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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

I am strongly  
 against Argentine polo players coming to  
 this country. So would be the crowd at any matches.  
 He could put Rugby in an  
 a highly embarrassing position  
 Argentina: Polo not  
 Prime Minister  
 Contact with the  
 approval?  
 A.S.C. 12/7.

12 July 1983

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary thinks the Prime Minister should be aware of approaches which we have received about the possibility of Argentine polo players coming to Britain in 1984. Some of these approaches have favoured such visits, while others have been against.

Lady Young's views were first sought informally by Sir Anthony Kershaw MP, on behalf of a constituent. Our reply reflected the Government's guidelines given in February by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment to the Chairman of the Sports Council on links with Argentina in any sport: Sir Anthony was told that the Government no longer considers it necessary or appropriate to discourage such contacts, but that this relaxation did not extend to the active encouragement of contacts, especially full-scale tours, and that we would only be prepared to accept the Argentines as individual players rather than as a national flag-carrying team.

We have since received further approaches which indicate considerable disagreement within the polo fraternity on the desirability of accepting a visit by Argentine players. Opponents of the idea express concern that members of the Royal Family would become involved, either in prize-giving ceremonies, or, in the case of the Prince of Wales, as participants. \*

Nigel Dempster of the Daily Mail has speculated on the potential problems on 22 June; and the fact that Prince Charles has an Argentine groom could also be brought into the controversy. \*

/The

\* ~ \* Passage deleted and closed, 40 years,  
 under FOI Exemption. CWayland  
 22 January 2013



The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is content with the advice which has already been given to Sir A Kershaw. He also considers that we should avoid becoming embroiled in the controversy within the polo-playing world and that, having stated our policy in principle on sporting links with Argentina, we should make it clear that it is for the organising bodies themselves to decide whether or not to invite Argentine players. We would retain the role of issuing visas, but sportsmen are among the categories for whom visas can be authorised without reference to London.

*Paragraph deleted and closed. 40 years,  
under FOI Exemption.*

*M. Wayland*

*22 January 2013*

*Yours ever,  
R B Bone*

12 July 1983

*91* (R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing St

CONFIDENTIAL



FILE

W7

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

13 July, 1983

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ARGENTINA: POLO

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 12 July.

The Prime Minister has minuted that she is strongly against Argentine polo players coming to this country. She believes that the spectators at any polo matches involving Argentine players would also be hostile to their presence. Members of the Royal Family could be put in an acutely embarrassing position.

A. J. COLE

R. Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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