



FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE Rt. HON. MICHAEL ANCRAM QC DL MP
MINISTER OF STATE



286/2

286/96

DATE: 19 FEBRUARY 1997

cf

- PS/PUS (B&L)
- PS/Sir David Fell
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Bell
- Mr Stephens
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Brooker
- Mr Carvill
- HMA, Dublin
- Mr Lamont, RID
- Mr Jordan
- Mr Palmer

POST 286/2
SEC 10 FEB 1997
CENT

Handwritten signatures and initials:
21/2
Mr Alexander
Mr Jordan
LD 20/2

To: PS/Secretary of State (B&L)



SPECIAL OLYMPIC GAMES 2003 - IRISH BID

Michael Ancram has seen a copy of Mr Bell's submission of 14 February and has commented that he would leave out the last sentence of the draft letter to the Tanaiste, which he feels "smells of money!".



He has also seen and agreed with Mr Jordan's submission of 18 February (attached), which suggests in addition the deletion of the reference to "the improvement of community relations generally".

Colin Jack

C D JACK

Enc



CULTURE AND RECREATION DIVISION

c.c. PS/PUS(B&L)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Stephens
Mr Watkins
Mr Brooker
Mr Carvill
HMA, Dublin
Mr Lamont, RID

FROM: R Jordan

18 February 1997

To: 1. PS/Michael Ancram - for approval
2. PS/Secretary of State (B&L)

SPECIAL OLYMPIC GAMES 2003 - IRISH BID

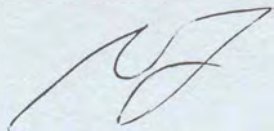
The Irish have now provided further information about their bid to host the "Special Olympics World Games" in 2003 and have given an explicit assurance that Northern Ireland's association with the event will impose no financial obligations on either central or local government in the Province.

The Department has spoken to the Department of National Heritage and the Northern Ireland Sports Council about what is proposed. DNH has confirmed that it has no objections to our support of the Irish bid, as there are no plans for a competing bid from within the UK.

The Sports Council endorses the work of Special Olympics Ireland and confirms that it operates actively on an all-Ireland basis. The Sports Council would be happy to liaise with the Irish Sports Council about arrangements if the bid is successful.

I can also confirm that the Northern Ireland Branch of Special Olympics Ireland has sought to promote a cross-community approach although its explicit impact in this area has been limited.

On the above basis, I recommend that the Secretary of State agrees to endorse the Irish bid. The draft provided by Mr Bell with his minute of 14 February seems broadly appropriate, though I would suggest that the reference to "the improvement of community relations generally" might be deleted, as might the rather open-ended assurance of support in the final sentence.



R JORDAN

P N BELL
JOINT SECRETARY
14 FEBRUARY 1997

cc: PS/Michael Ancram (B&L)*
PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Stephens
Mr Watkins
Mr Brooker
Mr Carvill, DENI*
Mr Palmer, DENI
HMA, Dublin
Mr Lamont, RID

* - with ALL attachments
(by fax)

PS/Secretary of State (B&L)*

SPECIAL OLYMPIC GAMES 2003 - IRISH BID

Background

The Irish have been pressing the Secretary of State for a gesture of support for the Irish bid to hold the "Special Olympics World Games" in 2003. At last week's meeting in Lancaster House, the Tanaiste personally pressed his case. Mr Fisher's note of that meeting records (paragraph 3) Mr Spring's pitch: admitting to a personal interest, he explained the bid enjoyed US support. To the best of his knowledge, the Secretary of State's own support would carry with it no financial implications. Events would take place at various centres in Ireland; several towns might be involved in providing accommodation on a private basis (including towns situated "near the line") with "minibussing" to events in Dublin. The Secretary of State is recorded as seeing the event as an admirable one but, although unaware of any competing (sc.UK) interest, he was slightly unsighted. The Irish agreed to submit further information on their bid.

PH/9852

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The supporting Irish information

2. This they have now done, and the material they have provided overtakes that circulated, for example, under cover of my minute of 31 January to Mr Carvill. It is attached (not to all) at Annex A. It comprises:

- a "note to the British side" from Mr Donoghue, summarising the background to the bid;
- a "Special Olympics organisational chart" showing the North/South structure of the programme in Ireland; and
- a copy of a letter from the Chief Constable to the Chairperson of the World Games Committee offering his own endorsement of the Special Olympics and how a Torch Run with the Garda, they had been able to raise more than 100,000 for the organisation...

3. This is all most heartwarming. But the key information is perhaps contained on page 2 of Mr Donoghue's note: the Irish are seeking to demonstrate to "Special Olympics International" (the governing body) that "Special Olympics Ireland" is a North/South organisation, and that bringing the games to Ireland would enhance North/South co-operation and contribute to "social inclusion". He adds, and underlines, that a Northern Ireland Association with the project would impose "no financial obligations on either central or local government" in Northern Ireland. Against this background, Mr Donoghue reaffirms the Tanaiste's hope that the Irish bid would enjoy the Secretary of State's support. He attaches a draft message from Mr Fergus Finlay to that effect, - almost certainly, I suspect, with a view to maximising US support above all for the bid. This I attach at Annex B.

4. For the reasons I set out in my own submission of 31 January I would - even if the Tanaiste had not raised the matter personally - still favour some measured endorsement of the Irish bid. But to

my ~~es~~ the Irish draft goes further than what I suspect the Secretary of State had in mind at Lancaster House. I therefore offer a shorter, less committal, and, above all, less OTT version at Annex C for the Secretary of State's consideration.

[Signed]

P N BELL

FERGUS FINLAY VERSION

ANNEX B



(Dear Dick)

You were kind enough to tell me recently of your Government's plans to make a bid to host the World Summer Games of the Special Olympics in Ireland in 2003.

I greatly value the work of Special Olympics Ireland, in which there is a significant Northern Ireland component, and would very much like to see Ireland play host to the Summer Games in 2003.

The contribution made by Special Olympics Ireland to the lives of people with learning disabilities, and to their families, in both parts of the island is incalculable. I was honoured recently to have been invited to officiate at the start of the Special Olympics Torch Run, which, as you are aware, brought the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Garda Síochána together in a magnificent fund-raising effort for Special Olympics.

The staging of the Summer Games in Ireland would be an opportunity for fruitful North/South cooperation on a major international sporting event which also has a wider human and social dimension. Beyond the importance of the event for the participants themselves and their families, it would make an important contribution to the promotion of social inclusion, the improvement of community relations generally and, last but not least, the development of North/South friendship and understanding.

For these reasons, I would like to assure of our full support and encouragement for your bid. I understand that the intention is that participating athletes would be hosted for a time on a voluntary basis in towns both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. I look forward to providing whatever advice and support we can in helping to make a success of this important venture.

Yours sincerely

Secretary of State

F T

Annex C

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE TANAISTE

You were kind enough to tell me recently of your Government's plans to make a bid to host the World Summer Games of the Special Olympics in Ireland in 2003.

There is, as you know, a significant Northern Ireland component to "Special Olympics Ireland". And I have heard many good things about their work, whether in terms of the contribution it has been making to promoting social inclusion, the improvement of community relations generally and, last but not least, the development of North/South friendship and understanding. You may recall, for example, last year's "Special Olympics Torch Run", in which the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Garda Siochana collaborated in an impressive fund-raising effort for "Special Olympics".

I can, therefore, readily imagine the further benefits which could flow from a successful bid. I am certain that it would be welcomed in both parts of the island of Ireland. I understand too that the intention is that participating athletes would be hosted for a time on a voluntary basis in town both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. For all these reasons therefore, I very much hope that Ireland can play host to the Special Olympics in 2003 and I would therefore like to assure you of our full support and encouragement for your bid. I also look forward to providing whatever help we can in due course in helping to make a success of this important venture.

PH/

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NOTE TO THE BRITISH SIDE

Special Olympics

Further to the discussion which took place at the informal meeting in London last Thursday between the Tánaiste and the Secretary of State, the following are details of the bid which Ireland is making to host the World Summer Games of the Special Olympics in 2003 and for which the Tánaiste would hope to have the Secretary of State's support.

The Special Olympics programme is founded on the belief that people with a learning difficulty can, with proper instruction and encouragement, learn, enjoy and benefit from participation in individual and team sport, adapted as necessary to meet the needs of the athlete.

The World Summer Games of the Special Olympics are organised every four years, usually in early July. Some 7,000 athletes from over 143 countries participate in 19 sports. The Games include colourful opening and closing ceremonies, professionally conducted sports competitions, artistic and cultural activities and special events for athletes and for their families.

To date all the Summer Games have been held in the United States. The organising umbrella body, Special Olympics International, have indicated their interest in holding the Games outside the US for the first time in 2003.

The Special Olympics programme in Ireland was founded in 1978 as a voluntary venture by a group of interested individuals. Ireland is now the most developed Special Olympics county outside the US. We have taken part in each World Summer Games since 1979 and a North/South team participated in the World Winter Games in Toronto at the beginning of February 1997. In 1985, Ireland organised the first European Special Olympics. Informal indications suggest that Special Olympics International will be warmly supportive of a bid from Ireland for the 2003 Games.

Attached is an organisational chart which shows the North/South structure of the programme. A Board of Directors, supported by a Management Committee, includes representatives of Leinster, Munster, Connaught and Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland representatives on the Board are: (i) Ms Evelyn Greer MBE, [REDACTED] Co. Antrim [REDACTED] and (ii) Ms June Davis. Ms Greer is a former Director of Mencap and Ms Davis has an involvement with Tor Bank Special School in Belfast. The Secretary of the Northern Ireland branch is Ms Isobel Matthews, [REDACTED] Co. Antrim [REDACTED]. The Treasurer is W. Canning (c/o Ms Greer).

If Ireland's bid is accepted, the World Games would be held at facilities in Dublin in July 2003. Each country sending athletes would be assigned a host town for the three or four days prior to the start of the Games. The athletes would stay with families in their host town for purposes of general acclimatisation before moving into an official residence in Dublin for the start of the Games. Family members of the athletes are encouraged to attend the Games through a Family Ambassador Programme and special events and seminars are organised for them.

Our aim in seeking the support of the British Government is to demonstrate to Special Olympics International that Special Olympics Ireland is a North/South organisation and that bringing the Games to Ireland would enhance North/South cooperation and contribute to social inclusion.

A Northern Ireland association with the project would impose no financial obligations on either central or local Government. The practical support envisaged is that a number of towns in Northern Ireland, supplementing those in the Republic, would be invited to be host towns. Families in those towns would open their homes to participating athletes and their accompanying family members for a few days prior to the opening of the Games. It is envisaged that towns participating in the Host Town Programme would undertake their own voluntary fund-raising activities for this purpose, most likely led by parents active in the Special Olympic movement.

If individual municipal authorities chose to offer some modest hospitality or to arrange a low-key cultural event to mark their town's association with the Games, that would be entirely a matter for them. There are a number of other ways in which host towns could lend voluntary support (such as the provision of bus transport to Dublin). There would, however, be no obligation of any description.

The Tánaiste would appreciate receiving a short message of goodwill and support from the Secretary of State to underpin the Government's bid for the Games. In practical terms, no

demands would be made of the British Government or the local authorities. In symbolic terms, however, it would be particularly valuable to demonstrate Governmental support in both parts of the island for a major sporting event of an international character which has wider social and human dimensions and which could also be expected to present a highly positive image of the whole island to the rest of the world and to generate significant publicity, tourism and other benefits for both North and South.

For convenience, we attach a draft message for the Secretary of State's urgent consideration.

We attach also a copy of a recent letter of support from the Chief Constable of the RUC to Special Olympics International in connection with the bid.

DD

12 February 1997

Telephone
BELFAST 650222

R FLANAGAN, OBE, MA
CHIEF CONSTABLE



BROOKLYN
KNOCK ROAD
BELFAST
NORTHERN IRELAND BT8 6LE

28 January 1997

Dear Ms Tunney,

I am delighted to hear that Special Olympics Ireland and the Irish Government are seeking to bring the World Games to Ireland in 2003.

It was a pleasure to work with Special Olympics Ireland in 1996 creating the first ever Torch Run together with An Garda Síochána, and it was indeed gratifying that we were able to raise £112,000 for the organisation.

Our officers greatly enjoyed the experience of working with Special Olympics and it was a privilege to be involved. I was therefore delighted to hear of the prospect of the games coming to Ireland and would wish to give our full support to the venture. I know that the organisers would find Ireland an excellent venue and that our people would make it an event to remember.

We look forward to opening our hearts and our homes in 2003 to the Special Olympians, their families and friends.

Yours sincerely,

Ronan Flanagan

R FLANAGAN
Chief Constable

Ms Kathinka Tunney
Chairperson - World Games Committee
Special Olympics International Board of Directors
Special Olympics International
1325 G Street NW
Suite 500
Washington DC 20005

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Special Olympics Organisational Chart

