



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 January 1980

cc. Afghanistan situ
cc: DOE
Sport
Afghanistan

Dear Rodric,

Original on:
SPORT: Olympic participation
Jan 80.

Afghanistan: Participation in the Olympic Games

When the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary called on the Prime Minister this afternoon he raised the question of Britain's participation in the Olympic Games in Moscow this summer.

The Prime Minister said that she agreed with Sir Curtis Keeble that withdrawal from the Olympics by a substantial number of the Western nations would be the gesture that would hurt the Soviet Government most, at least in the short term. She asked whether there was any possibility of another city offering to host the Games. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he thought this would be impracticable. He and the Prime Minister agreed that the role of Government in this question was limited. But the Prime Minister pointed out that it would be very difficult for the Government to avoid taking up a position, e.g., in dealing with Parliamentary Questions. The Government had expressed a view on the question of the British Lions Rugby Tour to South Africa and would certainly be asked to do the same in regard to the Olympic Games.

The Prime Minister made it clear that her own inclination would be to recommend against participation, but she agreed with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary that it would be important to co-ordinate our position with that of other Western Governments. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that perhaps the best outcome would be if the Government recommended against participation but the various committees, and the participants themselves, decided to go to Moscow none the less.

Given the Prime Minister's interest in this problem, I should be grateful to be kept in the picture as thinking develops.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Geoffrey Needham (Department of the Environment).

Yours ever

Richard Alexander

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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