



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 May 1980

Dear Sir Denis.

I last wrote to you on 19 March after the debate in the House of Commons when, as you will remember, a large majority supported the Government's view that Great Britain should not take part in the Olympic Games in Moscow. I was therefore sorry that, at their meeting on 25 March, the British Olympic Association decided to confirm their acceptance of the invitation to go to Moscow.

Since then, condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has continued to grow. As you know, the Olympic Committees of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany have now decided not to send teams to Moscow. Whatever other National Olympic Committees may decide, absence of these teams robs the Moscow Games of much international competitive significance. Their athletes are among the world leaders in many events and have won a high proportion of medals at recent Games. Without the Americans and West Germans and the other sporting countries who have also decided to stay away, the Games will not be worthy of the name Olympic, and medals won at Moscow will be of inferior worth and the ceremonies a charade.

A number of National Olympic Committees have still not decided on attendance. They will be strongly influenced by the German decision and I have no doubt that many will also decide against going to Moscow.

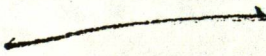
/ Nothing has happened

Nothing has happened to cause the Government to alter its advice to British athletes. Soviet troops still occupy Afghanistan and cruelly oppress the Afghan people. Despite the strict censorship, there are continuing reports of atrocities. Only the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops will end them, and it is essential that the pressure on the Soviet Union should be maintained. None of the recent initiatives from Kabul and Moscow includes a clear commitment to end the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

The Games will serve the propaganda needs of the Soviet Government. There is no effective palliative, such as cutting out the ceremonies. I remain firmly convinced that it is neither in our national nor in the wider Western interest for Britain to take part in the Games in Moscow. As a sporting event, the Games cannot now satisfy the aspirations of our sportsmen and women. British attendance at Moscow can only serve to frustrate the interests of Britain.

I am copying this letter to the representatives on your Committee of the Governing Bodies of Olympic Sports and to the Chairmen of those Bodies.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher



Sir Denis Follows, C.B.E.