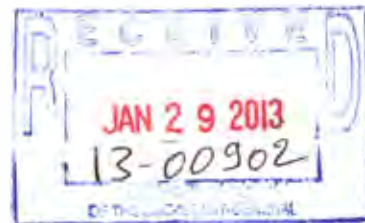




HOUSE OF LORDS

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon,
Secretary-General
The United Nations
1 United Nations Plaza
New York,
New York 10017-3515

JA



Z^{sr} January, 2013

Dear Secretary General,

Thank you again for your encouragement for the Olympic truce.

I would be very grateful if it were possible to secure a few minutes of your time to discuss ideas as to how the progress made with the Olympic truce during London 2012 could be built upon in Sochi 2014, the Summer Youth Olympics in Nanjing, Rio 2016 and Pyeongchang 2018.

My wife, Xuelin and I will be in New York between 16th and 21st of February, 2013 on a private visit. We appreciate how extraordinarily busy your diary will be but if you had any gap we would be honoured to meet with you and discuss ideas.

We will be staying at the Walford Astoria and can of course be contacted either by phone on +44 7801 103803 or email at batesm@parliament.uk

Warmest regards,
Pruce





WALK FOR TRUCE.

BRINGING RESOLUTION TO REALITY



On Good Friday, 2011 Lord Michael Bates embarked on a 3000 mile solo walk from Olympia, Greece to Westminster, London in order to highlight the opportunity presented by the UN Resolution declaring the London 2012 Olympic Truce.



CHRISTMAS 2011 UPDATE

LATEST:
9 DECEMBER, 2011

DISTANCE WALKED:
2234 MILES

LOCATION:
SAARSBRUKEN, GERMANY

DISTANCE TO LONDON:
800 MILES



Message from Gary Streeter MP

Chairman of Michael's Support Group at Westminster

Welcome to this Christmas update of Michael Bates' Walk for Truce. It is a bold and courageous endeavour by Michael. Already it is clear that the walk has exceeded all expectations in terms of raising the profile of the London 2012 Olympic truce and holding out the prospect of a widespread observance during the period of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games next year for the first time.

No one has set out clearer support for the truce that our prime minister, David Cameron. In June of this year I raised the issue in prime minister's questions and the prime minister was absolutely clear that the Olympic truce represented a **"historic opportunity"** for this country and one which he was determined to grasp.

Moreover, in his first speech to the United Nations General Assembly in September this year the prime minister warned against the UN issuing well meaning resolutions without backing up their fine words with actions.

“ in politics as in sport they don't award medals for signing up for the race, only for winning it. ”

On October 17, 2011 Lord Coe on behalf of HM Government presented the London 2012 Olympic truce resolution which called for the observance of the Olympic truce between 27 July and 9 September. The resolution was immediately signed by all 193 member states. This support is welcome, but in politics as in sport they don't award medals for signing up for the race, only for winning it.

There is a real momentum growing behind the London 2012 truce and I am delighted that my friend and colleague Michael Bates and **the British government are leading from the front.**

www.walkfortrue.org

Support for the Lord Bates and his Walk for Truce:



Lord Bates is commended for his efforts to promote world peace by His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI at a Papal Audience in St Peter's Square on October 14, 2011.



"The whole House will wish to congratulate Lord Bates on his great feat... The Olympic truce is a historic opportunity."

*Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Prime Minister
(House of Commons 29 June, 2011)*



"Lord Bates has made a valuable contribution to implementing the Truce concept and values, and to leading by example in showing that passionate and committed individuals can make a valuable contribution to world peace."

*Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the
United Nations (Geneva, 17 October, 2011)*



"The Olympic Truce is an extension of the Olympic values, and, through his initiative, Lord Bates is setting a fine example of what it means to live by the Olympic values every day."

*Count Jacques Rogge, President of the International
Olympic Committee (Lausanne 15 November, 2011)*

News round up.....



Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday Michael was invited to speak to the congregation of St Ursula's Church in the Swiss capital Berne by the vicar Peter Potter and the British Ambassador to Berne, Sarah Gillett.

Michael said, "I am a patriot and proud of my country. No soldier in recent history has taken the decision to go to war. They serve with honour and courage the decisions of the nation expressed through our elected politicians and deserve our respect and gratitude." He added "Sometimes I am asked whether there is any contradiction between wearing my Remembrance Poppy with pride walking for a truce. I respond that the best I know of honouring the courageous fallen in wars past and present is that we, the living, devote ourselves to seeking all means to add no more to their number."



Remembering the London 1948 Olympics

In Ljubljana Michael walked around the route of a fence which was used to seal off the city by occupying forces during WWII. On the walk he was joined by students from the British School and also Marko Racic.

Marko is 91 years old and Slovenia's most famous Olympian who competed in the 1948 Games in London, yet he left me standing as the walk commenced. We talked about what life was like for an athlete at the London 1948 Games: the accommodation for the Yugoslav national team was in Royal Air Force barracks at West Drayton. They had been told that because of food rationing they would need to bring their own food supplies and therefore

they lived off salami for the entire fortnight. They had been instructed on arrival to place two pictures, one of Tito and the other of Stalin, at either end of their barracks, but the Olympic organisers came round and insisted they were removed. Despite the food, conditions and a cinder track he still managed to qualify for the 400 meters in 50.2 seconds which would still be a respectable time even today.

WALK FOR TRUCE.

Supporting Kosova's bid for Olympic Recognition

In Kosova Michael met with Majlinda Kelmendi the World European Judo Champion who is wanting to compete in the London 2012 Games for the Republic of Kosova.

Because Kosovo is not yet formally a member of United Nations, despite being recognised by 82 countries, Kosovo has not yet been invited to send a team to the London 2012 Games.

Michael said, "The people of Kosova have suffered so much in recent years and along comes their best medal hope in a

generation and she is not able to compete. It is big power politics interfering in sport. London are the hosts. Britain was one of the first to recognise the Republic of Kosova and they should be there. It is meant to be a celebration of the best athletes in the world and Majlinda Kelmendi is already a European Champion." Michael took up the case of Kosova with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and The International Olympic Committee. A final decision will be taken shortly by the IOC.



Michael at joint press conference in Pristina with Kosova's Minister of Sport Memli Krasniqi, Majlinda Kelmendi and the President of the Kosova Olympic Association.

Tribute to Swiss medical staff who get the walk back on track.

Michael paid tribute to medical staff at Hospital du Valais, Visp who gave first class medical care following his fall down a ravine whilst crossing the Alps at Simplon in which he suffered a fractured arm, dislocated shoulder and slight head injury.



Michael said, "It could have been a whole lot worse so I was grateful to get away with injuries which meant I could still continue with the walk. " he added "The staff at the hospital were very supportive of the walk and did everything they could to get me up and on my way as soon as possible." Following the accident Michael has been unable to carry his 35 pound rucksack but has received tremendous support from friends and family in the UK who have taken it in turns to go out and transit the luggage along the route of the walk, Michael said, "I have been amazed and inspired by how people have rallied round at great cost to keep the walk on track. As a result I have managed to cover another 365 miles in the month since the accident which keeps everything on schedule."

WALK FOR TRUCE.



On July 27 Michael was invited to lead an event marking 1 year to go before the London Games in the Olympic Museum in Sarajevo and was accompanied by Olympians, political leaders and British diplomats.

Sarajevo provides inspiration

The first and only place that the Olympic truce has been implemented in any significant way was in Sarajevo in 1994.

The Olympic truce resolution had been passed for the first time by the United Nations General Assembly for the Lillehammer Winter Games in Norway. The day before the opening ceremony of the Games a mortar shell landed in the busy market square of Sarajevo killing 66 people and wounding over 200. The International Olympic Committee and the United Nations invoked the truce resolution to call a ceasefire to allow vital humanitarian aid

into the besieged former Olympic city. In Sarajevo Michael met with survivors and those involved in that international effort to bring relief into the dreadful suffering of the city and afterwards said, "I believe Sarajevo offers a model for what could happen in conflict zones all around the world during the period of the Olympic truce by opening a humanitarian through which vaccinations and immunisations could be delivered to women and children."



British Embassies and the Truce

Michael Bates paid tribute to the tremendous support he has received from British Embassies and Consulates on his journey from Greece.

Michael said, "the level of support and enthusiasm from British Embassies and Consulates has been outstanding and has been key to building the momentum behind the truce and a clear indication that the British Foreign Office is determined to see a widespread implementation of the Olympic truce for the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games." In particular Michael paid tribute to staff and diplomats in Tirana, Pristina, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Split, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Milan (pictured), Rome, The Holy See, Geneva, Berne, Berlin, Luxemburg and the Olympic truce team in the FCO, London.

Truce in Tirana?

When Michael arrived into the Albanian capital, Tirana in late June there was a political stalemate as a result of disputed elections and as a result the main Opposition parties were boycotting the parliament and the workings of government had ground to a halt.

Following meetings with the president, prime minister, deputy prime minister, Speaker of the Parliament and senior members of all the main political parties Michael said, "There seemed to be a genuine desire on the part of all politicians to break the deadlock, because they could see the harm it was doing to the country, but there was uncertainty as to how to do so without appearing to concede their arguments and look weak to their supporters."

The suggestion was made that representatives of all the political parties be invited to undertake a 'walk for truce'. Michael said, "I was amazed that everyone turned up to walk five miles together and then have breakfast. There was lots of banter and a humour, but underlying this was a display of a huge amount of courage to publicly work for reconciliation at a time of conflict. It may not have changed the politically nationally, but it certainly changed a few of us internally, which is a start."



Schools could hold the key to truce

Michael described his visit to the International School in Geneva as "the highlight" of his walk to date.

The International school was established in the 1920s to educate children of the diplomats attending the League of Nations. Today the school has over 4500 students drawn from over 125 nationalities.

Michael said, "Throughout this walk I have found that young people seem able to grasp the purpose and possibilities of the Olympic truce better than anyone." After speaking to three assembly groups and the Student Council the students and staff have adopted the Olympic truce

as their 'school project' and have said that they would write to every national mission to the UN in Geneva and ask them what they were planning to do to implement the Olympic truce. Michael said, "I think that letters from young people reminding politicians and diplomats about what they have just signed up to and asking what they intend to do about it could be the most powerful aspect of the entire campaign." Michael has been invited back to the school in March, 2012 to see how the campaign has gone.





Michael is invited to present awards to young athletes in the ancient Panatheniac Stadium in Athens, the only stadium in the world to host Games in both the Ancient (330 BC) and Modern (1896 AD) eras

Quick history of the truce

The Games were designed as a way of allowing fighting men to lay down their weapons without looking weak to their opponents and even more importantly to their supporters.

In the Ancient Games athletes competed not as Athenians, Spartans etc, but together as Olympians.

It was believed that if it could be shown that people could come together and there could be peace in Greece for the sixteen days of the Sacred truce then it demonstrated that peace and unity were possible for longer.

The Ancient Games were held every four years continuously for over eleven centuries and violations of the Sacred truce were extremely rare.

In the Modern Olympics started in 1896 the truce was viewed as symbolic.

The Games were designed as a sporting competition between nations.

The Modern Games have been held for just over one century and have already been cancelled three times because of war, subject to mass boycotts five times, terrorist attacks twice and the truce has been violated on virtually every single occasion.

In 1993 in preparation for the Lillehammer Winter Games in Norway the Olympic truce was made a Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Olympic truce is proposed every two years jointly by the host nation of the Summer or Winter Olympics and the IOC and calls upon member states to 'Pursue initiatives for peace and reconciliation' during the Games.

Since 1994 the Olympic truce has been signed by virtually all member states at the UN but implemented by none.

Quick Q & A with Michael:

Q. Where did the idea of the Walk for Truce come from?

A. The decision not to have the traditional international torch relay from Greece to the host city. I thought that was a missed opportunity to bring the message of peace and hope up through the Balkans, along the former front line of the Cold War and across the former battlefields of Europe.

Q. You started your walk on Good Friday (22 April, 2011) and aim to arrive back on 15 February, 2012 what are the significance of those dates?

A. Good Friday was chosen as a start date because it was the date of the 'Good Friday Agreement' which was a truce which is still working in Northern Ireland and it shows what is possible. February 15 will be 300 days since I set off and I will have covered approximately 3000 miles.

Q. You have said that the end point of your walk will be the House of Lords and not the Olympic Stadium in London – why?

A. I have always said that this is a political campaign to get politicians to implement an international political agreement which they have freely signed. I am not an athlete. I am a politician – Parliament is therefore my 'Olympic stadium'.

Q. Why did you choose to walk alone?

A. It was just the quickest way to get started. I have since found that in the countries I have visited the simplicity of the walk, added to the fact I am foregoing my Parliamentary income for ten months to undertake it and funding it from private resources all helps to strengthen the message.

Q. Do you have any support team?

A. Yes I have an amazing group of friends at Westminster who volunteer their time to help. They are led by Gary Streeter MP and include Michael Green who is project manager; John Glen MP; my sister, Alison Hardy; Nigel Double; Julie Spence our CARE Intern and Xuelin Black.



FUTURE DIARY:

DECEMBER 2011:

Walking through France, Luxembourg and Germany.

Visits to Frankfurt, Bonn and Cologne.

Christmas Day: Walk along the route of part of the former Berlin Wall.

January 2012:

5 January: arrive into Paris (birthplace of the modern Olympic Games).

Walk from Paris to Brussels.

Ceremony in Menen to mark the Christmas Truce of 1914 and plans for a permanent memorial on Flanders Fields.

February 2012:

8 February: arrive back into UK (possibly via Channel Tunnel – permissions being sought).

15 February: arrive back at House of Lords, Westminster (point of departure in April, 2011).

July 2012:

3 July: National Prayer Breakfast, Westminster on the theme of the 'Olympic Truce' (Chaired by Lord Bates).

27 July: Start of the Olympic truce and the Olympic Games.

September 2012:

September 9: Conclusion of the Olympic truce and the Paralympic Games.

Follow Michael on:
www.walkfortrue.org

Or contact him at:

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