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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

17 November 1981

Dear Mr. Bukovsky

Thank you for your letter of 15 October about Afghanistan and for the interesting memorandum which you enclosed.

We are determined that the problems caused by Soviet military intervention shall not be forgotten by world opinion. Any solution is unacceptable which does not involve Soviet military withdrawal, freedom for the Afghan people to determine their future and satisfactory arrangements for the return of the refugees, whose plight I saw at first hand on my visit to Pakistan last month.

You draw my attention in particular to the question of Soviet defectors who are in the hands of the Resistance inside Afghanistan. I note that you have had contacts with the Red Cross about their fate. Questions of political asylum necessarily require very careful consideration. If we were approached by the Red Cross about these cases we would naturally be willing to look into the facts and decide whether we could help, although I cannot commit HMG in advance to the granting of political asylum.

I wish you and your organisation all success in your efforts to promote the human rights of the Afghan people.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

Mr. Vladimir Bukovsky