

CONFIDENTIAL

Draft Working Paper on the Political Implications
for Canada of the 1976 Olympic Games

On January 14, 1974, officials of the Department of External Affairs met to consider the political implications for Canada of the 1976 Olympics, with a view to flagging for Ministers possible political danger points and to making recommendations for possible courses of action to be pursued by the Government at this time.

At the outset of the meeting it was established that, for the time being, and without prejudice to specialized Olympic interests within the Department of External Affairs (such as security and protocol arrangements), a coordinative role on all questions relating to the Olympics was to be exercised by the Policy Information Section of the Department's Information Division.

Deliberations of officials were based upon the explicit assumption that the Government wishes to pursue a low-profile policy vis-a-vis the Games, and that that policy was to be directed in the first place towards ensuring the participation of the maximum number of the members of the Olympic Movement in the Montreal Games. Recommendations to Ministers will therefore be framed in light of this criterion, and only as a last resort will recommendations be made on the dictates of bilateral foreign policy interests. In adopting this view officials took into consideration the traditional public posture of the International Olympic Committee, which governs

...2

the Olympic Movement, that political considerations should not influence the Games, and the resultant tendency of the Committee to postpone any decision of a political nature until a specific political question poses an evident threat to the success of the current games.

This is exemplified by the fact that the question of Rhodesian membership and participation was put before the I.O.C. at its Vienna Meeting in October 1974, but was not considered. As the I.O.C. is a self-sustained oligarchy with no responsibility either to any outside body or to the National Olympic Committees, it is extremely difficult to either exert influence upon it or to glean information about I.O.C. intentions. Moreover, because of the apolitical ideology of the I.O.C. and the present hands-off policy of the Government towards the Games, it would be most difficult for the Government to approach the I.O.C. directly either on policy questions or in search of information. It might, however, be possible to obtain such information in an informal way via the Organizing Committee for the 1976 Olympic Games, and officials considered that this would be an essential step to take, as at the moment it is not known even whether invitations to participate in the Games have yet been issued by COJO, or if so, to whom. (Subsequently, it was ascertained that formal invitations would be issued to all N.O.C.'s in good standing during the first week of February.

Notwithstanding officials felt it possible to flag the following potentially dangerous political situations:

Rhodesia

The question of Rhodesia is in many ways the easiest to handle, insofar as it has arisen and been dealt with at the two previous Games (Munich 1972 and Mexico 1968), and as it is covered by various Security Council resolutions to which Canada subscribes. Three points are evident:

- that if Rhodesia were to participate, the Games would be boycotted by most African, Asian and Caribbean states, as was the threat posed by the Organization of African Unity in its successful bid to have Rhodesia expelled from the 1972 Olympics;
- that, given the present state of negotiations between the Smith regime and the black African leaders, it is not probable that the political factors now operative will alter significantly before 1976;
- that Canada has already taken a firm position and has enacted regulations based on the Security Council resolutions which have the intent and effect of barring from Canada all Rhodesians travelling with the objective of furthering the aims of the illegal regime regardless of the nature of their travel documents. This would certainly include a Rhodesian Olympic Team travelling on Olympic identity documents which, however, must be endorsed by the sending N.O.C. under the arrangements agreed upon between COJO

...4

and the Department of Manpower and Immigration. There is also the fact that the letter of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to the I.O.C. of November 28, 1969 guaranteed entry to all Olympic participants "pursuant to the normal regulations", under which regulations Rhodesia would certainly be excluded. However, officials considered it inadvisable to rely upon what was above all intended to be a written guarantee of good faith. Officials preferred instead, if the situation arose and the I.O.C. were to exhibit no sign of acting independently, to remind the I.O.C. that Canada owed commitments to a higher international authority, the United Nations, and that the Secretary-General of that organization had already in 1972 felt it his duty to remind the Government of West Germany of that same commitment.

Israel

Officials considered the possibility that the so-called "Group of Seventy-Seven" spearheaded by the Arab states would attempt to force the expulsion of Israel from the Games using tactics similar to those employed in 1972 by the O.A.U. against Rhodesia. It was considered questionable whether all third-world states would support the Arabs if such a move were undertaken, but the likelihood exists that a significant number would. The corollary to such a possibility is that if such an anti-Israeli move were undertaken successfully, an equally strong possibility

would exist that the friends of Israel, notably the United States and even perhaps Canada would then in their turn withdraw from the Games. The point was made that the "Group of Seventy-Seven" have shown, and can be assumed to show in future, no scruple whatever about destroying any institution which they cannot bend to their will. Officials concluded that the case of Israel was a politically mixed situation regarding which no specific recommendations can be made at present.

Taiwan

The probable effect on the participation of other countries of Taiwan's exclusion from the Games was considered to be less widespread than the effect of the participation of Rhodesia, but was thought to be a factor growing in importance as the situation develops. The People's Republic of China has made it clear to the Government of Canada that it expects Taiwan to be expelled and itself admitted, and moreover, that it expects this to be accomplished by the Government of Canada. It is thought by officials that the P.R.C. may consider the 1976 Games to be a test case, and may put, or may have already put, a similar proposition to other governments. If this is so, then Canada might expect to come under some pressure from those governments to accede to the P.R.C.'s demands.

Officials concurred that it would not be possible to refuse

ab initio to admit Taiwan, insofar as we have undertaken to admit all invitees subject to normal regulations. The possibility of the I.O.C.'s adopting a two-China policy was examined. It was concluded that adoption of such a policy by the I.O.C. would probably place Canada in a more favourable position than we presently appear to be in, although China would almost certainly not accept such a solution.

Officials concluded that the question of Taiwan vs P.R.C. was a matter for the I.O.C. to decide, and that subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for External Affairs it should be the Government's starting position, in response to renewed initiatives from the P.R.C., that the P.R.C. must seek satisfaction from the I.O.C. alone.

Officials also examined other potential sources of trouble, notably the two Koreas, the rival Cambodian regimes of Lon Nol and Sihanouk, and the two Vietnams. None of these was assigned so great a degree of importance in Canadian terms as Taiwan, Rhodesia and Israel. It was noted that the question of the Palestine Liberation Organization's participation is not likely to arise since the P.L.O. fails to conform to basic Olympic criteria, such as membership in five international federations.

Summary

It was therefore decided that:

- the Department submit memoranda to the Interdepartmental Committee for the Olympic Games (ICOG), the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and if deemed necessary by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Cabinet and the Prime Minister, outlining the views on the above potential problem areas together with whatever policy recommendations it is possible now to make.

- if the Secretary of State approves, informal contact be made with the I.O.C. through COJO in an attempt to flag these same points for the I.O.C., to discover possible I.O.C. responses to them, and more immediately to discover whether invitations had yet been issued and if so to whom.

- the Department immediately approach the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the FRG, Japan, Mexico and Iran to acquire information from them on the problems encountered during the various games for which each was host, and the solutions adopted.

- in handling whatever situations may eventually arise, the policy recommendations will be based on the premise that the prime motive of the government is to ensure maximum participation in the Games.

- in such cases action not be taken by the Government of Canada until it is clear that the I.O.C. will not act on its own initiative.

- such actions be based on motives of bilateral policy only as a last resort.