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Prime Minister



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Prime Minister (2)

To note the risk of further
hostiganism at the UEFA
Cup final in Brussels tonight.

SOCCER SPECTATOR VIOLENCE

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Following the violence surrounding the France v England soccer match in Paris on 29 February, I met colleagues from the Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Department of Transport to discuss what further measures HMG could take to prevent this sort of chaos which is so debilitating for our image abroad. We set up a working group of officials from all our Departments to examine all the options open to us and to report back; but first, with the Football Association, to co-ordinate precautions against violence for the remaining European club matches of the season involving English teams. This effort helped the semi-finals of these competitions, in which 6 English clubs were competing, to pass off with relatively little trouble.

Only two English clubs reached the finals, the first leg of one - the UEFA Cup - being played between Anderlecht and Tottenham Hotspur in Brussels tonight. (The second - the European Cup Final, AS Roma v Liverpool in Rome - does not take place until 30 May). The working group has again supervised preparations: I have written to my colleagues in France (through which many supporters will travel) and Belgium asking them to enforce the provisions of the Council of Europe Recommendation on Spectator Violence (which I instigated): officials of Tottenham Hotspur have held meetings with the Anderlecht club, the Belgian police and our Embassy to agree arrangements for segregating supporters, and with the British Transport Police (BTP) to ensure that routes on this side of the Channel are adequately policed; BTP officers have been and will



be on board Sealink UK cross-Channel ferries which carry supporters and we have asked the French and Belgian authorities similarly to police their ferries; and information on the movement of our supporters is being relayed by the BTP to their colleagues in France and Belgium, and to the authorities via our Embassies.

Nonetheless, this remains a match at which the risk of violence is high. Access from London to Brussels is simple and many will travel not in organised parties; it is possible that so-called "supporters" of other London clubs will go to cause trouble for their rivals; and there is a history of violence at Anderlecht which is a stadium at which it is difficult to ensure fully effective segregation of supporters. As many as 8,000 tickets have been made available for Britons. One Tottenham supporter was shot dead ^{in Brussels} at an incident last night. I am, however, satisfied that we have done everything possible within the available powers to prevent trouble.

I am copying this minute to David Mellor, Ray Whitney and David Mitchell.

NEIL MACFARLANE

9 May 1984