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Folder Title:

Schedule Proposal for Gandhi Commemorative Event

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

February 13, 1995

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR MELANNE VERVEER
ALEXIS HERMAN

FROM: ANDREW SENS *ADS*

SUBJECT: Schedule Proposal for Gandhi Commemorative Event

The NSC continues to support presidential participation in a Washington, D.C. event to commemorate the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. The foreign policy interest is to promote U.S.-Indian relations. But there are also domestic rationales: there are over one million Americans of Indian origin who are increasingly active politically. This event will gather many of the leaders of this community. In addition, there is a strong bond between the leaders of the civil rights movement and Gandhi's philosophy. We have attached the remarks that Commerce Secretary Brown made in Delhi last month in which he spoke of the connection between Martin Luther King and Gandhi. Secretary Brown promised the Indian Prime Minister that he would do what he could to urge the President to participate in the event.

I ask you to consider supporting this event. The commitment of the President's time could be as little as 30 minutes.

Attachment

Tab A Brown remarks in Delhi

Tab B Scheduling Request

Attn: Maria Cardona/Cecile Ablack/Carol Hamilton - Maurya Sheraton

Fax No. 301 9009

**Remarks by U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown
at the
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance
Raj Ghat
Delhi, India
January 15, 1995**

In 1893, a young attorney named Mohandas Gandhi was thrown off a South African train for refusing to sit in a segregated car.

Jolted by that nation's brutality, Gandhi spent twenty years battling racism in South Africa. Returning to India, he spent the remainder of his life struggling to throw off the yoke of the British Raj and unite the people of this nation. Gandhi's medium was nonviolent protest, a courageous political philosophy that demands of its disciples extraordinary discipline, and challenges not the power, but the conscience of its opponents.

In 1955, a tired seamstress named Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up a seat on a segregated Montgomery, Alabama, bus. Montgomery's Black citizens rose up in boycott. A young minister named Martin Luther King, Jr. was asked to lead the effort.

Thrust into leadership, King thought back to the Sermon on the Mount and Gandhi's nonviolent resistance. "This principle," he later wrote, "became the guiding light of our movement. Christ furnished the spirit...while Gandhi furnished the method." King's leadership and Gandhi's philosophy carried the movement far beyond the bus routes of Montgomery, challenging and ultimately transforming America.

The work of Gandhi and King is one end of a chain that began a century ago. And from it, we are reminded that the work we do now has the power to enrich the lives of people not yet born and to shape a history we may never see. Our work will not be in vain.

And our work is not yet done.

Even though Nelson Mandela now leads South Africa, our hard work is not yet done.

Even though India is independent and free, our work is not yet done.

Even though African Americans have gained legal equality in my own nation, our work is not yet done.

Because until every person has a true opportunity to achieve economic dignity; until racism and caste hatred and religious intolerance are eliminated from all our lands; until the promise of human rights enshrined in both our constitutions is realized, our work is not yet done.

It is good that we begin this mission at this site, on this occasion. That before we meet with government ministers and captains of industry, we remember the work of an American Baptist minister and an Indian visionary.

Their struggle was not only for legal rights, but for economic opportunity. Gandhi wrote, "I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist." King preached that the struggle for salvation in the next life should not diminish our fight for dignity and a measure of security in this one. And we all understand that a broadly prosperous society more easily transcends the envy and bitterness that often underlie the hatred that took the lives of the two men we honor.

This mission is founded upon the idea that commerce between our nations has the potential to elevate the fortunes of millions of people. That we can speed growth and the spread of prosperity to India's needy. That we can create jobs for Americans struggling to make ends meet in a changing world. And that in doing these things we can create not just a more affluent society, but a better society: more just, more tolerant, more inclusive.

There are those who see heroes martyred and dreams deferred -- and turn inward or give up. But, as Gandhi said, "In the midst of death, life persists, in the midst of untruth, truth persists, in the midst of darkness, light persists."

As we seek to bring our nations in all their greatness and diversity to a better place, let us recall a prayer written three thousand years ago:

"May he protect us both. May he take pleasure in us both. May we show courage together. May spiritual knowledge shine before us. May we never hate one another. May peace and peace and peace be everywhere."

(Begin Q&A)

Q: What are the issues that you will be discussing with Prime Minister Rao and his cabinet colleagues?

A: We'll be discussing a whole series of issues that are related to our bilateral relationship. Obviously, the focus of this mission is commerce, trade and investment, but also, obviously, we're seeking to build a stronger bilateral relationship. As far as the commercial issues, we are determined to enhance the commercial, the trade, the investment, and the economic relationship between our two countries. We are confident that by so doing that we will be able to improve the lives of the people of both of our countries. We've been very impressed with the economic reform that has been undertaken in India since 1991. It is one of the reasons that such a large number of Chief Executive Officers of American companies wanted to accompany us on this mission to explore commercial opportunities, to seek joint venture

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partners and to seek this enhancement of the commercial relationship between India and the United States.

Q: If you had to tell Americans what Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi had in common, what would you say in short?

A: They were men who were committed to non-violence. They were committed to profound change in India and the United States and in fact, all over the globe. They were men who dedicated their lives to the basic principles which governed their very being. And we can feel their presence today. Not only here at this cremation site, but everywhere in the world where change abounds, where oppression is being overcome, where human dignity is being restored.

(End Q&A)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Schedule Proposal

WASHINGTON

date ____/____/____

 ACCEPT REGRET PENDING

TO: Billy Webster
Director of Scheduling and Advance

FROM: Anthony Lake

REQUEST Presidential Participation in
Mahatma Gandhi's 125th Birth
Anniversary Function

PURPOSE: To honor the 125 Birth Anniversary
of Mahatma Gandhi

BACKGROUND: The Government of India has invited
President Clinton to participate in
a one hour ceremony commemorating
the 125th anniversary of the birth
of Mahatma Gandhi. President
Clinton and the First Lady would be
the sole guests of honor at the
ceremony.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION: None

DATE AND TIME: April: 24, 25, 26
May: 1, 2, 3, 12, 29, 30, 31
June: 5, 6, 12, 13
July: 10, 11, 17, 18

BRIEFING TIME: 15 Minutes

DURATION: One Hour

LOCATION: To be determined

PARTICIPANTS: The President and the First Lady

OUTLINE OF EVENTS: To be determined

REMARKS REQUIRED: To be provided by NSC

MEDIA COVERAGE: Open photo

FIRST LADY'S ATTENDANCE: Yes

VICE PRESIDENT'S ATTENDANCE: No

cc: Stephanie Streett

RECOMMENDED BY:

Department of State, Department
of Commerce and NSC

CONTACT:

Martin Indyk, extension 69121

ORIGIN OF THIS PROPOSAL:

Department of State

SECOND LADY'S ATTENDANCE:

No

EVENTS MESSAGE FORM

Event: Mahatma Gandhi Commemorative Event

Date of Event: To be determine

Event Coordinator: _____

Lead Advance: _____

Deadline: _____

Mark Gearan's Initials: _____

Billy Webster's Initials: _____

DESIRED "HEADLINE":

President Honors Gandhi and Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts

MESSAGE THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL CONVEY:

U.S. and India have shared cultural values.

DESIRED VISUAL FOR EVENT:

President with Indian Americans.

DESIRED AUDIENCE AT SITE:

Indian-Americans, diplomatic community, African Americans, civil rights, and human rights community.

CONCISE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "WHY ARE WE DOING THIS EVENT?"

To underscore cultural bonds between Gandhi and U.S. civil rights movement, to strengthen U.S.-Indian relations.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

February 13, 1995

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ANDREW SENS

THROUGH:

MARTIN *GLDYK*

FROM:

ELLEN LAIPSON *EL*

SUBJECT: Schedule Proposal for Gandhi Commemorative

We still support presidential participation in a Gandhi commemorative event (log 0867 - see Tab C). We think it has domestic as well as foreign policy merit, and enclose the speech Commerce Secretary Brown gave last month at the Gandhi cremation site in Delhi identifying Gandhi as a major inspiration to the American civil rights movement. This linkage provides an added dimension to an event that would also underscore the growing ties between India and the United States. Secretary Brown personally promised the Indians that he would urge approval of the President's participation in an event in Washington.

RECOMMENDATION

That you forward the attached memo to Melanne Verveer and Alexis Herman.

Approve ✓ Disapprove

Attachment

Tab ~~A~~ Memo to Verveer and Herman

Tab B Brown's Remarks on Gandhi and Martin Luther King

Tab C Scheduling Proposal

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MARKER
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