

The President

Damian Collins
Culture, Media and Sport Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 January 2017

Dear Damian,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January 2017, explaining that the Committee believes there is a discrepancy between my evidence to the Committee on 2 December 2015 (you say I said that I *“did not know about specific allegations about Russian doping and corruption until Hajo Seppelt’s documentary about the IAAF was broadcast”*) and David Bedford’s recent evidence to you that he sent me a document detailing *“allegations relating to the senior management of the IAAF and the Russian marathon runner Liliya Shobukhova”* in August 2014. There is in fact no discrepancy, as I am happy now to explain.

First, it is important to be clear about what I did and did not say to the Committee. In fact, I was not asked by your Committee when I first heard the allegation that persons at the IAAF were involved in the corruption of Russian doping cases:

- Early in the session (Question 188), your predecessor as Chair pointed me to a statement I had made that the IAAF had not covered up wrongdoing, and suggested that the subsequent disclosures of corruption that were being investigated by WADA showed my statement was wrong. In response, I explained that it was important to distinguish between (1) allegations that the IAAF had not properly followed up on the results of its blood testing; and the (subsequent) allegations (2) that there was widespread corruption in the Russian anti-doping processes; and (3) that persons at the IAAF may have been complicit in that corruption. I pointed out my statement had referred only to the first topic, and I maintained it was accurate (and I note that the WADA Independent Commission subsequently agreed, in section 3 of its report dated 14 January 2016).

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- I was then asked when I became aware of the allegations of blood doping in athletics (Q212), and I explained that as a Council member I found out about doping cases only once they were completed and a ban was announced, but that over time I (along with other Council members) had noted and expressed concern about the number of doping cases involving Russian athletes, and we were told that the systems in place were considered robust, but that the IAAF Anti-Doping Department would follow up specifically on our concerns with the Russian national federation. I noted that I was not aware at that time of allegations that the Russian anti-doping processes had been corrupted (Q217).
- It was pointed out, and I readily acknowledged, that it subsequently transpired that the head of the IAAF Anti-Doping Department and others had connived with the Russian national federation in the cover up of certain anti-doping cases for a period (Q228). I was not asked when I first became aware of that.
- Later in the session I was asked about allegations concerning Papa Massata Diack, and I answered by noting that those allegations were aired by ARD in 2014 (I said I thought it was November 2014, but in fact it was December) (Q335). I was not asked whether this was the first time I had heard those allegations, or whether I knew about them before the ARD documentary; nor did I make any comment on that one way or the other.

However, I wish to confirm that to the best of my recollection I was not aware prior to December 2014 of the allegations that Papa Massata Diack/others associated with the IAAF were involved in covering up Russian doping. This is even though I accept that in August 2014 David Bedford emailed me documents containing allegations along those lines. To explain:

- I was out of the country for most of August 2014. I was in Marrakesh from 5 to 10 August 2014, first for my sister's 50th birthday and then for the African Congress and Championships. Then I was in Switzerland from 11 to 18 August with my four children, first walking in the mountains and then in Zurich at the European Championships. On 18 August, I flew to Singapore for the Grand Prix, staying till 22 August. From 23 to 30 August, I was on holiday with my family in Spain.
- I do recall David Bedford calling me at some point in early August 2014, while I was overseas, and asking me if I was aware of allegations being put to the IAAF Ethics Commission by Liliya Shobukhova. I said no and he said in that case he would email me copies of documents he had previously sent to the Ethics Commission. That was all he said; he did not provide any more detail about what the allegations were, and I did not ask him. My reaction was that he wanted to be sure that the Ethics Commission was in fact dealing with these matters, and that if he thought it was serious enough to contact me, then I needed to do what I always did (and still do) in such cases, i.e., inform the Chair of the Ethics Commission, Michael Beloff QC, of the conversation with David, as was my duty under the IAAF Ethics Code, so that the Ethics Commission, which had exclusive authority over such matters under the Code, could decide what to do about it.

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- You have a copy of the email that David subsequently sent me, on 8 August 2014. I tend not to go through my emails myself, particularly when I am on holiday with my family; instead I speak to my office and they tell me what has come in. My memory is they told me I had got an email from David Bedford. After our call, I was expecting it, so I did not ask for any detail about it or the documents that came with it, but just asked them to set up a call for me with Michael Beloff so I could tell him about my conversation with David.
- I believe my office came back and said they could not set up a call because Michael was on holiday, so I dictated a short email to be sent to him, on 14 August 2014. A copy is enclosed, along with his response of 16 August. I note that it indicates I spoke to David Bedford that day, but in fact as best I recall it was a few days before. Otherwise, however, the email is consistent with my memory: David had thought the allegations were serious enough to send information about them first to the Ethics Commission and then to me, and I knew I therefore now had a duty to inform the Ethics Commission that I was aware of allegations having been made, and I wanted to ensure that Michael had all of the information David had sent to me.
- Michael replied on 16 August, asking me to forward what David had sent me and noting *"I suspect it is material that I already have but you will be fulfilling your own duty by sending it to me"*. When my office told me about Michael's email, I had them forward David's original email to Michael, which they did on 18 August, and he replied the next day, saying: *"As I surmised, nothing new to me, but it is important that all members of IAAF family from the highest to the lowest appreciate that they are under a duty to report any potential breach of the code which comes to their attention"*. Having received these responses from Michael, I was satisfied that I had done what I was required to do under the Code of Ethics, that the information was in the right place and would be properly followed up.
- It is important to note that, as I have already explained to the Committee, in 2014 the Ethics Commission was restricted from informing either the IAAF or the public about what it was doing. This is something I changed in late 2015 so that the Ethics Commission was able to confirm they were undertaking an investigation on senior figures in the IAAF.
- I note David also told the Committee that he and I met on 21 November 2014 at the British Athletics Writers' Association lunch in London, and he told me then that Ms Shobukhova's lawyer, Mike Morgan, wanted to meet with me. I don't specifically remember that meeting but I do remember David asking me at some point if I would meet with Mr Morgan, to which I said I would have to take legal advice on whether it was proper for me to do so, given that I knew allegations made by Ms Shobukhova had been put to the IAAF Ethics Commission. I don't remember there being any more to the exchange than that. As before, David did not mention, and we did not discuss, the substance of Ms Shobukhova's allegations. He told your Committee that I would have been aware of them by then if I had read the attachments to his email, but I had not read them.

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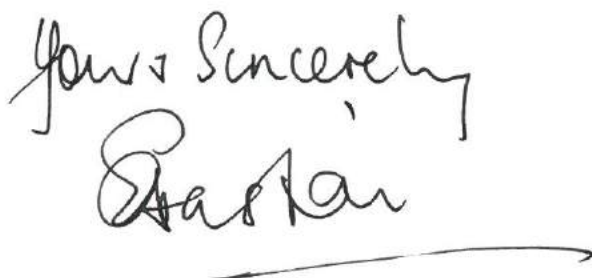
- On 3 December 2014, the ARD documentary that alleged rampant doping in Russian athletics was aired, and that also featured Liliya Shobukhova saying that she had paid €450,000 to people at the Russian federation to cover up her doping violation, some of which was subsequently paid back to her by a company in Singapore called Black Tidings. That was the first time I heard these allegations, and a further allegation came out pretty quickly after that that Black Tidings was connected with Papa Massata Diack.
- David told your Committee that I went back to him on 7 December 2014 and said that I had been advised that I should not meet with Mr Morgan while the IAAF Ethics Commission was investigating his client's matter. I remember doing that, although I don't remember the precise date. I note David told your Committee that I texted him "*Meeting the president this afternoon, will post you*", that he replied "*Ask him why the company that paid Liliya Shobukhova back €300,000 (Black Tidings) is based at Papa Massata's business partner, Ian Tan Tong Han*", and that I replied "*Ethics Commission know this and more*". I don't have my text messages from that period, but that all sounds right. The allegations of links between Black Tidings and Papa Massata Diack were in the public domain by then, and Papa Massata Diack stepped down from his consultancy role with the IAAF shortly thereafter, pending the outcome of the Ethics Commission investigation. Mr Valentin Balakhnichev was also required to step down as IAAF Treasurer at the same time, and ultimately the IAAF Ethics Commission banned them both for life. A French criminal investigation was also commenced, and remains ongoing, and the IAAF is doing everything it can to cooperate with and assist that investigation.

In conclusion then, I was not asked by your Committee when I first knew about the allegations that persons at the IAAF were involved in the cover up of Russian doping cases, and I have made clear I did not read David Bedford's emailed documents but asked my office to forward them to the person and the Commission with exclusive authority to investigate, in accordance with my obligations under the IAAF Ethics Code then in force.

I trust this clarifies the matter to the satisfaction of the Committee, and as such there are no grounds for suggesting that I misled the Committee in any way in December 2015. I can confirm I am happy for this letter and its enclosures to be made a formal part of the Committee's record.

I believe the Committee now has all of the information it needs from me to prepare its report. If in doing so it seems to you that you need any further information from me, it would be helpful if you would write again to explain what and why, so I can do my best to assist.

Yours Sincerely
Sebastian

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the words "Yours Sincerely" on the first line and "Sebastian" on the second line, followed by a long horizontal line.