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Prime Minister
You might welcome
this. CBN/bc.

PRIME MINISTER

SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

Flap. 1. When you spoke to me in March, you expressed concern about the decline in Soviet studies at British universities and I agreed to let you have an early report. You will have since seen my exchanges with Douglas Hurd culminating in the proposed announcement about a British Council scheme to promote additional lectureships in this area of study. I can now let you have a brief report on the wider context.

2. As you may know, the then Universities Grants Committee commissioned a review of Soviet and East European Studies through a working party under the Chairmanship of Dr N S Wooding, Deputy Chairman, East European Trade Council and President, British Soviet Chamber of Commerce. The working party reported to the Universities Funding Council in July 1989 recommending a range of measures to expand these studies in universities and polytechnics. At the heart of these recommendations were proposals to create 10 new teaching posts at lectureship level and to provide up to 15 additional postgraduate studentships.


3. The UFC have made the report widely available inviting universities to take account of the recommendations in their academic plans and funding proposals for the next four years. The British Council scheme provides the necessary impetus for taking forward the lectureships and we can expect the new teaching posts to be in place during the course of next year.

4. I am glad to be able to report progress also with the postgraduate studentships. The Economic and Social Research Council makes available studentships according to the merit of applicants. Numbers awarded in Soviet and East European studies

have more than doubled over the past four years and there are now 25 post-graduates receiving ESRC studentships for research and 12 for advanced courses. The Council stand ready to award more studentships as suitable applicants come forward. In addition, the Council has embarked upon a major research initiative to investigate the economic, social and political changes occurring in Eastern Europe and is also funding 18 other projects in the field of Soviet and East European studies.

5. Dr Wooding's other recommendations have less significant financial consequences. I have asked Robert Jackson here to keep an eye on progress with them.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to Douglas Hurd, John Major and Tom King.



JM

6 June 1990

(Approved by the Secretary of
State and signed in his absence)

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Rehm Pt 17.



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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

7 June 1990

See Stephen.

SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

The Prime Minister has read the Education Secretary's minute of 6 June recording the agreement which has been reached to establish additional lectureships in Soviet studies. She thinks this is an excellent initiative and is most grateful to all concerned for the work which has gone into it.

I am copying this letter to Stephen Wall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Gieve (H M Treasury) and Simon Webb (Ministry of Defence).

Yours sincerely,

C. D. POWELL

Stephen Crowne, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

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