

1) Mr Gyles 2/3.  
2) Prime Minister

DMS  
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PRIME MINISTER

FOOTBALL RELATED HOOLIGANISM: ENGLAND V FRANCE 29 FEBRUARY

Your office asked me to let you have a report following my meeting this afternoon with the Chairman and officials of the Football Association. I am giving you a slightly fuller note, as it is possible the shameful events in Paris this week may be raised during your discussions with President Mitterand.

From the accounts I have had today both from my official who attended the match and from the FA, it is clear that two of the important measures in our European document (agreed by European Ministers with responsibility for sport last November) were not fully implemented. In particular, tickets were fully available on Tuesday and Wednesday, thus allowing anyone to travel from the UK and purchase a seat amongst the French supporters. The careful plans made to segregate England ticket holders, and so prevent violence with French supporters, were thus negated.

Secondly, 39 of the 40 or so arrested on Wednesday night were put on a train out of Paris on Thursday morning without any charges being preferred. These hooligans have learned no lessons and will probably offend again. This particular part of our European agreement worked when England played in Luxembourg last November and I am disturbed that these people should have been allowed to get away scot free.



I have written to my French Ministerial colleague on both these important points. You may wish to mention this to President Mitterand, if the subject is raised. I should add that 5 or 6 hooligans remain in French custody: we must hope that they undergo the full process of French law.

I discussed with the Football Association today the need to look for better implementation of the agreed precautions in future and also to consider urgently new measures. In particular, I have asked them to think about a scheme of membership cards for supporters travelling abroad, to prevent the trouble makers leaving the UK. My officials will have further discussions with the FA. I also propose to meet Ministerial colleagues to discuss further steps the Government might take.

I also met today the French Ambassador's deputy to express my concern about this match and also the rugby match in Paris tomorrow. I have also spoken to him and to the Spanish Ambassador's representative about people travelling to the worrying fixture between Barcelona and Manchester United next Wednesday.

Let me mention two final points which may be of interest. The suggestions from various quarters that England may be banned from playing in Europe is not, according to the FA, a very likely possibility and the current England fixture list covering the next couple of years does not appear to contain any further matches abroad which might lead to incidents of this kind.



If you would like a quick word to discuss this difficult but important issue, I will of course be glad to make myself available at any time.

I am copying this to the Lord Chancellor, Ray Whitney David Mellor, David Mitchell and Patrick Mayhew.

NEIL MACFARLANE  
2 March 1984

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