was edited out of the interview. In addition, the introduction to the interview struck a sceptical note by reporting that Dr. Chauhan was printing his own currency and passports. If you heard this you will be aware that the tone of the interview, despite its reflection of Sikh determination and reference to violence against Mrs. Gandhi, was muted, not rabble-rousing.

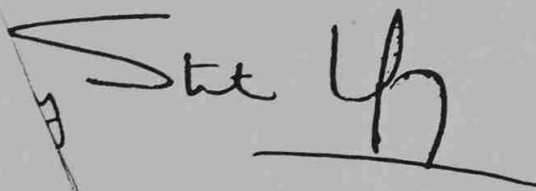
I can understand that you found Dr. Chauhan's remarks offensive, but I cannot accept that the BBC should have suppressed the interview. Its transmission in no way reflects BBC support for his views.

/continued



It remains a matter of regret to the BBC that you have refused the repeated invitations to appear on "World At One". I understand that only yesterday you chose to refuse a further invitation to appear.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stuart L. H.", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mr. P. Johari,  
Acting High Commissioner,  
Indian High Commission,  
India House,  
Aldwych,  
London, W.C.2.



Pushkar Johari  
Acting High Commissioner.

India House  
Aldwych  
London, W.C.2

June 18, 1984

Sir Stuart Young, FCA,  
Chairman,  
British Broadcasting House  
London W1A 1AA

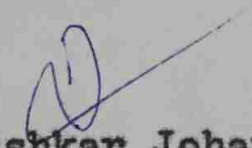
Sir,

I have your letter of June 14 in response to mine of June 12 to you regarding the interview with Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan in the "World at One" news programme on BBC Radio 4 on June 12. Much to my regret, your letter reveals a complete lack of appreciation of the important issues that I had raised in my letter. In particular, I find the statement that Dr Chauhan's comments on Mrs Gandhi and her family being "beheaded" was retained "because it was so revealing about Sikh attitudes," an absolute travesty and most unfortunate. If that statement was so revealing about anything, it was about the sick attitude of an opportunistic individual who represents no one but himself. If those responsible for the interview had had their ears closer to the ground, they might have discovered that Dr Chauhan's pretensions about representing the Sikhs are nothing short of ludicrous.

2. In the light of the regrettably inflexible attitude displayed in your letter, no purpose will be served by continuing this distressing correspondence any further. However, it might be of some interest to you to know that the view of Her Majesty's Government, as conveyed to me, was that Dr Chauhan's utterances in the interview were "most objectionable". As for the Government of India's view in this matter, it is best summed up in the statement issued by the Official Spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs on June 15, which I reproduce below:

"As for Dr Chauhan's utterances on BBC or elsewhere, we treat them with the contempt they deserve. However, what has shocked us is that the BBC should have permitted the incitement to murder India's Prime Minister to go on the air. There are certain conventions on broadcasting and we thought that the BBC would not depart from them in such a blatant manner and that, too, in such a sensitive situation."

Yours faithfully,

  
(Pushkar Johari)