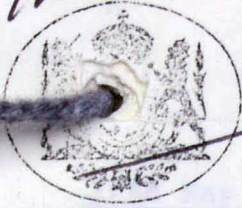


For the Cabinet folder

FROM THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION



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9 April
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CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

THE WORLD CUP

In George Younger's absence at the Party Conference he has asked me to let you know our views on the paper about British participation in the World Cup which Michael Heseltine has circulated (C(82)23) for discussion next week. Scotland is due to play New Zealand (June 15), Brazil (June 18) and Russia (June 22).

Unless there is a serious escalation of the conflict by the time Cabinet considers the matter, I think we should then decide and announce that it is entirely for the football authorities to decide whether or not to go to Spain. We might have to reconsider our position if one of the home countries had to play Argentina but this is unlikely to happen. Scotland could meet Argentina in the second round, but Scotland have never yet qualified for the second round and, even if they do, the Secretary of the Scottish Football Association (SFA) is hopeful that FIFA, the organisers of the tournament, would co-operate in re-arranging the groupings to avoid the need for the two countries to play each other. Public opinion in Scotland, as I judge it, is mainly opposed to withdrawal. The Secretary of the SFA has stated publicly that they are proceeding as planned. The Scottish Professional Footballers' Association have recommended withdrawal, but their Secretary is a full-time official of the GMWU, and there is a strong left wing bias in his attitude, which does not properly reflect the players' view.

I am sending copies of this minute to members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip, Neil Macfarlane and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

ALEX FLETCHER

14 May 1982