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FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

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Prime Minister

CDP 27/3

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Downing Street  
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23 March 1987

Dear Tim,

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#### SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

Thank you for your letters of 3 and 17 March in reply to mine of 18 February.

From what you, Roger Freeman and Alan Clark say, we all clearly recognise the problem that exists in Soviet and East European studies. There is no need to point out the attraction of announcing some remedial action early in April in the immediate aftermath of the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow. Subject to the views of others, I should like us to be in a position to announce a package of measures along the following lines.

First and most urgent is the need to boost the number of posts and postgraduate studentships. I hope that other departments, and particularly the MOD, will be able to help with financial support for this. I note what Roger Freeman says about the availability of MOD funds. I believe that the Prime Minister's visit presents a unique opportunity, and hope that some of these funds can be made available. To make an impact, some ten new posts will be needed costing at least £200,000. I shall take advice from the UGC and ESRC on how they should be allocated, but I envisage that they might be concentrated in one or two institutions. The ESRC have agreed to be the channel for such funding to a suitable research project or projects. They regard it as of sufficient priority to apportion up to £50,000 themselves if funds from other Government departments are also forthcoming. If the MOD is able to make a contribution, I should of course be happy for some posts to be in areas of special relevance to that Ministry, though I hope the MOD's interest can be interpreted widely enough to include studies of the Soviet economy and disarmament policy.

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Secondly, I am actively considering whether DES could set up a quick study of the present state of Soviet studies and the scope for reorganisation and concentration. This would be similar to Sir Peter Parker's study of Oriental and African Studies and might be carried out by a retired diplomat. We would have to emphasise that the study implied no additional expenditure, beyond that contemplated above. I wonder whether the FCO might be prepared to give some assistance with this study, rather as you did in the preparation of the Parker Report?

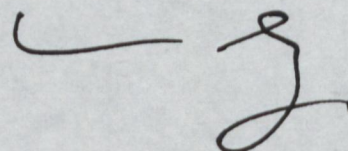
Thirdly, I am grateful for Alan Clark's undertaking to consult the Eastern European Trade Council, and should like to announce this undertaking as part of the package.

Fourthly, I am grateful to you for drawing my attention in your letter of 17 March to the financial position of students who study in the Soviet Union. As part of the package, I should like to announce my decision that, from the 1987/88 academic year, the Soviet Union should be classified as a "high-cost" country for the purposes of determining grant rates. This year it is in the "standard-cost" category but I have received representations from various sources about the special problems associated with study in the USSR and I am satisfied that there is a good case for re-classifying it. Subject to Parliament's approval of the necessary regulations later this year, students studying in the USSR as part of a degree (or comparable) course will therefore be eligible for a higher rate of grant.

Finally, we shall look for opportunities to emphasise the importance of Soviet and East European studies in Ministerial speeches and in other ways.

I should like very soon to set up a meeting to agree particularly on the first proposal and how the funds might be found. My office will be in touch with yours, Alan Clark's and Roger Freeman's about a suitable date next week.

I am sending copies of this letter to Alan Clark and Roger Freeman. A copy goes to Charles Powell at No 10 because he has asked to be kept in touch with our developing proposals.



GEORGE WALDEN



