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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 March, 1984

Dear Nicholas,

In my letter of 21 February, I said that I would let you have as soon as possible a substantive reply to your letter of 15 February enclosing letters from two Soviet soldiers whom you met in Pakistan. I have also seen your letter of 16 February to Leon Brittan.

We have looked most carefully at the soldiers' application to come to the UK. As you know, we cannot give any blanket assurances in advance about the resettlement of Soviet soldiers, any more than we would for other deserving groups who may seek resettlement here. However, we are prepared on humanitarian grounds to look sympathetically at the particular applications you have lodged on behalf of Mr. Rykov and Mr. Khlan, subject to evidence being produced of sponsorship by a private organisation or individual in this country and the satisfactory outcome of an interview by an official of our Embassy in Islamabad. As you will appreciate, the question of sponsorship is particularly important in cases where the applicant has no previous connections with the UK.

It would be most helpful therefore if you could let Leon Brittan have details of the financial and practical arrangements which you would propose for sponsorship of the two soldiers. These arrangements would of course have to cover their travel to the UK as well

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as resettlement here. We would then be in a position to instruct our Embassy in Islamabad to interview the two soldiers in the same way as all applicants for resettlement to confirm that their applications were made entirely of their own free will.

I hope that progress can be made soon. In the meantime, however, I am sure you would agree that it would be best if publicity about the applications could be avoided until the results are known. Given the international implications, it could easily jeopardise our ability to help if there were premature disclosure of the applications.

Please treat this letter as replying also to your letter of 16 February to Leon Brittan.

*Yours
Raymond*

The Lord Bethell, M.E.P.