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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State's
Private Secretary

25 July 1985

Dear Mark,

In your letter of 12 July to the Minister for Sport's Office, you sought comments from other recipients on the Prime Minister's proposals for further measures to defeat football hooliganism before the start of the next season.

Mr Renton will unfortunately be abroad for the Prime Minister's meeting with representatives of the football authorities on 30 July, but Mr Luce is ready to attend in his place.

For the meeting at Number 10 it might be helpful for Ministers to have the following progress reports on the various overseas aspects.

- (a) The Council of Europe Convention. This was adopted in Strasbourg on 23 July. We propose to sign it in August without qualification on the subject of ratification, on which we foresee no difficulties. Provided three countries sign without qualification about ratification by 31 August the Convention will come into effect on 1 October. We are of course encouraging our partners in the Council of Europe to sign, and are reasonably hopeful that at least two other countries besides ourselves will do so.
- (b) We are also addressing the problem of possible crowd trouble at the European and World Cup qualifying matches that Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish clubs will be playing in Europe in the Autumn. The designated football officers at local consular posts have been instructed to be in touch with the local authorities about security and other arrangements for each match. Scottish clubs have already decided not to sell tickets for these away matches.
- (c) It is not too soon for us to be planning for the World Cup finals in Mexico in May/June 1986 (if British teams qualify). Mr Renton has already had two meetings with

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25 July 1985

the Mexican Ambassador on the possible suspension of the visa agreement between the United Kingdom and Mexico. The Mexicans have not yet agreed; discussions will continue (see the enclosed record of Mr Renton's meeting on 16 July). A problem area is likely to be the procedures for making up and handing to the Mexicans lists of known football hooligans. There could be some legal and practical difficulties about producing these lists on the basis of what is bound to be in some cases uncorroborated evidence. We shall need the fullest support of the British Clubs.

In the meantime the FCO have been passing to the English Football Association at their request, on a post box basis, the names of football supporters who have been detained at, or on journeys to and from, overseas matches. We are making similar arrangements with the Scottish, Welsh and Irish football associations. (Overseas posts where we know matches will be played in the next few months have been notified of this requirement)

Yours sincerely

Alistair Harrison

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PS/Mr Renton

cc: Hugh Taylor Esq, Home Office
Ms Sue Vanervord, DOE
P Dykins Esq, DOE
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MEXICO - WORLD CUP 1986

MEETING: MR RENTON AND MEXICAN AMBASSADOR: 10 AM 16 JULY:
VISAS FOR MEXICO

Mr Renton
Mr Mehmet
Mr Taylor
Mr Abbott

HE Sr. Cuevas-Cancino,
Mexican Ambassador

1. Sr. Cuevas-Cancino explained that following the meeting on 3 July, he had put the Minister's views favourably to his Government. He now had an initial reply which he had set out in an Aide Memoire (attached) which he had brought to the meeting.

2. Mr Renton thanked Sr. Cuevas-Cancino for his assistance and goodwill in this problem: we were grateful for the prompt reply. We would study the Aide Memoire and reply in detail. He hoped it would be possible for the Ambassador to be the link between our two Governments.

3. Mr Renton said that his initial reaction to the points made in the Aide Memoire were:-

paragraph 2 We had very much in mind the problem of the Mexican authorities in screening visa applicants. We would in fact hope to be able to discuss with the Mexican visa officers in London a list of known troublemakers who should be refused visas. The list would be as complete as possible within the limitations imposed on proper disclosure of information. The list would not be foolproof but would be the best we could do to serve our common aim to keep British hooligans out of Mexico.

/ paragraph 3



paragraph 3 There would be great difficulty in ensuring that tickets were sold only to bona fide supporters, even though the English FA may control sales.

paragraph 4 Any suspension of the visa abolition agreement would be for a short period of time and, under paragraph 8 of the Agreement, could be applied only to British citizens. Our intent was that Mexicans visiting the UK would not require visas. Most British businessmen (and genuine supporters) would not object to visa requirement if it helped to reduce possibility of British hooliganism at World Cups: they were as interested as HMG in maintaining the good name of the UK overseas.

paragraph 5 The Ambassador clarified this paragraph: security concerned the actual matches to be played, not visa matters. He was informed that the English FA liaison officer would certainly visit Mexico in advance if England qualified, and had recently accompanied England in their short visit to Mexico in June.


4. Sr. Cuevas-Cancino thanked Mr Renton for his comments and said that the Aide Memoire should be treated as a 'starting paper' for discussions. He confessed that he had not put the point about Mexicans not requiring visas even if British citizens did.

5. Mr Renton mentioned the Council of Europe Convention on controlling hooliganism at sporting events and suggested that if ratified by sufficient member States, Mexico would perhaps be invited to ratify also. The Convention included the need for liaison and close cooperation in preventing hooliganism.



6. In final conversation the point was made that the number of British supporters visiting Mexico for the World Cup was not likely to be large, possibly in the region of 10,000. Mr Renton concluded by confirming that a detailed formal comment on the Aide Memoire would be prepared and passed to the Ambassador.

7. The meeting closed at 10.30 am.


Foreign and Commonwealth Office
18 July 1985

Aide Memoire

1.- The Mexican Government fully understands the aims pursued by the British Government in offering its cooperation to avoid any acts of violence that may mar foot ball world championship, and is duly grateful for its initiative.

2.- The Mexican Government finds however some limitations in agreeing to a suspension of the visa agreement between the U.K. and Mexico. The responsibility for screening british amateurs going to Mexico would then fall exclusively on Mexican authorities, and they lack - sufficient information in order to stop potencial delinquents.

3.- The Mexican Government would also like the problem to be considered from another point of view:
the tickets for the championship have been on sale the world over, and Mexico would find itself criticized if it closed the borders to ticket holders.

Furthermore, and since the sale of tickets was done through National Foot ball Associations, the Mexican Government believes that those Associations acted in such a way as to assure themselves of the "bona fide" of ticket buyers.

4.- The Mexican Government has also considerable misgivings regarding other effects of the suspension of the agreement, since much unnecessary troubles would be caused during the whole period of the suspension of the agreement to individuals traveling to Mexico from the U.K., and viceversa.

5.- The Mexican Government would, however, welcome the visit from a British security officer who together with the Mexican Security Authorities would examine the adoption of suitable preventive measures.

Home Affairs: Football Pt 4

