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LETTER TO THE HONOURABLE ROBERT KAPLAN

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, has sent the following letter, with its attachment, to the Honourable Robert Kaplan, Member of Parliament for York-Centre concerning Mr. Balkar Singh:

"Dear Bob:

I was surprised to learn, through the press, of your September 19 letter to me, concerning Mr. Balkar Singh. Publicity stunts like that might gain you notoriety - they do not help Mr. Balkar Singh. I would have expected a former Solicitor-General to have been more sensitive to the plight of a Canadian in jail abroad.

Since the first days following Mr. Singh's arrest I have been personally involved in resolving this case. Enclosed you will find a list of interventions on behalf of Mr. Singh by me and my officials. As you noted in your letter my statement in the House of Commons in November, 1987 made public the fact that Mr. Singh had been mistreated and conveyed the outrage of the Canadian government to the government of India. Canadian officials have since visited Mr. Singh in jail, he has had regular visits from members of his family and he has been in direct touch with his lawyer. As well, Mr. Singh informed Canadian officials that he has seen prison doctors on an ongoing basis.

Your penchant for headlines could make it more difficult to help Mr. Singh, at this sensitive stage. If you are prepared, as a Privy Councillor, to respect a confidential briefing, I would be willing to have my officials brief you confidentially on the present status of this case.

Yours sincerely,"

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada