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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

1 April 1987

Dear Mrs. Pylyshova,

I am taking the opportunity of my visit to Moscow to reply to the letter which you have written to me and which was published in Izvestia on 27 March.

I am glad that you have written so frankly. I think it important that the peoples of East and West should understand each other's point of view clearly.

I agree wholeheartedly with much that you say in your letter. It is indeed the business of Governments to help to create a better life for their people in peace, security and freedom and in a healthy and prosperous environment. I know that this is the aim of the present Soviet leadership as it is the aim of the Government which I lead. The discussions which I am having this week in Moscow are precisely directed at these objectives and at, as you put it, a warming of international relations and in particular Anglo/Soviet relations. Although it would be wrong to expect too much too quickly, I think that the Soviet leadership and I have made progress along the right road.

I am disturbed, however, at what you say about the United States. I know the American people and their Government well. There is certainly no question of the US "aspiring to war" or thinking of "dropping their stockpile of nuclear weapons on the heads of humanity". We in the West want peace, and a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship with the Soviet Union. The

arms race about which you write so critically has come into being, not because of the ill-will of one side or the other but because of a tragic lack of trust and confidence between us. We must now work carefully and methodically to build that trust and that confidence and to ensure that at each stage the security of both sides is maintained at a steadily reducing level of armaments. I am working for achievable step by step progress, and I hope that as our dialogue with the Soviet leadership develops we shall have the support of the Soviet people, as we work towards those goals which you and I clearly share.

Thank you for writing to me. I send you my best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dalida

Mrs. Margarita Pylchikova