

FROM: Eldon Griffiths, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

R30/5

Dear Margaret

27th May, 1981.

You will recall that the Indo British Association would very much like you to be the Guest of Honour at their Annual Dinner, commemorating the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru. You were unable to accept their previous invitations; but following your visit to India, I have been asked by the Committee to try once again to persuade you to come, in particular since your visit to India has aroused great interest and enthusiasm among our members.

The dinner can be held on any evening that would fit into your busy schedule during either December or January. It takes place at the Royal Garden Hotel and normally attracts not less than 600 guests, mainly industrialists, bankers, businessmen and diplomats.

I am sure this would be a very appropriate occasion for you to attend, and I know that your presence would be greatly appreciated in India itself, as well as among the Indian community in Britain.

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eldon Griffiths', written over the typed name and address.



efo
1/9

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 June 1981

Dear Eldon,

Thank you for your letter of 27 May.

I am afraid I am still not in a position to give you a reply to the invitation from the Indo-British Association to be their Guest of Honour at their Annual Dinner in December or January. As I believe Caroline Stephens mentioned to you when she last wrote, this invitation is dependent on other commitments at that time and I shall not be in a position to give you a firm answer until the autumn. I appreciate that this may cause some inconvenience to the Association but hope that you and they will understand.

Yours sincerely
Margaret

Eldon Griffiths, Esq., MP.

MB

MR. ALEXANDER

Eldon Griffiths has written again about the possibility of the Prime Minister addressing the Indo-British Association in December or January. You will remember that in March we agreed that this should be brought up again in September and the acceptance was dependent on Indo-British relations later on this year. How would you like to proceed?

Ann Stephens -

ES.

I do not think we should allow ourselves to be bullied by Mr Griffiths. We have said we would come back to him in the Autumn & we will. The PA will be ~~opening~~ renaming the Bhawan's hall in September so the Indian

2 June 1981

Community are being well looked after! Ann

6/2

2 June 1981

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 27 May.

This is receiving attention and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Eldon Griffiths, Esq., M.P.

Jul

18 March 1981

Further to my conversation with your secretary this morning, I am writing to confirm that we shall be getting in touch with you again in the autumn regarding your kind invitation for the Prime Minister to be Guest Speaker at the Annual Dinner of the Indo-British Association in January 1982. Although this is an invitation Mrs. Thatcher would like to accept, it is dependent on her other commitments at that time, many of which are not negotiable. I apologise for this rather unsatisfactory reply but know that you are only too well aware of the pressures on the Prime Minister's time.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Eldon Griffiths, Esq., M.P.



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 March 1981

Agree that Caroline should
reply to the Committee Office saying
that you are U.S. sympathetic but that
we will have to look at the question again
in September to see whether it can be fitted in?

Yes not

Dear Michael,

16/3

Invitation to Prime Minister from Indo-British Association

Thank you for your letter of 2 March seeking our advice on whether the Prime Minister should accept an invitation to be a Guest Speaker at the Indo-British Association's annual dinner in January 1982. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary advises that the Prime Minister should reply to the Association to the effect that she hopes to be able to do this but will not be able to enter any firm commitment until later this year.

It may well prove to be a good idea for the Prime Minister eventually to accept this invitation. But in view of some uncertainty about how Indo/British relations will develop during the remainder of this year we think it would be wise not to enter into a definite commitment now.

The Prime Minister's visit to India will of course be a significant demonstration of British interest in India. Mrs Gandhi attaches considerable importance to it. There is scope for productive discussions on political issues. The visit could result in a number of specific agreements of real value to British industry. Our aim is to have a package of commercial arrangements ready for endorsement by the two Prime Ministers in mid-April.

But experience shows that the relationship with India is a somewhat delicate plant. The Indians are displaying marked sensitivity about a range of immigration/nationality questions. They are also always liable to take offence at reports about India in the British media. There are a number of international issues (eg Soviet behaviour, Afghanistan, the Indian Ocean) where we do not see eye to eye with them. We also need to bear in mind the unpredictability of internal developments in India. While we have no reason to doubt that India will remain stable throughout the rest of this year there is always the risk of a sudden deterioration, which could affect relations with Britain.

The Indo/British Association is potentially a useful instrument in bilateral relations but in recent years its
/activities



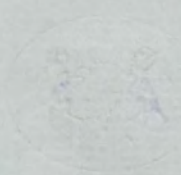
activities have been largely confined to an annual dinner and its influence is at present limited. The 1980 dinner, when Lord Carrington was a guest speaker, was not well organised. There was uncertainty until very close to the event as to who the visiting Indian Minister and the other guest speakers would be. In the event there were no less than seven speeches, including speeches by the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Peter Shore, which made for an unduly long evening. If the Prime Minister were to accept an invitation you may think we would want to ensure that the evening was better organised.

Nevertheless, we wish to encourage the Association. Its Chairman is Mr Swarj Paul, a close associate of Mrs Gandhi. The Association is now making an effort to find premises (it has none at present) and to expand its membership and activities. We therefore think we may well wish to advise later in the year that Mrs Thatcher accept the invitation but for the reasons given above we suggest that a decision be taken later.

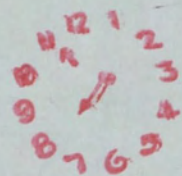
Yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street



11 MAR 1981





Ch

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 Marc h 1981

The Prime Minister has received an invitation from the Indo-British Association to be Guest Speaker at their Annual Dinner. The original date was for November which she is unable to do but Eldon Griffiths, MP, the founder of the Association has come back to us to suggest January, 1982.

Michael Alexander thinks it would be quite a good idea for the Prime Minister to accept and I would be grateful for advice from the Foreign Office. Could this please reach us by Friday, 13 March.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

D Neilands, Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

ss

2 March, 1981

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 27 February. This is receiving attention and you will be sent a reply as soon as possible.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Eldon Griffiths, Esq, MP

FROM: Eldon Griffiths, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PB
Wear Margaret

12/8/81
27th February, 1981.

Indo-British Association

It was very kind of you to say that you would have liked to accept the Association's invitation to be Guest Speaker at their Annual Dinner, and entirely understood that November is impossible in the light of the three other major speeches you are already committed to in that month.

However, in view of your visit to India, and the possibility that Mrs. Gandhi may come here the following spring, my Committee have asked me to approach you again on the basis of our changing the date of our dinner in the hope of its being made convenient for you to attend.

May I enquire if you would be able to do this on any evening during the first two weeks of December 1981, or in the second half of January 1982?

I am sure this would be an appropriate platform, and your presence would not

Continued.



VLS
19/2

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 February 1981

Thank you for your letter of 17 February.

I am extremely grateful to the Indo British Association for inviting me to be the Guest Speaker at their Annual Dinner in November, but, alas, I am not able to accept. As I am visiting India in April this is an invitation I would like to have been able to accept but unfortunately I am now committed to three major speeches already that month, and feel unable to take on anything more of this sort of significance.

I am so sorry.

(Sgd) Margaret Thatcher

Eldon Griffiths, Esq., M.P.



10 DOWNING STREET

~~Mr Alexander.~~

Advice —

Regret I hope
Neville is bad.

C.P.

Regret.

Ant

FROM: Eldon Griffiths, M.P.



R19

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Wend Margaret

17th February, 1981.

The Indo-British Association will be holding its Annual Dinner in November, and as Chairman I have been asked to find out if you could possibly be our Guest Speaker. This would be a very appropriate gesture to all those who invest, trade and are otherwise associated with India, particularly as you are visiting New Delhi this April.

The Indo British Association was founded by Swraj Paul and myself with the strong support of Mrs. Gandhi. Our previous speakers have been Mrs. Gandhi herself, Peter Carrington, Reggie Maudling, Michael Foot and Peter Shore.

We will arrange any date in November to suit your convenience.

It is an entirely suitable occasion and a ideal platform, well reported in

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P. India and
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1. *among the Asian
Community in this
country.*

c.c. Mr. Swraj Paul.

Eldon Griffiths