



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 November 1984

Dear Nagat,

Thank you so much for your letter of 15 November. It was very good to hear from you again.

The memory of that night in Brighton will never leave us. Denis and I were so fortunate to escape injury, although of course our thankfulness is mingled with sorrow at the suffering of dear friends. The past few weeks have been difficult ones, but we must carry on, and letters like yours have been a great comfort.

I did indeed receive your teletmessage about overseas aid. I believe, though, that our position on this has deliberately been misrepresented by some of our critics. Total provision for expenditure by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office next year has not been cut: the figure we published this month is exactly the same as the figure we published last February. Moreover, Geoffrey Howe made clear in the House of Commons on 22 November that the specific provision for overseas aid within this total would also remain unchanged, at £1,130 million in 1985/86. He added:

"I hope that it is clear from what I have said that within that figure our capacity to provide emergency assistance to Ethiopia and other countries suffering from drought and famine will be fully maintained."

I hope you find this completely reassuring. I am so glad you wrote and I was delighted to have all your family news.

In haste

Your

Margaret

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Mrs. Margaret Wickstead