

[Coach Schäuble](#) ^[1]

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England faces its old nemesis Germany on today in the World Cup and, no doubt, there'll be the usual hackneyed references to past confrontations between these two great nations, whether on the football pitch or on the battlefield.

But, as we've said here before, Chancellor George Osborne would be well advised to cosy up to his German counterpart, Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble. Right on cue, he writes in Thursday's Financial Times a stirring defence of restoring discipline to government spending.

The wailing in the UK is in full cry and Mr Osborne will need nerves of steel to stay the course. If ever a man needed a wise uncle for solace and support, it's Mr Osborne. And that uncle could easily be Mr Schäuble.

Here's just some of Mr Schäuble's no-nonsense pearls of wisdom to justify his government's budget tightening:

?To the question of what caused the recent turmoil in the eurozone, there is one simple answer: excessive budget deficits in many European countries.?

?Governments should not become addicted to borrowing as a quick fix to stimulate demand. Deficit spending cannot become a permanent state of affairs.?

?Seeking to engineer more domestic demand by raising government borrowing even further would?be counter-productive. On the contrary, restoring confidence in our ability to cut the deficit is a prerequisite for balanced and sustainable growth.?

?These steps are? economically sensible because they will increase incentives for the jobless to find work, reduce subsidies and trim the civil service.?

Both Mr Osborne and Mr Schäuble are in Toronto on today for the G20 summit. Kick-off time for the England-Germany match is 10 am local time. Imagine the two of them dawdling over a nice Canadian breakfast, served in front of a wide screen TV. Maybe they could ask France's Finance Minister Christine Lagarde along to reveal some details from Thierry Henry's briefing on Thursday to President Sarkozy.

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