



10 DOWNING STREET

1. Charles Powell <sup>No: the only</sup> argument is that  
2. Kelli Butler <sup>the Mexicans</sup> will be reluctant  
to go to the <sup>trouble.</sup> <sup>OP</sup>

The idea of requiring visas  
to be obtained in advance  
seems to have been dropped.

But is there any reason  
why this should not be  
proved dayside the  
customs at ports of entry?

MLA 27/6

I think visas are necessary because  
the football authorities will be unable to  
provide a list of undesirable in advance.  
It would be more effective (and more of a  
deterrent) to make application necessary and  
then consider them on their merits. PBR 27-6-



CC/MB

FS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR RENTON

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR JENKINS

MR BARRINGTON

MR MACINNES

HD/WED

HD/CONS D

HD/CRD

HD/NEWS D

HD/FINANCE D.

RESIDENT CLERK

PS/NO.10 DOWNING STREET

PS/MR MACFARLANE, DOE

PS/MR SHAW, HOME OFFICE

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MEXICO CITY 261800Z 1986

TO IMMEDIATE FCO DESKBY 270000Z

TELEGRAM NUMBER 705 OF 26 JUNE

YOUR TELEGRAM NO 766

WORLD CUP 1986

1. THE MEXICANS HAVE NOT SO FAR SAID ANYTHING TO US ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF BRITISH FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM DURING THE 1986 WORLD CUP. BUT SINCE THE RECORD OF BRITISH SOCCER VIOLENCE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF AND THE EVENTS IN BRUSSELS ATTRACTED THEIR SHARE OF UNFAVOURABLE PUBLICITY AND UNOFFICIAL COMMENT HERE (OUR TELEGRAM NO 640) WE MUST ASSUME THAT IT IS LIKELY TO BECOME A MAJOR PREOCCUPATION. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MEXICANS WILL HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY MUG'S FIRM REACTION TO THE BRUSSELS DISASTER AND THEY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY LOOK TO US TO PLAY THE FULLEST POSSIBLE PART IN PREVENTING OUTBREAKS OF BRITISH FOOTBALL VIOLENCE DURING THE WORLD CUP. AS I HAVE REPORTED IN MY LETTER OF 14 JUNE TO WEDB, CONSULAR DEPARTMENT, THE FACT THAT THE RECENT FRIENDLY MATCHES HERE INVOLVING ENGLAND PASSED OFF WITHOUT SERIOUS INCIDENT CANNOT BE TAKEN AS AN AUGURY FOR NEXT TIME SINCE THERE WAS NOTHING AT STAKE AND THE NUMBER OF ENGLAND SUPPORTERS PRESENT WAS MINIMAL. AN ADDED FACTOR ON THE MEXICAN SIDE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SINCE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY PROGRAMME WILL BE WELL INTO ITS FOURTH YEAR BY NEXT SUMMER, OPPOSITION ELEMENTS MAY BE TEMPTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN THE WORLD CUP IN ORDER TO PROVOKE VIOLENCE IN AN ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT THE ADMINISTRATION. WE DO NOT RATE THIS A HIGH POSSIBILITY.

2. IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE SUGGESTIONS IN YOUR TUR. THE PROBLEM WITH A TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE VISA ABOLITION AGREEMENT, AS YOU POINT OUT IN YOUR PARAGRAPH 3, IS THAT IT SHIFTS THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY ONTO THE MEXICANS. A MORE SUBSTANTIAL OBJECTIVE, GIVEN THE RELATIVE INEFFICIENCY OF MEXICAN ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES, IS THAT IT IS UNLIKELY TO PROVE EFFECTIVE. EVEN IF THE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES WERE TO BE PROVIDED WITH LISTS OF KNOWN UNDESIRABLES, WE MUST EXPECT THAT A HIGH PROPORTION WOULD BE LIKELY TO SLIP THROUGH. NOT ALL MEXICAN CONSULATES CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE AS ALERT TO THE PROBLEM AS THEIR CONSULAR OFFICES IN THE UK.

? see below



WE MUST EXPECT THAT A HIGH PROPORTION WOULD BE LIKELY TO SLIP THROUGH. NOT ALL MEXICAN CONSULATES CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE AS ALERT TO THE PROBLEM AS THEIR CONSULAR OFFICES IN THE UK.

3. LIKE YOU WE TEND TO THINK THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF REDUCING THE CHANCES OF VIOLENCE IS BY ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT THE ENTRY OF LISTED TROUBLEMAKERS AT POINTS OF ENTRY TO MEXICO. FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT MEXICO CITY, THE AIRPORTS AT MONTERREY AND GUADALAJARA (WHICH ARE VENUES FOR MATCHES AND WHICH CAN BE REACHED BY DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM THE US) AND THE NORTHERN BORDER WITH THE US. WE DO HOWEVER HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT LEAVING IT TO THE BRITISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION TO PASS NAMES TO THEIR MEXICAN COUNTERPARTS OR TO THE MEXICAN EMBASSY IN LONDON. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD SEEM TO LEAVE TOO MUCH TO CHANCE AND TO THE VAGARIES OF THE MEXICAN ADMINISTRATION.

4. IT SEEMS TO US THAT A MORE EFFECTIVE PROCEDURE OUGHT TO BE TO PASS NAMES OR STOPLISTS, CONFIDENTIALLY, TO THE APPROPRIATE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES VIA THIS EMBASSY. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THIS PROCEDURE WOULD REPRESENT A GRAVE DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL PRACTICE FOR A DIPLOMATIC MISSION AND CARRY CERTAIN RISKS. BUT BRITISH FOOTBALL VIOLENCE IS AN ACKNOWLEDGED MENACE AND ANY FAILURE ON OUR PART TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF IT RECURRING DURING THE WORLD CUP COULD BE EXPECTED TO HAVE EXTREMELY DAMAGING REPERCUSSIONS, EXTENDING FAR BEYOND OUR RELATIONS WITH MEXICO. THE ADVANTAGES OF PROCEEDING CONFIDENTIALLY WOULD SEEM TO BE CONSIDERABLE. FOR ONE REASON THE MEXICANS WILL BE ANXIOUS TO AVOID SPOILING THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE WORLD CUP THROUGH ANY CRITICAL ADVANCE PUBLICITY THAT MAY RESULT FROM FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS PASSING NAMES TO THE EMBASSY AND FROM AIRLINES BEING IN THE PICTURE. YOU WILL WISH TO REMEMBER THAT NO BRITISH CARRIER PROVIDES A THROUGH SERVICE TO MEXICO AND IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS MOST UNLIKELY ONE WILL RESUME DOING SO IN TIME FOR THE WORLD CUP. THAT MAY BE AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATING FACTOR IN TERMS OF INVOLVING AIRLINES.

5. IN GENERAL, WHAT IS REQUIRED IN OUR VIEW IS THE CLOSEST INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IF THE RISK OF VIOLENCE IS TO BE AVOIDED OR AT LEAST APPRECIABLY REDUCED. GIVEN THE POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE ISSUE IT OUGHT NOT TO BE LEFT TO THE RESPECTIVE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS, OR TO NORMAL MEXICAN BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSES. WE ARE THEREFORE GLAD THAT YOU PROPOSE TO CALL IN THE MEXICAN AMBASSADOR SHORTLY FOR CONSULTATIONS. IT MAY BE ALSO THAT AT A LATER STAGE, PERHAPS AFTER THE AMBASSADOR'S RETURN FROM LEAVE IN AUGUST, THAT WE SHOULD DISCUSS WITH THE MEXICAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.

6. THE HEAD OF CHANCERY PLANS TO WRITE SHORTLY ABOUT THE QUESTION OF REINFORCING THE CONSULAR STAFF OF THIS EMBASSY FOR THE PERIOD OF THE WORLD CUP. HERE TOO, AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION WILL BE TO MAKE ARRANGMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE COOPERATION WITH THE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY IF THE COURSE OF ACTION IN PARAGRAPH 4 ABOVE IS ADOPTED, AS WELL AS THE MORE NORMAL CONSULAR AND OTHER TASKS EG. LIASON WITH THE BRITISH TEAMS PARTICIPATING.

MILTON

NNNN



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File



SKW

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

27 June 1985

WORLD CUP 1986

Robin Butler and I have seen Mexico City telegram no. 725 about measures to prevent British football hooligans attending the World Cup matches in Mexico next year. We are rather sceptical about the direction this is making. We think it unlikely that the football authorities will be able to produce a list of undesirables in advance; and that checks operated at points of entry in Mexico would for this and other reasons be ineffective. We continue to believe that a visa regime which required applications to be made in the United Kingdom, enabling us to help the Mexicans vet such applications, would be more effective and more of a deterrent.

I should be grateful if these views could be taken into account when considering the telegram's recommendations.

I am copying this letter to Phil Dykins (Minister for Sport's office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office) and Richard Allan (Department of Transport).

(C. D. POWELL)

CS

Len Appleyard, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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