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MR POWELL

15 March 1990

SOVIET STUDIES

We spoke. I attach a copy of the report of July last year done by Norman Wooding, Bryan Cartledge and Malcolm Jones.

As you will see, the report advocates sizeable government intervention to put Soviet studies on a footing appropriate to the new era in the Soviet Union and in Soviet/British bilateral relations. New fellowships, lectureships, more Russian in state schools etc, are proposed at an overall cost of £9 million over 14 years.

The report lies with Robert Jackson in DES and has, I understand, received a negative or temporizing response, advocating as it does a line contrary to the main thrust of government policy on higher education.

There is certainly a serious problem over funding. On the other hand, there is no doubt there is a case for a boost in Soviet studies to bring our level of teaching to something like that of our allies and competitors, to take account of the new political climate and to correct the negative intervention of the Atkinson Report of 1979, which recommended the discontinuance of Russian teaching in some 19-20 universities.

I wonder whether we could not look at this report as a quarry for more limited action in connection with forthcoming visits to the Soviet Union by the Prime Minister and by members of the Royal family. On the first, it would presumably assist the Prime Minister's visit if she were able to announce that we were prepared to give some help to Soviet studies in the UK. A relatively small sum, say £1 million, would have a strong

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symbolic effect and would prime the pump. Alternatively, some gesture of this kind might be appropriate when the Prince of Wales makes his visit. I recall that when the Queen visited China in 1986 she inaugurated a number of fellowships in China-related studies.

When you have a moment to look at the report we might discuss further. The Foreign Office is wary, fearing demands on its own vote and possible similar requests to assist studies in Arabic, Chinese, etc etc. William Waldegrave, however, is enthusiastic.



PERCY CRADOCK

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