Ref: A01476

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Moscow Olympics
(OD(80) 14)

BACKGROUND

When the Cabinet discussed the Olympic Games on 14th February, it was agreed that the Government would need to consider their policy on a number of issues following their decision to advise British athletes not to take part. This paper is the Report by Officials which it was noted that I would provide. Most of it consists of a series of practical questions on which recommended answers are provided with supporting comments. The Secretary of State for the Environment has been invited for this item. The Attorney General has also been invited in view of possible questions on the Government's legal liability.

2. Foreign Ministers of the Nine discussed the issue yesterday, but failed to agree a common line, mainly on account of French opposition. FCO telegram no. 108 to Rome contains a fuller acount.

HANDLING

3. The background is the Cabinet discussion on 14th February, your answers in reply to Parliamentary Questions on the same date and your letter to the Chairman of the British Olympic Association of 19th February.

4. The Committee might first go through the lettered sub-paragraphs in paragraph 4 of the Report by Officials. Are the recommended answers agreed in each case?

5. Next the Committee might discuss the two more general questions posed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report:-

(a) Arm-twisting. Over South African sport, the Government did not really want their advice taken. In this case they do. How is the process of persuasion to be carried forward? What about a resolution of Parliament? On a Free Vote? Should Mr. Monro now tackle each of the Chairmen of the British governing bodies for the various Olympic sports? Should the Paymaster General be invited, in consultation with Mr. Monro, to orchestrate the Government's publicity campaign?

CONFIDENTIAL

(b) Finance. Should the Secretary of State for the Environment be invited, in consultation with other Ministers, to attempt to cost more exactly the Government's likely or desirable expenditure? Can this be met from the Contingency Reserve? Does the Attorney General have views on the issue of liability?

6. Finally you may wish to raise two further points:-

(a) What does the Home Secretary think that the BBC and ITV will do about televising the Moscow Games? He reported earlier that they had agreed to act in concert. Should the Government try to persuade the BBC to boycott Moscow, even if British athletes are there?

(b) What does the Foreign Secretary think of the danger that by our present actions against the Moscow Games we may be storing up for ourselves even greater difficulties than in the past over South African sport?

CONCLUSION

7. Your summing up should cover -

(a) The agreed answers to the lettered questions in the Report by Officials.

(b) The allocation of responsibility for follow-up action to put across the Government's case.

(c) Whether the Cabinet on 28th February should be informed of the Committee's conclusions orally or in writing, and by whom.

RWA

(Robert Armstrong)

20th February 1980