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FCS/90/111

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Soviet and East European Studies

1. Thank you for your letter of 1 June.

2. We have considered further with the British Council whether they can agree to administer a scheme of lectureships in Soviet and East European studies. They remain concerned, as do we, that this will lead to pressure to continue the scheme for longer than the three years you envisage, and to agree to similar schemes in other areas. But, given the exceptional circumstances of this case, they have agreed to administer the funds you have offered us, which we will pass on by means of an increase in the FCO grant-in-aid. Their agreement is on the following basis, which I understand has been agreed between our officials.

(i) the funds have been made available to the Council by Government for a specific purpose and for a limited number of years;

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(ii) the Council will disburse the funds as they decide, making the best possible use of them to achieve the given purpose;

(iii) there can be no guarantee on the number of lectureships which can be funded;

(iv) unless you can make available extra funds for administration, the administrative costs of the scheme will come out of the money available: this will reduce the amount which can be spent on lectureships.

3. FCO and the British Council spokesmen will draw on the enclosed line in briefing the press as soon as possible after the Prime Minister has made an announcement in Moscow. My Private Secretary is in correspondence with Number 10 about this, copied to your office. As you will see, we intend to hold the line that the scheme will be funded by Government money, if necessary adding that it will be passed to the British Council through an increase in the FCO grant-in-aid. But we cannot entirely exclude the possibility of a direct question at some stage about the source of the funds. In that event we would see no alternative to confirming that it had been provided by PES transfer from the DES.

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4. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Prime Minister.

DH.

(DOUGLAS HURD)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

6 June 1990

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PRESS STATEMENT/LINE TO TAKE FOR THE SPEECH BY THE
PRIME MINISTER IN MOSCOW

FUNDING OF SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

The British Council will be given funds from Government for the financial years 1991/2-1993/4 inclusive to enable it to contribute to the cost of additional lectureships in Soviet and East European studies in this three year period. This follows one of the recommendations in the Wooding Report.

If necessary

- This is an exceptional pump-priming scheme for three years only, in view of the recommendations of the Wooding Report.
- It is hoped to secure joint funding of posts by institutions concerned.
- A committee will be set up to allocate funds.
- (If asked) the money is being made available through the FCO's grant-in-aid to the British Council.