



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

From The Minister of State

8 May 1990

In Archie,

*COB
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BRITISH DAYS IN THE USSR (KIEV, JUNE 1990)

Provisional arrangements have been made for the band of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards to take part in "British Days" on 9 and 10 June, which will coincide with the expected visit to Kiev by the Prime Minister, we hope accompanied by Mr Gorbachev. Mrs Thatcher has expressed the hope that a British military band will be present at that time.

As you are no doubt aware British Days is a month long information, cultural and trade event. It will be the largest presentation ever put on by Britain in the Soviet Union or elsewhere in Eastern Europe. We are very pleased that the Red Arrows will be performing there, for the first time in a Communist country.

However, no decision has been made about how the military band's appearance will be funded. The estimated cost is £35,000. The FCO's main contribution to British Days will take the form of an Information exhibition costing £3.4 million. In addition we are carrying the general administration and promotion costs. We are making some small subsidies to a few of the participating events but we have no budget for substantive activities on the scale of a military band. The FCO could only fund an item of this sort at the expense of a number of valuable small projects aimed at opening up relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the coming year.

I am accordingly writing to ask whether, given that British Days is an affair of Britain at large rather than simply an FCO event, and given the prestige nature of the occasion, you would see your way - exceptionally I realise - to carrying the cost of the military band's participation, or at least a substantial part of it, on MOD funds.

I am copying this letter to **Charles Powell, No 10.**

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The Rt Hon William Waldegrave

The Hon Archibald Hamilton MP
Minister of State
Ministry of Defence