

Russia could be let off the hook BEFORE end of investigation by British drug-buster and WADA president Sir Craig Reddie

- **WADA president Sir Craig Reddie has ‘no intention’ of taking any action against Russia and assured them they won't be singled out**
- **Britain’s most senior international sports politician doesn't want to disrupt his friendship with Russian sports minister Vitaly Mutko**
- **Senior Russian insiders say they ‘take comfort’ from approach by WADA**
- **Sir Craig insists he needs to tread a diplomatic line in his WADA role**
- **Russia is central to ongoing controversy in athletics and could see more dopers punished over the next few days**
- **World Anti-Doping Agency is widely perceived as ultimate ‘policeman’ of world sport against doping**

By [Nick Harris for The Mail on Sunday](#)

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Fears that the British head of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) may be taking a soft approach to Russian drugs cheats have grown with the revelation he has assured them they won't be singled out for a clampdown.

Russia has more dopers serving bans than any other country. But The Mail on Sunday can exclusively reveal that Sir Craig Reddie, WADA president and arguably Britain's most senior international sports politician, has told Russian sports minister Vitaly Mutko there is 'no intention' WADA will take any action against Russia to disrupt the pair's friendship. Senior Russian insiders say they 'take comfort' from this approach by WADA, although it may raise concerns such messages from WADA are inappropriate.

Sir Craig insists he needs to tread a diplomatic line in his WADA role, which he has held since January 2014. Last week he re-iterated he was against banning any nation from competing, no matter how prolific their doping patterns. He said such bans would be ‘blunt-edged’ and ‘damage the innocent.’



Russia could be let off the hook by World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) president Sir Craig Reedie

But Russia is central to the ongoing controversy in athletics with a raft of historic Russian dopers expected to be retrospectively punished over the next few days.

Their athletics set-up remains under active investigation by an independent commission headed by former WADA president Dick Pound over allegations of more recent systematic doping and cover-ups.

These were aired in December by German TV station ARD, which built on a major investigation published on the same subject by The Mail on Sunday in 2013 on the eve of the world athletics championships in Moscow.

WADA is widely perceived as the ultimate ‘policeman’ of world sport against doping, and as neutral and detached. Yet sources say Reedie sent a message to Mutko in late

April via a senior Russian anti-doping official to suggest that ARD's December programme was of historic not current relevance.

This might be interpreted in some quarters as WADA pre-judging Pound's findings, and there are some in Russia who believe this. Pound told The Mail on Sunday that his commission 'has decided that it should not issue interim statements prior to issuing its report, in order not to interfere with the ongoing investigation.'

It is understood Sir Craig also described ARD's programme to the Russians as simply 'adverse publicity' that has not damaged Russia's relationship with WADA.



Britain's most senior international sports politician doesn't want to disrupt his friendship with Vitaly Mutko

Sir Craig also asked an intermediary, in writing, to tell Mutko he valued their friendship, and 'there is no intention in WADA to do anything to affect that'.

Sir Craig declined to address specific claims made by MoS sources but said: 'We at WADA have a normal institutional relationship with The Russian Ministry of Sport, as is the case with all signatories to the World Anti-Doping Code.'

‘WADA informed the Russian Ministry of Sport of the Independent Commission after it was formed in December 2014. The Commission is entirely independent and is conducting its investigation without any interference of the WADA management including myself.

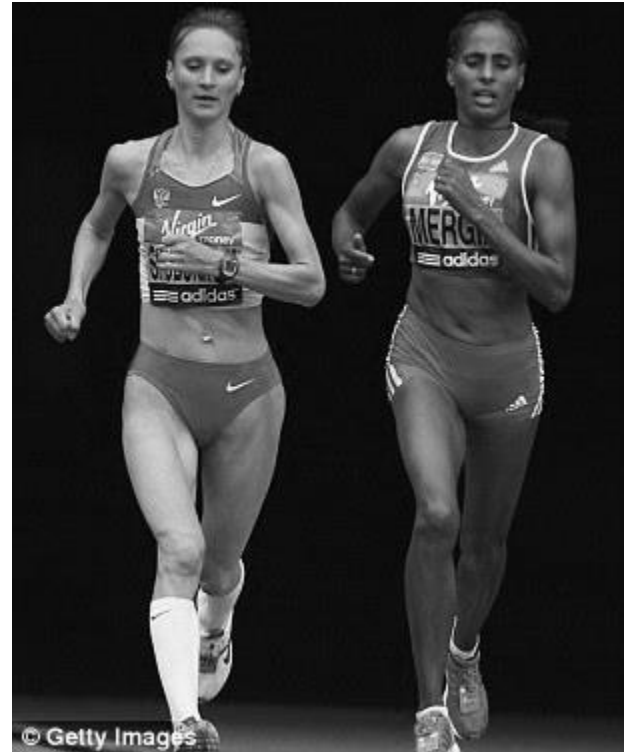


WADA president has ‘no intention’ of taking action because of his relationship with the Russian sports minister

‘The last occasion on which I saw Minister Mutko was at a colleague’s birthday celebration in Moscow in February. At that meeting, I encouraged the Minister to cooperate fully with the Commission, and stated that the Commission may wish to communicate with him as part of its ongoing investigation.

‘After that meeting, Minister Mutko further expressed some concerns that there might be a political agenda directed against Russia. I reassured him that this was not the case and that the purpose of the commission was to objectively examine any evidence which will allow the Commission to take a view on the allegations raised by the television programs.

‘I regard it as only right and proper that WADA maintains regular diplomatic relations and an open dialogue with all members of its Foundation Board. This is important in order to continue in our efforts to protect the rights of the clean athlete at a global level.’



Russian Liliya Shobukhova was stripped of her three Chicago marathon titles and 2010 London win (left)

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-3199484/Russia-let-hook-end-investigation-British-drug-buster-WADA-president-Sir-Craig-Reedie.html#ixzz4eX68pK2B>

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