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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 May, 1983

John [unclear]

Call on the Prime Minister by Mr Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Mr Alexander Solzhenitsyn will be calling on the Prime Minister at ~~1630~~ hours tomorrow, Wednesday 11 May.

1730

Mr Solzhenitsyn is in London to receive the Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion on 10 May from HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. This was followed by a public ceremony and an address at the Guildhall earlier today. In addition, Mr Solzhenitsyn is due to lunch privately with HRH the Prince of Wales at Kensington Palace on 17 May. The Templeton Foundation is a private body, set up by a Bahama-based American millionaire of the same name. Prizes have gone in the past to such figures as Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King.

/ I enclose a biographical note. As the Prime Minister will see, Mr Solzhenitsyn has not travelled much since his arrival in the United States.

Mr Solzhenitsyn will no doubt wish to give the Prime Minister his views on the nature of Soviet society and ways in which the West might most effectively meet the Soviet ideological challenge. The Prime Minister may wish to seek his views on the likely evolution of Soviet society under Andropov. Although considerably more skilful in putting his views over to Western public opinion, we have seen no sign as yet that Andropov is prepared to make any radical departures from the policies pursued under Brezhnev. It will, however, be interesting to see how high into the reaches of the Party he is prepared to pursue his drive against corruption and inefficiency.

The Prime Minister may wish to reaffirm our stance over the Soviet human rights record. As you know, we have repeatedly raised Soviet abuses of human rights in bilateral contacts (Mr Pym called in the Soviet Ambassador on 7 February to appeal for the release of Shcharansky; Mr Rifkind repeated this request in Moscow on 26 April, and raised a number of other cases at the same time). We have also made use of the CSCE Review Meeting in Madrid and other international meetings to make the same point. —

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We understand that Mr Solzhenitsyn welcomed the decision to allow the Memorial to the Victims of Yalta to be built on Crown land in Kensington. If he criticises the attitude of Governments in the immediate post-war period, the Prime Minister may wish to say that the decision to allow the erection of the Memorial was taken in order properly to commemorate those who had died, and not to attribute blame to the policies of the Governments of the day.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R B Bone', written in a cursive style.

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON MR ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

Born 1918, Rostov-on-Don. Son of a teacher. Graduated from Rostov University in Physics and Mathematics in 1941.

From 1941 to 1945 he served as an artillery officer in the Red Army and was decorated for gallantry. In February 1945 Mr Solzhenitsyn was arrested and subsequently sentenced to 8 years hard labour for making a critical reference to Stalin in a letter. On his release in 1953 he was sentenced to 'perpetual exile' in Kazakhstan, where he remained until 1957 when he was rehabilitated in the post-Stalin 'thaw'.

With the fall of Krushchev in 1964, Mr Solzhenitsyn came under increasing pressure from the Soviet authorities and none of his work was published in the Soviet Union after that date. In 1969 he was expelled from the Soviet Writers Union. In 1970 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature but was not allowed to travel to Stockholm to collect his prize. Increasing restrictions on Solzhenitsyn's activities culminated in his arrest in 1974 and the news that he would stand trial for treason (a capital offence).

Before the trial, however, he was deprived of his Soviet citizenship and forced to leave the Soviet Union. He spent some months in West Germany and Switzerland before moving to his present home in Vermont, USA, in 1975.



Always a controversial figure, Mr Solzhenitsyn has travelled infrequently since 1974. He has criticised the West for its alleged weakness in the face of the Communist threat.

In 1981 he refused an invitation to lunch by President Reagan on the grounds that he disagreed with the political stance of the other invitees, many of whom were emigré dissidents.

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6 May 1983

The Prime Minister is going to see
Solzhenitsyn for an hour on Saturday 14 May
at 1500 hours.

Could you please provide us with a brief
to reach here by close of play on Thursday
12 May.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Ms. Alison Walters,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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