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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 October 1984

Indo-British Colloquium

Thank you for your letter of 4 October about the foundation of the Indo-British Colloquium. The Prime Minister agrees that the Indian Government should be told that Sir Donald Maitland is her personal nomination as coordinator of the British side in the Colloquium.

(C.D. POWELL)

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Prime Minister
Agree to tell to
Indians that Donald
Maitland is your
personal nominee to
lead the British side
of the IBC?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 October 1984

Sir Charles, CDP 4/2. Yes

Indo-British Colloquium (IBC)

We have been trying for some time to establish a forum on Koenigswinter lines in which members of the Indian and British establishments could exchange ideas and establish contacts with each other. This would be a useful adjunct to our bilateral relationship and would help to expose Indian policy-makers to British views on international issues, on which the Indian Government's stand is often unhelpful.

An earlier forum, the Indo-British Exchange (IBE), fell foul of Mrs Gandhi on her return to power in 1980, when she decided that the opposition was over-represented on the Indian IBE team. Mrs Gandhi has now agreed to set up a new body to be called the Indo-British Colloquium (IBC), but has said that it should have no connection with the now defunct IBE.

Ministers here have selected Sir Donald Maitland (former Permanent Representative to the EC and PUS at the Department of Energy) as co-ordinator on the British side. The Indian co-ordinator, Mr T N Kaul, is the personal appointee of Mrs Gandhi. He is a staunch member of her Congress (I) Party and is likely to keep his team on a tight rein. Our own view is that the IBC should be independent of both governments. But it would help our team if Sir Donald Maitland's appointment had the Prime Minister's personal approval, as well as that of Sir Geoffrey Howe. Would the Prime Minister be content for us to tell the Indian Government that Sir Donald was her personal choice?

Yes
Yes ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 1AA



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