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CONFIDENTIAL FIUNG

Visits to the United Kingdom by
Dr Andrei Sakharov.

SOVIET UNION

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April 1989

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
5-5-89 5/6/89 23-6-89							



Series closed

PREM 19/2870

SUBJECT cc MASTER



File
Call

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

23 June 1989

From the Private Secretary

Dear Richard,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH DR. SAKHAROV

The Prime Minister had a talk this afternoon with Dr. Sakharov who was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Bonner. The Prime Minister took the opportunity to thank Dr Sakharov for his message about China.

The Prime Minister recalled their last meeting in Washington in November. She noted that enormous political changes had taken place in the Soviet Union since then, but that economic reform was taking much longer to come through.

Dr. Sakharov said that even on the political front the position was not clear. No-one knew where political reform would lead. But he was sure of one thing: without further political changes, economic reform was simply not possible. The so-called new leadership and ministerial structure were in practice exactly the same as before. Agricultural reform would not work until a right of ownership was recognised and the whole rural system was liberated from party and state influence. The transfer of land to peasants would simply not happen under the present political arrangements. The result was that the Ligachev programme remained in place, propping up an untenable system. Collective farms remained a massive burden on the back of the rest of the agricultural sector and no real growth was possible. The Prime Minister commented that Gorbachev's plan for leases was meeting a poor response. Dr. Sakharov said this was because collective farms would offer the worst land, and were exploitative landlords. But the real reason was the absence of any political guarantee that the system would last. The Prime Minister said that she agreed that political freedom had to be backed up by private property.

Dr. Sakharov continued that the situation in industry was no better. Unless a centralised system of management was eliminated, there would be no improvement in production. Overall, a whole host of internal stresses were piling up and the economic system was falling apart: the old one was more and more ineffective and the new one was not yet in place. There was a vast budget deficit. Soviet economists were not arguing whether there would be an economic catastrophe, only when it would happen. Social, ecological

and nationality problems had been added on top of these other difficulties. There had been terrible events in Uzbekistan as well as in Kazakhstan and Northern Georgia. There was a general falling off of trust in the leadership. The massive vote for Yeltsin was not an expression of trust in him but of lack of trust in Gorbachev. Gorbachev's personal popularity had fallen substantially. All in all there was an extremely tense and dangerous situation. It was simply impossible to be sure which way the country would go. It was a time of great uncertainty.

Dr. Sakharov said that he could see this was a difficult situation for the West. They did not want the Soviet system to collapse altogether. On the other hand Western policies should not be such as to remove all incentive for further political change. His own conclusion was that the cautious policy pursued by the United Kingdom was much more appropriate than the euphoria of West Germany.

The Prime Minister reiterated that she supported what Mr. Gorbachev was trying to do in the Soviet Union. She was increasingly impressed by the scale of the difficulties facing him, particularly on economic reform. People simply had no experience of enterprise or management. Dr. Sakharov said the problem was not so much inexperience. The economists knew what had to be done. But their views could not be implemented under the present political set up. Mrs. Bonner said that she was not quite so pessimistic as her husband. The Congress of People's Deputies had been a vast school of political education. She did not know what would happen to the Soviet Union, but did not believe the Russian people would be driven back into the old ways of the Stalin era. Dr. Sakharov said that the people were indeed more politically active than he had ever imagined. There was a real desire to influence the fate of their country. The problem did not lie with the people it lay with the authorities. The situation was not as dramatically etched as in China, but there were elements of that kind of danger. The Prime Minister asked whether there were as many hard liners as in China. Dr. Sakharov said that he feared there were precisely the same kind of reactionary forces as had been seen there. That was another reason why it was so difficult to predict the course events would take.

The Prime Minister said that we should not talk ourselves into being too pessimistic. Dr. Sakharov said he was not a pessimist (!). But it was very important for the West to take a sober view of prospects in the Soviet Union. If he inclined towards pessimism in describing the situation, it was because he was worried about the euphoria in some western countries, above all West Germany.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Your sincerely
Charles Powell *CP*

Richard Gozney Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH DR. SAKHAROV AND MRS. BONNER

You are seeing Dr. Sakharov and his wife briefly tomorrow afternoon. He is over here to receive honorary degrees from Oxford and Sussex. He has also visited a number of laboratories including the Rutherford Apppleton at Didcot, lunched with the Royal Society and given a speech at Chatham House.

You will recall that your last meeting with him was in Washington in November 1988. A note of that meeting is in the folder.

Sakharov has become increasingly pessimistic about Gorbachev's prospects, talking of the risk of a military coup d'etat. He also made himself very unpopular at the recent Congress of People's Deputies by accusing the Soviet Army of genocide in Afghanistan: he was roundly booed and forced to leave the podium. He has said publicly that you are right to be cautious about developments in the Soviet Union. The Russians are showing sensitivity to his activities over here, and are a little anxious about your meeting with him in the current delicate state of relations.

You will obviously want to ask for his views on developments in the Soviet Union and the prospects for progress towards democracy. In particular it would be interesting to know how he sees the role of the Congress and whether it will really act as a parliament and be able to restrain the executive. You might also ask how he thinks we can best support the emergence of democratic institutions in the Soviet Union. It would be interesting, too, to hear his views on the human rights situation. In anything you say, I think it is important to reiterate your support for perestroika and what Gorbachev is doing within the Soviet Union.

Another area which you might explore is the role of the military and the extent to which he feels Gorbachev is sincere in his arms control initiatives and expressed desire to reduce conventional forces. How far will the Russians go? Will they play fair?

C.D.T.

mt

(C. D. POWELL)

22 June 1989

cc PC
b-up

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 June 1989

*Jean Charles,*The Soviet Union: Call by Dr Andrei Sakharov

Dr Sakharov and his wife, Mrs Yelena Bonner, are seeing the Prime Minister at 4 pm on 23 June. They are visiting Britain from 18-25 June as FCO-sponsored visitors. The main purpose of the visit is for Dr Sakharov to receive honorary degrees from the universities of Sussex and Oxford. A copy of the programme is attached, with the main items sidelined. The Prime Minister previously met Dr Sakharov during her visit to Moscow in March 1987 and in Washington in November 1988. She also met Mrs Bonner in London in 1985. Biographical notes on Dr Sakharov and Mrs Bonner are attached.

Dr Sakharov has recently been outspoken in his criticism of Mr Gorbachev. During a speech at Chatham House on Tuesday this week, Sakharov suggested that Gorbachev's position in the Soviet Union was unstable; that there was considerable opposition to perestroika; and that Gorbachev could find himself removed by a military coup d'etat. Dr Sakharov was also reported as saying that he agreed with the caution that the Prime Minister was showing in her dealings with Gorbachev.

The Prime Minister may like to reaffirm the Government's support for perestroika: no credible alternative to pressing ahead with Mr Gorbachev's reforms has emerged. The Soviet authorities will be following Sakharov's visit closely, and any suggestion that the Government echo Sakharov's views about Gorbachev's position and the reform programme could clearly be damaging. The Russians are naturally inclined to suspect conspiracies, and at present would view anything they regarded as an official echo of Sakharov's opinions through a post-expulsion prism.

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The Prime Minister may wish to ask Sakharov about his views on progress towards democracy, in particular the central issue of the relationship between the Congress of People's Deputies and the new Supreme Soviet. So far the meeting of the Congress in late May and earlier this month has been the focus of attention. This has provided a platform for a number of remarkably outspoken speeches. It is not yet clear how the relationship between the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet will develop, and whether the Congress will become an effective constraint on the legislative functions of the Supreme Soviet and the executive decisions of the Soviet government. Although the membership of the Supreme Soviet is drawn from the Congress, the latter will only meet two or three times a year whilst the Supreme Soviet will meet in semi-permanent sessions.

Dr Sakharov's views about action that we could or should take to support and encourage the development of democratic institutions in the Soviet Union would also be interesting. We are arranging a visit by a delegation from the Supreme Soviet (probably in July or the early autumn) to study British Parliamentary procedures. This will probably be followed by a separate visit by a more senior Supreme Soviet delegation which is expected to come here in late November under IPU auspices.

The Prime Minister may like to ask Dr Sakharov and Mrs Bonner for an update on respect for human rights in the Soviet Union.

The Foreign Secretary has not seen this letter in draft. He will see a copy tonight and we shall let you know first thing in the morning if he has other comments on the meeting.

Yours ever,
Richard Gozney

(R H T Gozney)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: ANDREI SAKHAROV

Born in 1921, Sakharov graduated in physics from Moscow University, and spent 20 years working on the hydrogen bomb. Elected Academician 1953. In 1970 became founder-member of Human Rights Committee. In 1975 he was refused permission to travel to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. From January 1980 (when he openly condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) until December 1986, he was exiled to Gorky.

On return to Moscow Sakharov spoke out on human rights. He took part in official meetings attended by Gorbachev, and in 1987 he met Mrs Thatcher and M. Chirac. He resumed his scientific work at the Academy, and in October 1988 was elected to the Academy's Presidium. In October 1988 he visited Washington, his first trip abroad for 30 years. He has since visited Italy twice, and has met the Pope.

A Deputy to the new Congress of People's Deputies, Sakharov was invited by Gorbachev to be the first to speak from the floor. In his speech he said that, while he supported Gorbachev's election as President, he considered it a matter of principle that there should be more than one candidate. In the final session of the Congress Sakharov read out a 'Decree on Power' proposing inter alia the abolition of the section of the Constitution which provides for the leading role of the Party. Sakharov was not elected to the new Supreme Soviet, but is a member of the Constitutional Commission set up by the Congress.



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: MRS BONNER

Mrs Bonner is the daughter of a prominent Armenian Party leader who was executed in 1939. Her mother, who was active in the Revolution and later spent 16 years in the camps, died in 1988.

After the war Mrs Bonner trained as a doctor, but retired in 1971 on her marriage to Dr Sakharov and became increasingly involved in the dissident movement. In 1976 she became a founder member of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group. During Sakharov's exile in Gorky she travelled repeatedly to Moscow to maintain links with friends and foreigners. In 1984 she was herself exiled to Gorky.

In 1985 she was allowed to travel to the USA for heart-bypass surgery, as a result of Dr Sakharov's repeated hunger strikes. She returned to the Soviet Union in mid-1986.



ABI

JW

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

9 June 1989

DR. SAKHAROV

BF // The Prime Minister has decided on reflection that she would be willing to see Dr. Sakharov and his wife during their visit here. The best time for her would be 1700 on Wednesday 21 June. Could you please propose this to Dr. Sakharov.

(C. D. POWELL)

Richard Gozney, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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PRIME MINISTER

cc Mrs Ponsonby

DR. SAKHAROV

You should be aware that Dr. and Mrs. Sakharov will be in the United Kingdom from 17-23 June. I have not offered them a meeting this time, because you are so very busy. I assume this is right.

eDP

I assume FCS

will be seeing them?

CHARLES POWELL
5 June 1989

If they ask - not
perhaps I had
better see them
not



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 May 1989

CCPC

*(we have deleted
the attached from
our index books)
GR*

*CF
Pl. bring forward
on 5 Jul
OH*

Dear Charles,

Visit to UK by Sakharov: 17-23 June 1989

Thank you for your letter of 22 April to Richard Gozney. We were aware of Dr Sakharov's plans to come to the United Kingdom this summer, and are arranging a COI programme for him at Category I level (all expenses paid).

When the Embassy discussed the visit with the Sakharovs on 26 April, Elena Bonner specifically asked that the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary should be told about the visit and said that they would of course be happy to call on either if time allowed.

The Foreign Secretary agrees with you that there is no need for the Prime Minister to see them (unless they make a specific request). The Foreign Secretary will be ready to see them if they wish.

*Yours,
Stephen Wall*

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/No 10 Downing Street

Sir Leslie FLEWING

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me mlu

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 April 1989

See Liden.

I enclose a copy of a letter I have received from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex about a visit there in June of Dr. Sakharov. I am not aware that Dr. Sakharov has yet asked to see the Prime Minister: and she did of course meet him only last November in Washington. It would be difficult to refuse if he seeks an appointment but I do not think we need take the initiative in offering one. Are you content with this?

your mch.

CHARLES D. POWELL

Richard Gozney, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

From the Vice-Chancellor
SIR LESLIE FIELDING KCMG

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26th April 1989

Charles Powell Esq.,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, SW1.

Dear Charles,

I should perhaps let you know that Dr. Andrei Sakharov has agreed to come to the University of Sussex in June to accept an honorary doctorate; and that he will also be receiving a doctorate from Oxford while he is in the UK. The outline schedule for his visit is:

Monday 19 June	addressing a one-day Physics conference at Sussex
Tuesday 20 June	giving a talk at Chatham House
Wednesday 21 June	receiving a doctorate at Oxford
Thursday 22 June	giving a talk at Oxford
Friday 23 June	receiving his honorary doctorate at Sussex.

I thought I should mention this in case anyone at No.10 is proposing to see Dr. Sakharov. I would naturally prefer, as far as Sussex is concerned, to keep to the programme as above; but if you want to hijack him on the Friday, then we could at a pinch confer his degree on the day he is giving his Physics lecture here.

*Yours Ever
Leslie*

Grey Scale #13



A 1 2 3 4 5 6 **M** 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 **B** 17 18 19



Inches 1 2 3

Centimetres 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Colour Chart #13

Blue Cyan Green Yellow

