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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 December 1981

Dear John,

Dr Andrei Sakharov

As you know Dr Sakharov and his wife began a hunger strike two weeks ago to protest at the Soviet authorities' refusal to allow Lisa Alexeyeva, who was married by proxy in June under United States law to Mrs Sakharov's son by a previous marriage, to emigrate to the United States to join her husband. The Soviet press carried a lengthy attack on Dr Sakharov and his family on 5 December, together with a statement that they have been hospitalised for what was described as 'prophylactic medical assistance'. This has been interpreted by the press as forced feeding, but may be less severe.

We have made our views on the Soviet treatment of Dr Sakharov plain since his exile to Gorky in January 1980. Mr Luce called in the then Soviet Ambassador on 22 January 1980 to protest at the Soviet action, and the Italian Presidency made a demarche in Moscow. We, and other Western Governments, have repeatedly drawn attention to Dr Sakharov's confinement in Gorky, for example at the Madrid CSCE Review Meeting, where the Dutch Presidency made a statement on behalf of the Nine on the occasion of Dr Sakharov's 60th birthday in May of this year. Lord Trefgarne raised the general question of the Soviet human rights record at a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador on 23 November, referring in passing to Dr Sakharov, whose hunger strike had just begun. The following day Lord Trefgarne saw Mrs Dina Beilin, a former refusenik and friend of the Sakharovs, and pledged the Government's continued support for Dr Sakharov and his family.

We have taken further action since the reports over the weekend of the Sakharovs' hospitalisation and the Soviet refusal to allow Lisa Alexeyeva to visit them in Gorky. The FCO News Department made the enclosed statement on the record on 7 December. Lord Trefgarne gave an interview to the BBC's 'World at One' on 7 December in which he expressed the Government's concern at recent developments, with particular reference to the Soviet authorities failure to honour their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act.

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Recent developments in Dr Sakharov's case may be raised during Prime Minister's Question Time tomorrow afternoon. I enclose a Line to Take and Notes for Supplementaries, together with a Background Note.

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The Eastern European Working Group of the Ten today discussed a possible statement to be issued at the close of the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels tomorrow. I enclose a COREU telegram reporting their conclusions. You will see that certain delegations suggested that the text of any statement should be conveyed formally to the Russians by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Presidency, in a letter to President Brezhnev. The British delegation reserved our position on this, and the COREU telegram therefore refers only to transmission "at a suitably high level". Subject to the views of the Prime Minister and of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary (whom we are consulting in Brussels), FCO officials consider that the most appropriate level would be for the message to be conveyed in Lord Carrington's name, probably by means of inviting the Soviet Ambassador to call on another FCO Minister later this week.

Yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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ON THE RECORD STATEMENT BY FCO NEWS DEPARTMENT, 7 DECEMBER 1981

Dr Sakharov and his wife began a hunger strike two weeks ago intended to persuade the Soviet authorities to allow his step-daughter-in-law, Miss Lisa Alexeyeva, to join her husband (whom she had married by proxy) in the United States. We deplore the circumstances which drove Dr and Mrs Sakharov to this action. The treatment of Dr Sakharov demonstrates the callous disregard of the Soviet Government for the commitments which they undertook in signing the Helsinki Final Act. It also undermines confidence in the CSCE process.

The Government have been deeply disturbed by the news that the Soviet authorities have placed Dr and Mrs Sakharov under compulsory medical care and that Miss Alexeyeva has been prevented from visiting them.

We urge the Soviet authorities to allow Miss Alexeyeva to join her husband and to restore to Dr Sakharov and his wife the freedoms to which they and all their fellow citizens have a right.

ANDREI SAKHAROV

1. Born 1921. Outstanding nuclear physicist, member of the USSR Academy of Science, winner of 1975 Nobel Peace Prize. Increasingly active in defence of human rights from 1970, when he helped to found a Human Rights Committee. Subjected to increasing harassment and vilification; in January 1980 stripped of his Soviet awards and illegally banished to the closed city of Gorky following his criticism of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

2. Lives in virtual isolation in Gorky. His flat is under constant surveillance by the KGB; he is not allowed contact with foreigners or representatives of the foreign press; his mail has also been interfered with.

3. On 22 November, Dr Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner, began a hunger strike in protest at the refusal of the Soviet authorities to grant an exit visa to Lisa Alexeyeva, his step daughter-in-law, to join her husband in the United States. Miss Alexeyeva's husband is Mrs Bonner's son by a previous marriage and the couple were married by proxy in June under US law.

4. Dr and Mrs Sakharov were taken to hospital in Gorky on 5 December for compulsory medical care. Dr Sakharov has a heart condition. Miss Alexeyeva has been prevented from visiting the Sakharovs in hospital.

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME: TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER

DR ANDREI SAKHAROV

Line to Take

1. I deplore the circumstances which drove Dr and Mrs Sakharov to go on hunger strike. I am disturbed by the recent reports that the Sakharovs have been placed under compulsory medical care and that Miss Alexeyeva has been prevented from visiting them in Gorky.
2. The actions of the Soviet authorities demonstrate a blatant disregard for their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act. This can only undermine confidence in the CSCE process. I urge the Soviet authorities to allow Miss Alexeyeva to join her husband in the United States and to restore to Dr Sakharov and his wife the freedoms of which they have been deprived.



NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

WHAT CAN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DO?

1. We have made our views on Dr Sakharov's case quite plain, and, together with our partners, will continue to do so. Human rights such as the freedom of movement and of political conscience and expression are inextinguishable. The sooner the Soviet government realises this and starts to live up to its international commitments, the more likely it is that the international confidence on which East/West relations depends might be restored.

ACTION BY THE TEN

2. We are obviously in close touch with our Partners in the Ten on the latest developments in Dr Sakharov's case and shall be considering where there is any more we can do. The position of the Ten on this case and on the many other cases of Soviet human rights violations is quite clear.

HAVE WE CALLED IN THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ?

3. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office saw the Soviet Ambassador on 23 November, shortly after the Sakharov's hunger strike began. He made clear the British Government's continued concern over the Soviet human rights performance.

OUT COREU TELEGRAM

Classification
DIFFUSION RESTREINTE

Precedence
IMMEDIAT

ZCZC 1 ZCZC
FM LDN C 2 FROM LONDON COREU
TO*C Pre 3 TO ALL COREU IMMEDIAT
INFO*Pre 4
CPE*ETR 5 CPE/MUL/ETR
DATETIME 6
CLASS 7 DIFFUSION RESTREINTE
DISTN 8 DISTRIBUTION GENERALE

9 ACADEMICIAN ANDREI SAKHAROV

10 1. The Eastern European Working Group discussed recent develop-
11 ments concerning Dr Sakharov this afternoon. The Presidency
12 proposed that there should be a common expression of the views
13 of the Ten concerning Dr Sakharov's hunger strike and his
14 hospitalisation by the Soviet authorities. In the Presidency's
15 view, the most convenient way of implementing this would be for
16 a joint statement to issue following the Foreign Affairs Council
17 in Brussels tomorrow, 8 December. Other delegations also
18 proposed that the text should be conveyed by the British Prime
19 Minister on behalf of the Presidency in a letter to President
20 Brezhnev, and that the text ^{sh} would ~~also~~ be referred to by the
21 Presidency at the Madrid CSCE Review Meeting. Each delegation,
22 speaking personally and ad referendum, agreed to recommend the
23 following to their authorities:

24 a) that there should be a common expression of the Ten's
25 views, if possible in the form of a declaration to issue

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File number	Dept EESD	Distribution
Drafted by (Block capitals) N SHEINWALD		
Telephone number		
Authorised for despatch		
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		EEC Embassies

OUT COREU TELEGRAM (CONT)

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 2 following the Foreign Affairs Council SEMI COLON
 3 b) that this statement should be used by the Presidency as
 4 appropriate in Madrid,
 5 AND
 6 c) that the Presidency should convey the statement at a
 7 suitably high level to the Soviet authorities, bearing in mind
 8 comments received from partners.
 9 2. The text recommended by the Eastern European Working Group
 10 is as follows:
 11 "DR SAKHAROV
 12 The Foreign Ministers of the ten member states of the European
 13 Community have been profoundly concerned by the circumstances in
 14 which Dr and Mrs Sakharov were driven to go on hunger strike in
 15 an attempt to persuade the Soviet authorities to allow Lisa
 16 Alexeyeva to join her husband in the United States SEMI COLON
 17 that subsequently Dr and Mrs Sakharov have been taken into
 18 hospital SEMI COLON and that Lisa Alexeyeva has been prevented
 19 from visiting them there.
 20 "The Foreign Ministers urge the Soviet Government, in accordance
 21 with the principles and provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, to
 22 take a humanitarian approach to this problem. The continued
 23 refusal to grant Lisa Alexeyeva permission to travel to the
 24 United States, on top of the refusal to permit Dr and Mrs
 25 Sakharov to return to a normal life, further impairs the climate
 26 of confidence on which an improvement in East/West relations
 27 depends."
 28 3. The Presidency would be grateful for comments by 1100 hours
 29 London time tomorrow, 8 December. The Presidency will also be
 30 circulating this draft text to Foreign Ministers' parties in
 31 Brussels.
 32
 33 FIN DE TEXTE
 34 NNNN

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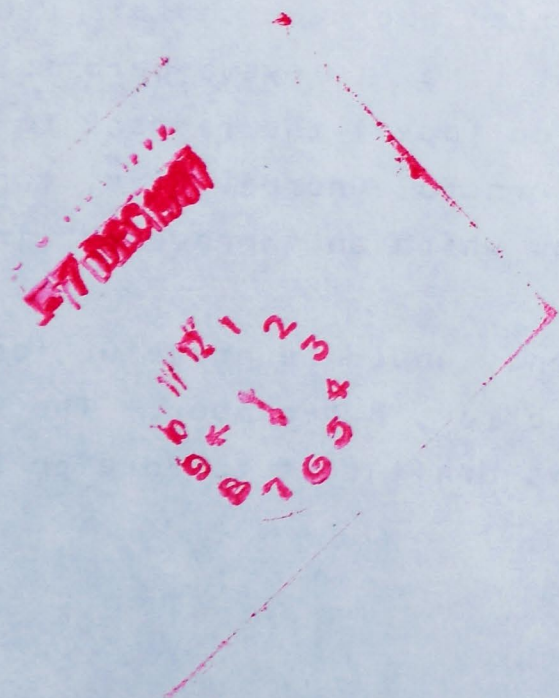
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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Sakharov

Agree that the Tsar's views
should be conveyed by an F./C.O.
Minister to the Soviet Ambassador?

Yes
A.S.C. 7.
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Sar Uwa

8 December 1981

Dr. Andrei Sakharov

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 7 December and takes the view that it would be best for any message from the Ten to the Soviet Government to be conveyed by the FCO Minister to the Soviet Ambassador.

A. J. COLES

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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