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PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE FOOTBALL AUTHORITIES: 30 JULY

You are meeting the football authorities tomorrow at 1130.  
Present will be:-

Mr Bert Millichip	FA Chairman
Mr Jack Dunnett	Football League Chairman
Mr Graham Kelly	Football League Secretary
Mr David Dent	Mr Kelly's deputy
Lord Aberdare	Football Trust Chairman
Mr Tom Wharton	FGIT Chairman

Mr Ted Croker (FA Secretary) cannot attend as he is on holiday. He has written a letter of apology. ~~Post is a pity.~~

There is a pre-meeting of Ministers at 1100, at which you will be able to discuss and agree the general line to take with the authorities - see below for ground you need to cover.

Background to the meeting

Your main purpose in calling the Football Association, the Football League and the Football Trusts in for a further meeting is to take stock of the progress that has been made to combat hooliganism and to improve ground safety, and to press the authorities to ensure that everything possible will be done to ensure the season gets off to a trouble free start. The FA Charity Shield Match, between Everton and Manchester United, is at Wembley on 10 August. The season proper starts a week later on 17 August.

← Generally, you will wish to make it clear that you are not yet satisfied enough has been done by the authorities. You will also wish to watch out for the FA and the FL using their normal tactic of arguing that the problem of hooliganism is one for the Government to solve, and diverting the meeting

with lots of requests for further legislation. The truth is that football is their game; and the clubs are responsible for the safety of the spectators at their grounds.

### Handling

You will wish to open the meeting by thanking those present for attending and explaining your purpose in calling the authorities in. You will then wish to run through the action the Government has taken and is taking. The briefing provided by DOE (Flag A) contains a useful check-list at Annex A. The Home Secretary's note at Flag B, and the FCO note at Flag C, provide further details on some of these measures. The Home Secretary and Mr Luce can elaborate as appropriate.

You may then wish to ask the Home Secretary to comment on the specific suggestions made by the authorities at your last meeting with them on 13 June. You will need, however, to ensure the meeting does not get sidetracked on these points. The Home Secretary's note at Flag B (pages 3-5) deals with them, (but what is said to the authorities will be subject to the discussion at your pre-meeting with Ministers):

- i) on making encroachment on to the pitch a criminal offence, the Home Secretary believes that existing legislation provides the police with adequate powers. Clubs in any case can make clear that those supporters getting on to the pitch will be removed from the ground. Decisions on this should be deferred further until Popplewell has produced his final report.
- ii) on disclosure of information about troublemakers, the Home Secretary believes that the clubs and authorities must take the necessary co-ordinated action themselves. But if a membership card system were introduced, this might enable him to consider giving the courts powers to stop offenders going to matches.

- iii) on establishing a central point for co-ordinating information, the police believe this is best done by Chief Constables acting locally. Hartley Booth believes there is, however, a case for pressing the police on the points (ii) and (iii) (Flag H)

You will then wish to ask the authorities to identify action they have been taking, particularly with a view to the opening of the new season just over two weeks away. The DOE briefing at Flag A contains the list of measures the authorities are likely to mention (annex A). You will be able to use this to identify and raise any measures they omit. You will then need to pick up the following key issues:-

i) Memberships Cards

You can welcome the setting up of the Football League Working Group, but regret that progress in this area has been slow. The force of the Popplewell recommendations must be taken seriously. (Hartley's note at Flag H).

ii) Closed Circuit TV

Deployment must be targeted on those clubs where the opening fixtures of the next season are most at risk. (Hartley's note at Flag H).

iii) Publicity

A proper campaign, to be mounted by the clubs to coincide with the new season is essential. This has been discussed within the Macfarlane Working Group, and the Minister for Sport has written to the FA, who are now working on the idea. Depending on the line agreed at the pre-meeting, you may like to circulate our outline of a possible draft message from club chairmen. (Flag E). You will also wish to note that Neil Macfarlane will be writing round to MPs

indicating the action that has been taken, and that you are arranging to see sports journalists on Thursday 1 August.

iv) Luton/Millwall

You will wish to register your grave concern that the FA saw fit to lift the penalties imposed by the original Commission of Inquiry. How, in the light of that, can the general public be expected to take seriously the authorities commitment to eradicate violence? The Home Secretary may like to comment on this, because as you will remember he offered advice to the FA on their rules, advice which was specifically ignored at their AGM. [NB The FA Disciplinary Committee today fined Birmingham £5,000 and ruled that all Leeds away matches should be ticket only]

v) Finance

The authorities will doubtless ask the Government for more money. You will wish to note that the Macfarlane group is soon to consider the general picture, including estimates of the costs of the improvements required (based on the reports from Chief Fire Officers) and on the resources available to the Association and the two Trusts. You may (subject to discussion at the pre-meeting) wish to reiterate that the Government will then be prepared to consider extra support, but that it could properly do so only if the authorities had taken firm action themselves and, in particular, made progress with membership cards. You will wish to refer to the paying of the substantial sums Clubs are still spending on transfers - Hartley's note at Flag H contains a list.

Pre-Meeting

At the pre-meeting with Ministers you will wish to discuss the way you propose to handle the discussion with the Football Authorities and in particular agree that you should:

- i) generally adopt a firm line with them; suggest that not enough has been done; that they have dragged their feet on membership cards; and that every effort must now be made before the season starts up. You will not be prepared to be diverted during the meeting into discussing lists of further legislation the authorities will be seeking.
- ii) open the meeting by setting out the Government's action to date; go on to ask the authorities to set out what they have done; and then press them on some specific issues including membership cards, closed circuit TV at problem grounds and publicity.

You will also wish to cover with Ministers the following points:-

- i) whether you should pass to the authorities our outline of a possible publicity campaign by the clubs. (Flag D).
- ii) whether you should indicate that more resources may be made available by the Government, but only on condition that the authorities actions warrant it. (The Chief Secretary's note advising caution is at Flag D).
- iii) ask the Home Secretary how far he has got in considering taking powers to close grounds, as a precaution in case the authorities were not prepared to take tough enough action themselves. (You asked the Home Secretary to give some thought to this after the last meeting with the FA and the FL).

iv) consider the Home Secretary's view that the police should not be asked to disclose information on hooliganism to the clubs, nor to establish a central point for co-ordinating information.

v) you will wish to agree with Ministers the line to be taken with the press at the end of the meeting.

The briefing

Flag A	DOE note (with comments setting out the action taken by the Government and the clubs)
Flag B	The Home Secretary's note providing details of measures taken by the Home Office.
Flag C	Foreign Office note.
Flag D	Chief Secretary's note
Flag E	Outline of a possible anti-hooligan statement the clubs might put out.
Flag F	Your letter of 17 June to Mr Millichip.
Flag G	Popplewell's interim report
Flag H	Policy Unit advice.

*Mark Addison*

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