

SUBJECT.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 April, 1981

Mrs Avital Shcharansky called on the Prime Minister this afternoon as arranged. She was accompanied by Lord Bethell. The larger part of the discussion was taken up with a description by Mrs Shcharansky of the conditions in which her husband is being held. These will be familiar to you. Mrs Shcharansky confirmed that her husband's health was deteriorating.

Mrs Shcharansky asked for the Prime Minister's public support for her case. The Prime Minister said that she doubted whether it would be helpful to Mrs Shcharansky if she were actively to pursue her husband's case in public. Government representatives regularly argued the case of the dissidents in private. We had, for instance, been doing so in Madrid. As regards the public aspect, what mattered was that the Prime Minister and other political leaders, should be seen to be taking an interest in the case and to be "keeping an eye on things". This was the most effective means of restraining the Soviet authorities from extreme actions. That objective had been achieved by the fact that Mrs Shcharansky had called at No.10.

At the end of the meeting, Mrs Shcharansky was photographed together with the Prime Minister at the front door here.

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