



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon William Hague MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

13 January 2014

Our Ref: JA/RM/05140006 (Please Quote in all Correspondence)

Dear William,

Re: 1984 Indian Army Storming of Golden Temple

It has come to my attention that the British Government under Margaret Thatcher advised the Indian Government on its storming of the Golden Temple in 1984.

In Cabinet papers now made public under the 30 year rule, there is documentary evidence from the then Principal Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary, Brian J P Fall, stating that:

“The Indian authorities recently sought British advice over a plan to remove Sikh extremists from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The Foreign Secretary decided to respond favourably to the Indian request and, with the Prime Minister’s agreement, an SAD [sic] officer has visited India and drawn up a plan which has been approved by Mrs Gandhi. The Foreign Secretary believes that the Indian Government may put the plan into operation shortly.”

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office documents then go on to advise the Home Office on how to deal with “tension in the Indian community here, particularly if knowledge of the SAS involvement were to become public.”

In light of this evidence, I should be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

What / ...



- What was the involvement of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in advising the Indian Government on its plan to storm the Golden Temple?
- What was the involvement of the British Prime Minister and her Office in advising the Indian Government on its plan to storm the Golden Temple?
- What are the details of the plan devised by the SAS officer in question, and were they the final plans for Operation Blue Star?
- What advice did the Foreign and Commonwealth Office give to the Home Office in quelling potential Indian unrest in Britain as a result of this plan?
- What plans did the Home Office have in place to quell potential Indian unrest as a result of Operation Blue Star?

Official Indian figures state that roughly 400 people were killed during the attack, but Sikh groups dispute this figure. According to some sources, thousands of people died during the attack, including pilgrims who were there to celebrate an important Sikh festival (the death anniversary of the fifth guru, Arjan Dev Ji).

As new evidence has come to light, and given the historical legacy of Operation Blue Star, it is only reasonable that the British Government provide answers on its role in the affairs of 1984.

I would be grateful if you could answer my questions, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wish

Jonathan Ashworth
Member of Parliament for Leicester South