

BETA



England should withdraw from the 2022 World Cup

Ed West

Follow @edwest

13 November 2014 13:38



Image: Getty

Mark Steyn **once wrote** of the United Nations: ‘It’s a good basic axiom that if you take a quart of ice-cream and a quart of dog feces and mix ’em together the result will taste more like the latter than the former. That’s the problem with the U.N.’

It’s a maxim that works double for Fifa, world football’s governing body, which has just cleared future World Cup hosts Qatar and Russia of any wrongdoing but managed to criticise the FA. **The BBC reports:**

‘As for Russia, they have also been cleared, although the report

noted its bid team made “only a limited amount of documents available for review”.

‘According to the report, the Russian team hired computers that were subsequently destroyed, denying the inquiry access to email accounts.’

To quote Maya Angelou: You couldn't make it up.

Without wishing to get into a confrontation with any lawyers from the charming little Islamic state, or to anger the Russians (especially as critics of Russia tend to end up brutally stabbing themselves to death while shaving), some of us feel a slight touch of scepticism about Qatar in particular hosting the tournament. It's not just that the country is hellishly hot in the summer, or that several hundred indentured servants have died building their stadiums, or that apostasy is still a capital crime in the country and it has been host to the funding of Isis and other terrorist groups; it's just, as Rod Liddle **pointed out**, there are one or two queries about the whole voting process.

ADVERTISEMENT

As Rod wrote of Fifa:

‘The organisation is riven with corruption from top to bottom and there is a perfectly good case for saying that our home nations should withdraw from it entirely; our continued membership is a connivance with an institution which has been shown, repeatedly, to be bent, and which has not the slightest inclination to change its procedures.’

Now that Fifa has made this decision, can England really go ahead and enter the 2022 World Cup? Let's withdraw, and see who joins us.

As an aside, the game theory behind the corruption of Fifa is quite interesting. Part of this is explained in Paul Collier's excellent book *Exodus*, where he looked at a study of diplomats at the UN in New York,

by academics Ray Fisman and Edward Miguel. During the period of study diplomats were immune from parking fines, ‘and so the only restraint on a refusal to pay was their own ethical standards. Fisman and Miguel found that the behaviour of diplomats from different countries varied enormously but was well explained by the corruption level prevailing in the country of the diplomat, as measured by standard surveys. Diplomats brought their culture with them.’ But, curiously, their behaviour began to change in New York so that ‘diplomats from high-corruption countries continued not to pay fines, whereas those from low-corruption countries became less likely to pay’.

That’s international bodies for you; in an ideal world only representatives from the top 20 countries on [Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index](#) would be allowed to vote in Fifa, and the whole thing would be run by Danes and Swedes. This is not a perfect world, but the least the FA could do is withdraw England from the 2022 World Cup.

Tags: [Corruption](#), [FIFA](#), [Football](#), [Qatar](#), [Russia](#), [Soccer](#), [UN](#), [United Nations](#), [World Cup](#)

There’s never been a better time to subscribe. A year’s subscription to the print magazine, plus full online and app access from just £1 a week. [Join us now.](#)

← ◀PREVIOUS

NEXT ▶ →

How sure are the Mirror about their White Widow splash?

Steerpike

13 November 2014 11:52

Citizenfour: the paranoia of Snowden & co will bore you to death

Douglas Murray

13 November 2014 13:50

ADVERTISEMENT

12 Comments

Spectator Blogs

 2 Elisa ▾