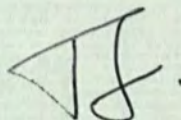


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PRIME MINISTER

Attached is a letter from Neil Macfarlane setting out his approach to the forthcoming England football matches abroad. On the home front I understand that the Home Secretary feels that he now should adopt a higher profile on football hooliganism, particularly in view of last weekend's intemperate criticism of the Government by various football club chairmen (who appear to be labouring under the delusion it is the Government rather than the courts which send offenders to prison). The Home Secretary is to meet Mr. Macfarlane next week with a view to making a statement perhaps by means of a Parliamentary answer about the range of penalties available to the courts for hooliganism-type offences and the measures which the Government has taken to support the police and the football authorities in coping with hooliganism.

TIM FLESHER12 October 1982



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

My ref:

Your ref:

cc to

8 October 1982

Her Minis. Minister:

You will know that British football hooligans are still behaving badly abroad, recent unsavoury incidents taking place in Copenhagen and Valencia. Sporadic outbursts of hooliganism are still occurring at home.

I have maintained a regular dialogue with the football authorities, insisting upon careful pre-planning for the World Cup matches in Spain in which my officials and those of the Foreign Office were very much in the lead. This was repeated for the European Cup Final last May and I am pleased to say that both passed off without serious incident and proved the value of careful preparation in conjunction with the authorities abroad.

Unfortunately the Football Association continues to look to Government to resolve the problem by withdrawing passports - despite my repeated explanations of why this would not be possible. Following the Copenhagen disturbances I immediately told the Football Association to put its house in order, outlining a four point plan which, in my view, would do much to minimise the risk of future misbehaviour. I have also told them that I want my Department to be involved in the preparations for future matches abroad by the England team, and also at critical club matches in Europe. England are due to play against Greece in Athens on 17 November and my officials will be in Athens this weekend to talk to the various Greek authorities concerned with this match.

I have also insisted that the F.A. Chairman reconvenes the Liaison Group which I set up to plan for the World Cup, and for the Group to meet regularly to deal with the problem of hooliganism both at home and abroad. The F.A. is aware that the Government is deeply concerned about the effects on our reputation abroad by these extremely serious incidents. It is my intention from now on to ensure that the preparation for all our matches is overseen by my departmental officials.

Neil Macfarlane

NEIL MACFARLANE