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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. 98c/83

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 2, 1983

Dear Margaret:

I have asked Ambassador Walter Stoessel to make a special trip to several countries in Europe to let you know of my concern about the human rights situation in the Soviet Union. The situation concerns me because of the importance I attach to the Helsinki Final Act commitments, because of the terrible costs that are being paid by individual human beings, and because our overall relationship with the Soviets is seriously affected by human rights violations. Our Western countries have been working hard to find ways of dealing with the Soviet Union that enhance the chances for peace. Arms reduction negotiations are naturally a major focus of this effort. But I am convinced that human rights must be another, and for that reason we give it a central role in our discussions with the Soviets.

In some cases our talks with the Soviets have made us hopeful that progress is possible. Yet, at the same time, Soviet performance on human rights has deteriorated badly in several specific areas; one manifestation of this is the drastic cutback in the number of Jews and other Soviet minority groups permitted to emigrate. There is also evidence that a renewed anti-Semitic campaign is underway. The current repression of human rights points to a decision to eliminate ties between the Soviet people and the outside world that are not under the complete control of the authorities. This includes jamming of Western broadcasts, cutbacks in international telephone service, harassment of Western tourists who seek contact with Soviet citizens and the continued campaign of arrest and imprisonment of Soviets who express

ideas not in keeping with official policy. Andrei Sakharov's exile to Gorkiy, the elimination of his direct contact with the outside world, and the difficulties his wife has experienced in Moscow symbolize this intensified atmosphere of repression.

I have, therefore, asked Ambassador Stoessel to give you our thoughts and to hear yours on how we might most effectively deal with the Soviets on this vital issue. He has an especially distinguished record of professional involvement in Soviet affairs, and no one is better qualified as an interlocutor. Ambassador Stoessel has my full confidence, and I know he will be worthy of yours.

Sincerely,

Ron

The Right Honorable
Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
London