



**Minutes of the 81st meeting of the English Chess Federation Board
on Saturday 8th February, 2014, at 18.00
at Exmouth Arms, Starcross Street, London NW1 2HR**

Present

Andrew Paulson (AP):	President	
Phil Ehr (PE):	Chief Executive	Chair
David Eustace (DE):	Director of Finance	Minutes from 18.30
Alex Holowczak (AH):	Director of Home Chess	
Lawrence Cooper (LC):	Director of Junior Chess and Education	
David Thomas (DT):	Director of Membership	
Sean Hewitt (SH):	Non Executive Director	

By teleconference

David Openshaw (DO):	Director of International Chess
Julian Clissold (JC):	Non-Executive Director

In attendance

Chris Majer (CEM)	Chairman, Governance Committee	Minutes from 18.20 to 18.30
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Apologies

Nigel Short (NS)

1. It was agreed that PE would chair the meeting.
2. NS declined an invitation to attend because he did not want to distract from discussions regarding AP, a new plane ticket would be required (for which he is not reimbursed) and he did not have a vote.
3. PE noted that the Board Meeting was scheduled to last 1.5 hours, from 18:00 to 19:30. It was agreed that the start of the meeting would be delayed until 18.20 when DE was scheduled to arrive. In the event, CEM recorded the meeting from 18:20 until DE's arrival at 18.30. PE noted that the agenda contained three items: a rather broad discussion point followed by two votes. PE announced that the structure of the meeting should be: opening statements from each Director with AP speaking last, discussion if time permitted and finally the votes. The Board agreed.

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4. Prior to the meeting, AP requested that senior members of Council be invited to attend to witness this highly unusual Board meeting. This request was firmly rejected by the Board. AP also requested an audio recording be made of the meeting solely for the purpose of avoiding conflict while creating the Minutes. Although CEM advised that an audio recording could be made but kept in sole possession of the minutes secretary for the purpose of drafting minutes, some Board members expressed discomfort with this request and it was therefore not actioned.
5. CEM made opening remarks:
 - CEM asked the Board to consider their actions very carefully. During the history of the ECF, a Director had never been removed from Office.
 - Council had known the controversial reputation of AP when they elected him and would pose difficult questions should the Board seek to remove him.
 - This would also reflect badly on the reputation of the ECF.
6. PE gave an opening summary of the current situation:

“Notice of this meeting came from six of the Directors, without consultation of the President, Chief Executive or one of the two Non-Executive Directors. Two Directors explained this by claiming that I had lost objectivity regarding AP. The Agenda for this meeting calls for two votes ‘of confidence’, but it has the tone of a disciplinary hearing, and that is wrong.

At about the same time this meeting was being discussed, I proposed by email a compromise solution to diffuse the FIDE/EUCO controversies whereby both parties would be restrained (see appendix). AP accepted the proposal, but Nigel Short did not. There have been many further conversations and other proposals seeking compromise but all have been dismissed.

I consider that AP has been doing a very good job. AP is absolutely dedicated to the work of the ECF and the advancement of English chess. When a Guardian reporter recently called me, I shared this assessment of AP with him and will continue to do so. Reporters will call again: the World’s chess press is watching what we do.

There is plenty of evidence of AP’s achievements: the charity project is an excellent example; progress has already been made on many of the projects in our strategic papers list.

A board of directors is meant to be an effective group of leaders. To varying extents, each of us is responsible for the failed communications and the Board’s poor climate, in which the pace of change may be a factor. AP and I are the Board’s leaders; therefore we bear the greater responsibility. Council and our members want a functioning Board with a constructive climate.

The leaked AGON memorandum’s description of a point in the negotiations where proposed arrangements would almost certainly have been illegal had they come into operation (which appears not to be the case) does create the appearance of impropriety; but this Board does not intend to nor is it competent to pass judgement on this.

For the good of English chess, particularly the untenable Board climate, I asked AP today to resign.

Nigel Short’s behaviour releasing the AGON memorandum to The Sunday Times resembles that of a whistle-blower, a role we must respect. I am disappointed, however, by the vituperative language he used in the press and in social media, persistently asserting that the AGON memo is proof of a criminal conflict of interest. The lack of circumspection is unbecoming the role of our FIDE Delegate and a Grandmaster.”

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7. Each Director was asked to present the charges against AP and NS which were the cause for this meeting to be convened:

SH:

- i. He had been approached by two executive directors concerning AP's chairing of board meetings. It would be better if PE chaired the Board as per the rules of the federation.
- ii. Issues over the interaction of AP in the international arena (ECU / FIDE), particularly where it was contrary to ECF policy.
- iii. AP's approach with respect to the Board; overriding the responsible executive Director and ignoring the stated will of the Board.
- iv. 29th January meeting did not go well; agenda not finished and many arguments as a result of AP's actions. AP thought it had gone well, others thought not.
- v. Spoken to AP on a number of occasions about his approach in an attempt to resolve these issues; his entrepreneurial background and approach were not helpful for an organisation which required consensus. AP failed to acknowledge that this needed to change.

LC:

- i. At the first December meeting LC raised a point of order about being undermined as Junior Director in dealings with UKCC/UKCA.
- ii. A number of meetings and discussions took place without his involvement, arranged at times LC couldn't make,
- iii. LC wasn't informed of, or told too late to have chance to participate.
- iv. LC was told on the phone by the President that he wasn't the person to negotiate on behalf of the ECF and was better suited to working in the background. He subsequently refused to recognise in an e-mail thread that the Board had decided that LC was to take an active/lead role in negotiations.
- v. The only updates LC received on this issue are when Sainbayar Tserendorj contacted him on Facebook to ask if LC knew what's going on.
- vi. Despite AP's assertion that the board were being kept fully informed they only found out the latest information when LC asked him in a board thread if ST's Facebook update was accurate.
- vii. LC was glad to have raised the point of order when he did as despite claims at the time that was being ridiculous etc he asserted his point had sadly been proven correct.

AH:

- i. Concerns over a statement made by third parties to AP that there were problems with the British Championships at Aberystwyth. AH not informed at all by AP. He should have been told about this.
- ii. Issue where a Northern organiser (an individual) had apparently been promised by AP the right to organise ECF events without AH being aware.

DO:

- i. DO had proposed AP as President at the October Council meeting and was very positive about his anticipated contribution to the ECF and keen to make it work. DO had a number of meetings with AP to discuss issue starting in mid November in Warsaw.
- ii. However now some Board members and various Council members including Malcolm Pein have a different view
- iii. DO now believes that matters are getting worse and worse and that Council will take a different view of AP's presidency from the October position.
- iv. DO unhappy about AP's treatment of NS in various emails and correspondence, particularly about the threat to take NS to FIDE's Ethics Committee and the deliberate attack on NS in AP's paper on Zurab Azmaiparashvili. NS should be seen as a whistleblower and should be protected. These were not the sort of comments someone in the role of President should make.

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- v. The Kirsan Ilyumzhino/AGON relationship is a disturbing and very unsatisfactory one; this is not a suitable association for a presidential role.
- vi. Council voted in Oct 2012 to support NS as FIDE Delegate and to support Kasparov for FIDE president. This is therefore current ECF policy as it has not been changed. But, despite a number of conversations, AP would not accept that this was current policy. This is one of the reasons for his disputes with NS.
- vii. AP acted effectively as a CEO and therefore responsible for the lack of minutes of Board meetings.
- viii. AP said he wanted to have ECF play a bigger role yet totally ignored our role in G15 Group.
- ix. AP's support of Zurab Azmaiparashvili is damaging to the ECF.
- x. DO felt undermined by AP even though various discussions were held. DO was particularly disturbed by the proposed creation of the Anglophone Group and AP's dealings with Rupert Jones.
- xi. Stewart Reuben was appointed as Manager of Senior Chess without any prior involvement of DO to whom the manager reports.
- xii. AP puts in a lot of hours on chess but sponsorship of English chess did not appear to be one of AP's priorities; yet that was expected off him.
- xiii. Board had not had the opportunity to discuss sponsorship nor generally failed to consult with Board members and no agreed strategic plan had been put in place.

DT:

- i. Not aware of anything in his area not functioning properly, but felt that the Board as a whole was not functioning properly.

DE:

- i. Concerned about the very unsatisfactory way that Board minutes have failed to materialise. The previous individuals responsible for the minutes were not asked about the cause of any problems; the appointment of a professional minutes secretary was unnecessary as two people attending the Board were prepared to provide temporary cover. The top team just did not make basic enquires to solve the problem and this lead to much discontent.
- ii. On creating the Charitable Trust DE considered he was undermined by AP in conversations with the legal adviser and those conversations were not revealed to DE at a two hour meeting to discuss the way forward on this subject.
- iii. AP's chairmanship of the Board was not conducive to team building and getting the best out of all members present.

JC:

- i. JC had made most of his points in a pre-meeting paper. This should be part of the Board's record of the meeting.
- ii. There are two acid tests:
 - What has the Board done to rectify the above disagreements?
 - Have DO and LC brought their issues formally to the Board for resolution?
- iii. The Board has no prior history of Board discussions about the issues raised in the vote.
- iv. Board had not tried hard enough to seek an improved relationship before a vote of confidence was called.
- v. The Board has given no consideration to what happens after the Board agrees a vote of no confidence? It cannot go forward with a poor President/Board relationship and has no alternative plan.
- vi. The Board has not thought about the consequences; Council will think that the Board has not addressed this failure and that directors who are otherwise competent and professional, have not considered how a new scenario would be handled.
- vii. Not heard that the Board has sought solutions.

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- viii. For NS the Board also needs a solution; it was not clever on his part to go the Sunday Times and risked reputational damage to the ECF; however, this is a side issue and is not well handled with a confidence motion; the main issue is about the Board itself and how it can function if the vote is agreed.

AP:

“I will be very careful to answer your complaints in two parts: first, to show that in their specifics they are largely inaccurate; and second, to acknowledge the existence of a very real sense of unfocused anxiety among the Board members and propose ways of assuaging it:

1. The specific charges of the Directors are erroneous:
 - i. Regarding SH: “I had two lengthy dinners and several phone conversations discussing all the issues SH cites; these discussions were always productive and satisfactory to both of us. Sean attended the first Board meeting, missed the next two and tried to get the fourth one cancelled saying there was nothing to discuss. He advocated that Board meetings be conducted by Skype. He has yet to present an example of my action ‘contrary to ECF policy’.”
 - ii. Regarding NS: “Let us not mangle the English language. A whistle-blower is an employee who at great risk to himself exposes a crime for the public good. In this case, for purely political reasons, Nigel Short leaked a stolen document to The Sunday Times that had been bought by Garry Kasparov. This is called ‘dirty tricks.’ Nigel Short has once again put his personal ambitions above the interests of English chess, or any chess for that matter.”
 - iii. Regarding DE: “David Eustace felt undermined when he discovered that I had consulted David Anderton on a technical legal matter. I spoke to DA prior to a preliminary meeting where we were to consider several possible solutions to the ECF Charitable Status issue, so as to confirm that one of the options to be discussed was indeed a satisfactory solution under English law. This seemed to me to be a reasonable approach so as not to waste people’s time on something that wouldn’t work.”
 - iv. Regarding AH: “Alex has disingenuously repeated his imagined hurts. I discussed both of these issues with him earlier today. He confirmed to me that in both cases he had been misinformed and misled and was satisfied with my explanation. There is nothing here.”
 - v. Regarding LC: “Loz felt insulted and hurt by being marginalised and excluded from negotiations ... which weren’t taking place. In my presidential election platform, I advocated the general principle that the ECF should welcome back under its wings all elements of English chess that had been alienated from it over the years. I identified UKCA and UKSCC, representing 55,000 chess-playing children, as a priority and asked the Chief Executive to produce a Term Sheet which would be acceptable both to the ECF Council and to Michael Basman and his team; subsequently, other groups (such as EPSCA) were to be encouraged to work with us under the same terms. The Chief Executive is compiling a chronology of this process for the Board, which is forthcoming: we held one introductory meeting, we invited Basman to a Board meeting to present his case, and I had one meeting after we decided not to proceed with the UKCA negotiations, on a different subject (lining up trainers for a Pushkin House chess club). No other meetings were held and I had no private conversations with anyone on Basman’s team. Aware of his anxiety (initially he had been categorically against such a relationship), I formally reassured LC by phone that no terms would be proposed to UKCA which he had not signed off on.”
 - vi. Regarding DO: “I have enthusiastically backed David Openshaw and his plans for development of top level English chess, including personally guaranteeing a certain level of fundraising for the Olympiad team and supporting developing a £3m plan for long-term elite development. Our only point of divergence is over

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his rather extreme position that I don't have the right to stand for Deputy President of the European Chess Union (or any other position, for that matter) without the ECF Board's permission. This question was resolved in my favour at the last Board Meeting."

- vii. Regarding the Agenda of today's meeting: "It should be noted that the Agenda for this meeting claims that Items 23 and 24 on the Agenda for the last meeting (Minutes for which are forthcoming) were not addressed. This is false. These questions were resolved by votes: (a) it was agreed that I could stand for ECU Deputy President without the permission of the ECF Board, and (b) it was agreed that as President of the ECF I could lobby for the appointment of additional competent members to FIDE Commissions at the next AGM in Tromso in August."

AP described a number of compromises he had proposed to the Board to resolve the current impasse:

- i. Drafting a better description of the role of the President in the Statutes.
- ii. Allowing the CEO to chair all meetings pending a resolution of the issue by the Governance Committee.
- iii. Pre-approval by the Board of all initiatives undertaken by the President.
- iv. Against the charge that AP has his own agenda, he commented: "My only agenda is to do a good job for English chess, promote inclusiveness from as many parts of the English chess community as possible, well-represent the interests of the ECF to FIDE and the ECU."
- v. AP recognises that the pace of change he sought may have been too fast, but noted that he hoped to produce concrete achievements to bring to the Council meeting in April.
- vi. AP regretted the ECF Board's real consternation over his decision to stand for a position on the ECU Board, but noted that the Board has no jurisdiction over his ability to stand for such a role. He also noted that he would be bringing the headquarters of the ECU to London, advocating the interests and values of English chess in the ECU and that although the presidential candidate on his ticket was a controversial figure, each of the nine members of the ECU Board had an equal vote.
- vii. AP apologised for allowing the most recent letter to the Board (discussing Nigel Short's ethical violations vis-à-vis leaking a stolen Memorandum to the press) to be made public. He felt that after a certain point he had to defend himself against personal attacks and noted that the Board had not made any moves to protect him by censuring Nigel Short's egregious behaviour.
- viii. AP regretted the impression of inappropriate behaviour (vis-à-vis Kirsan Ilyumzhinov) in the stolen Memorandum, but reminded the Board that it was an impression not the reality. AP reminded the Board that at its first Board meeting he offered to answer any questions at any time the Board might have about his relationship with AGON/FIDE.

8. CEM advised the Chair to call for the vote. PE called for the votes, noting there was no time for a discussion.

9. Motion of confidence in Andrew Paulson as President of the English Chess Federation.

In favour: 2 (AP, JC)
Against: 5 (SH, DO, AH, LC, DE)
Abstain: 1 (DT)
The Chairman (PE) did not vote.

10. Vote of confidence in Nigel Short as the FIDE Delegate of the English Chess Federation

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In favour: 2 (DO, LC)
Against: 0
Abstain: 6 (JC, AP, DE, DT, AH, SH)
The chairman (PE) did not vote.

11. Closure of the meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.30.

P Ehr

Date

Appendix – Additions to the minutes for clarification purposes

1. Reason for the meeting and agenda:

At the Board meeting of 19th January 2014, the Board failed to deal with two important items on the agenda with their relevant motions:

23. FIDE Commissions

24. ECU presidential Election

Given recent events, a majority of the Board now believe that these two subjects and related issues need to be urgently discussed and resolutions sought. This view is further exacerbated by the recent Sunday Times article, correspondence between Andrew Paulson, Nigel Short and Malcolm Pein, the referral of the ECF's FIDE Delegate to the FIDE Ethics Commission and references to further action at the ECF at the April Council meeting.

Therefore, this letter is to request that you convene an urgent, additional Board meeting at 6.00pm on Saturday 8th February 2014 at The Exmouth Arms, 1 Starcross St, London NW1 2HR to deal solely with the following:

1. A discussion about the issues raised in the recent print and web articles, various claims involving the recent activities of Andrew Paulson and Nigel Short concerning the imminent ECU and FIDE elections, and various threats to refer ECF members to the FIDE Ethics Committee.
2. Motion: A vote of confidence in Andrew Paulson as President of the English Chess Federation
3. Motion: A vote of confidence in Nigel Short as the FIDE Delegate of the English Chess Federation

2. Letter from Chief Executive:

From: Phil Ehr <chief.executive@englishchess.org.uk>
Date: 31 January 2014 18:19:11 GMT
To: ECF Board <board@englishchess.org.uk>
Cc: David Anderton <davidanderton@blueyonder.co.uk>
Subject: Diffuse Controversy

Dear Board,

Emotive public displays from Nigel Short and Andrew Paulson are calmer today than a couple days ago. I feel that now is the time when Board action can effectively disengage the parties and diffuse the controversy.

We need to act on both form and substance. Although the dispute over the AGON-FIDE relationship deals with a small area of routine ECF activity, it is producing a range of negative effects on our ambitions: undermining conversations with potential sponsors, commercial directors, commercial and media partners; as well as other leading actors in English chess.

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1. In the first instance, we need to act on form, i.e., without passing judgment on their respective positions. I suggest that the Board adopt the following motion:

For the good of English chess, the Board requests Andrew Paulson and Nigel Short to demonstrate their good faith by:

- re-affirming their primary allegiance to the English Chess Federation while serving in their respective ECF roles, the authority of the ECF Board to moderate the public display of their disputes, and their respect of normal conventions of confidentiality in Board proceedings
- renouncing recourse to legal action against one another at any time for torts presumed prior to today's date
- renouncing any action to refer the other to the FIDE Ethics Commission in the absence of ECF Board action
- without restricting prerogatives of ECF Council members, renounce any motion to the ECF Board or Council seeking to remove the other from his ECF position
- confirm that they will not comment on or allude to each other regarding the AGON-FIDE Memorandum and Contract, as well as their relationships with FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and the FIDE Presidential Candidate Garry Kasparov in the media or any public forum, including Twitter and Facebook
- seeking to moderate the tone of public debate that their respective representatives and colleagues are likely to continue

If one party subscribes to this Board resolution but the other does not, or if either party violates the Board resolution, the Board retains the right to warn either or both parties, withdraw our confidence in their suitability to serve and refer them to the FIDE Ethics Commission.

2. Secondly, the Board needs to act on substance. At our next scheduled Board meeting in five weeks' time, we should assess both men's conduct against the resolution. At that meeting, or the following meeting prior to Council, we should decide our position on:

- the substantive charges of unethical conduct
- the FIDE and ECU presidential elections

This email is confidential to the Board distribution list, as customary, as well as the legal advisor. Both Andrew and Nigel should comment. Eight directors (Dave E, Dave T, Alex, David O, Lawrence, Sean, Julian, me), the Governance Committee Chairman and the Legal Advisor are invited to discuss the Board's course of action using individual email address. For those able (and not all are), I will host a Skype discussion tomorrow (Saturday) at 3:30. An email discussion can continue and a vote taken among all nine directors (including Andrew) will follow.

Kind regards,
Phil

Phil Ehr
Chief Executive
English Chess Federation

Office 01424 775222 | mobile 07740 428 029 | www.englishchess.org.uk

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3. Pre-meeting Statement by Julian Clissold:

Statement from Julian Clissold ECF Board Meeting London 8th February 2014

Apologies that I cannot be there in person, however I am running an EPSCA Chess tournament in Manchester 9-5p.m. and I cannot reasonably find a substitute for this activity. In lieu of being able to comment at the meeting I want to make a number of points about the substantive issues and about how this matter is being conducted.

The letter requesting the meeting states:

At the Board meeting of 19th January 2014, the Board failed to deal with two important items on the agenda with their relevant motions:

- 23. FIDE Commissions
- 24. ECU presidential Election

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Given recent events, a majority of the Board now believe that these two subjects and related issues need to be urgently discussed and resolutions sought. This view is further exacerbated by the recent Sunday Times article, correspondence between Andrew Paulson, Nigel Short and Malcolm Pein, the referral of the ECF's FIDE Delegate to the FIDE Ethics Commission and references to further action at the ECF at the April Council meeting.

Therefore, this letter is to request that you convene an urgent, additional Board meeting at 6.00pm on Saturday 8th February 2014 at The Exmouth Arms, 1 Starcross St, London NW1 2HR to deal solely with the following:

1. A discussion about the issues raised in the recent print and web articles, various claims involving the recent activities of Andrew Paulson and Nigel Short concerning the imminent ECU and FIDE elections, and various threats to refer ECF members to the FIDE Ethics Committee.
2. Motion: A vote of confidence in Andrew Paulson as President of the English Chess Federation
3. Motion: A vote of confidence in Nigel Short as the FIDE Delegate of the English Chess Federation

Substantive issues

How does the ECF handle the matter of the ECU elections?

I have had a lengthy conversation with both Nigel Short and Andrew Paulsen about the matter of the elections to the European Chess Union. I have also followed the various twitter and other information that have been circulated. I am concerned that the tone of some of this has been frenetic and claims and counter claims have been presented and remain largely conjecture. ECF Board should reaffirm its strong belief that it wants the ECF to punch its weight in national and international circles, **but then seek an appropriate process** through which the Board can be confident that it is taking an appropriate path in relation to the specific moves over the ECU elections and the FIDE elections later in the year. Nothing the ECF undertakes should detract from the ECF's reputation for being serious, committed and ethical. Inaction would be better than an action that compromised English Chess.

I believe Andrew Paulsen's suggestion that we identify a small subset of the Board to meet all the candidates is a proper way forward. It may not answer all the questions and may not dispel all the doubts but it would provide some platform of independent assessment of the probity of those involved. The meeting of colleagues with Zurab Azmaiparashvili is the first step in this process and is to be welcomed. The preparation of questions for that meeting and for a subsequent meeting with Denailov would also be helpful.

Dispute between ECF's FIDE Delegate and ECF President

This very public dispute has been a reputational disaster for the ECF. It should not have happened; ECF should not learn from national newspapers about the involvement of its FIDE delegate. The English Chess world must have thought we had returned to the chaotic days when plot and counter plot embroiled the BCF. The Board now needs to insist that bridges are built. **The Chief Executive's proposed way forward (Diffuse Controversy email 31/01/2014) does exactly that and has my full support.** Both parties need to subscribe to that approach without any reservation or ambiguity. Failure to do so can be discussed at a future Board meeting. The ECF Board collectively and individually must take seriously the need to build a reputation for a serious and ethical organisation that operates with transparency and consultation. This episode shows a disunited Board in which members are not at ease with each other. As a Board we have to take steps to ensure we do not have this situation recurring.

The ECF Board, the Emergency Board Meeting and managing internal conflict

This is not the first or the only matter that has raised differences within the Board, although it has been the most public and the most far reaching. My paper at the last Board Meeting suggested that we must find other ways to act as a Board; these conflicts underline the extent to which my concerns about our internal dynamics were apposite. Such differences will continue, they are what being a Board is about. But there are better ways of handling them than the current approach.

The decision to call for an emergency board meeting seems to me to fall into the category of a poorly managed response to internal conflict. It immediately puts in place crisis management when it should have first put in place attempts to build bridges.

David Eustace helpfully suggested at the last Board meeting that we should insist that the President and the FIDE Delegate sit down and do not get up until they have settled their differences and can agree on advice to the Board as to the way forward. I think that this advice still stands and should be pursued. If they cannot settle their differences they can articulate the basis for their continued disagreements.

In a conversation with David (Monday 3rd February) he also advises me that Board members are concerned with the way in which the Board Meetings have been run and how individual Directors have been undermined. It is my belief that these issues are also better handled outside the context of an Emergency Meeting.

The Emergency Board Meeting

The Board Meeting is in danger of becoming a platform for both parties (AP and NS) to air their differences in an unconstructive way. What is still needed is mediation and a strong reminder to both parties of the need to find a compromise. Failure to engage in such a process would tell the Board much about the engagement of either party. Unfortunately we may have passed the point where we might have sought mediation between the parties. The Board meeting has been called and will proceed. I have tried to suggest some protocols for running the meeting to allow it to be productive (email to Board Members 2/2/2014).

However it remains the case that if the Board wants a positive outcome and not just to ascribe blame, then the President and the FIDE delegate still have to meet to settle their differences.

Motions of No Confidence

I am not in favour of motions of no confidence. They suggest that the Board has failed to find a solution to its internal differences. They are a matter of last resort and where they are passed they should really lead to resignation. The Board cannot reasonably go forward with such an internal expression of dissatisfaction.

I look to Andrew to re-establish the vision he presented at his election; to distance himself from the FIDE ECU disputes and to commit to an appropriate process, before the Board decides how it goes forward internationally; and to indicate his support for the various Directorships, notably the Junior Directorate; this should include an acknowledgement that Directors can expect the autonomy to pursue their agreed objectives. If this is forthcoming then I would not support the vote. If it is not forthcoming, then I would want to know what he brings to the table to offset these issues.

I look to Nigel to undertake not to conduct Chess business through the pages of the national media; to work harder to bring the issues and understandings relating to International Chess to the attention of the Board; and to ensure that he has the support of the Board as and

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when he acts on behalf of English Chess. If those are forthcoming I would not support the motion. If they are not then again I would want to know what else he brings to the table to offset these serious issues.

My support for these motions would only come forward where there was evidence of a complete and irrevocable break down in trust between the parties. I would expect that in this case the Board, the President, and the Fide Delegate would all be “reconsidering their position”.

I would urge the Board not to support either motion of no confidence. They are admissions of failure, and that is a collective failure as well as the individual failures. Andrew’s handling of the directorships happens in part because we have not grasped the nettle and said – we want Directors to enjoy control and independence in the context of ECF Policy, we want meeting chaired in a different way, we want your approach to international chess to be ethical and unimpeachable.

Similarly Nigel’s foray into the national media is because we have failed to identify for him how the Board feels, what it wants advice on and how we expect the ECF to be viewed externally. These are not personal failures any more or less than they are Board failures for which we must all bear responsibility (one of the thrusts of my paper).

I hope Board members use the emergency meeting to plainly state their concerns and decide how to build from them. That building will be about Nigel and Andrew but it will also be about us, how we behave and how we move forward.