

FOOTBALL TRAGEDY

ADVANCE COPIES

22



PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR RENTON
PS/PUS
MR DEREK THOMAS
MR JENKINS
MR BARRINGTON

PS/NO.10 DOWNING STREET
PS/MR MACFARLANE, DOE
PS/MR SHAW, HOME OFFICE

HD/WED
HD/CONS D
HD/CRD
HD/NEWS D
RESIDENT CLERK

Prime Minister:

An account of
the Italian reaction.
The Belgians seem to
be more under attack
than this country. Our

public penitence seems
to have done some good

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

PP PARIS

GR1500
RESTRICTED
FM ROME 311500Z MAY 85
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 540 OF 31 MAY 85
INFO PRIORITY BRUSSELS, PARIS.

OUR TELNO 537: LIVERPOOL/JUVENTUS.

FROM FITZHERBERT.

1. AS THE REPORTING TODAY'S ITALIAN PRESS MAKES CLEAR, THE MAIN TARGETS CONTINUE TO BE THE 'HOOLOGAN' ELEMENT AMONG DRUNKEN BRITISH FOOTBALL FANS AND THE INADEQUACY OF BELGIAN ARRANGEMENTS. THE MESSAGES FROM HM THE QUEEN, HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES AND THE PRIME MINISTER, TOGETHER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S IMMEDIATE REACTION ON THE NIGHT OF THE MATCH AND HER FURTHER INTERVIEW ON TELEVISION YESTERDAY, ESPECIALLY THAT WITH THE ITALIAN STATE TELEVISION, HAVE HOWEVER HAD A CONSIDERABLE EFFECT HERE. WE ARE SEEN AS ACCEPTING THAT IT WAS THE LIVERPUDIEN ATTACKS WHICH LED DIRECTLY TO THE DISASTER AND AS NOT SEEKING TO ALLOCATE BLAME ELSEWHERE. AT THE SAME TIME THE SHAME AND HORROR FELT IN BRITAIN, HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE ITALIAN PRESS AND ON TELEVISION. THIS HAS NOT PREVENTED AN AVALANCHE OF TELEPHONE CALLS AND TELEGRAMS OF PROTEST AND OUTRAGE TO THE EMBASSY AND TO CONSULATES THROUGHOUT ITALY, OFTEN ABUSIVE AND INCLUDING A NUMBER OF BOMB THREATS. BUT, HAVING WRITTEN OFF THE LIVERPOOL SUPPORTERS RESPONSIBLE AS 'ANIMALS', THERE IS EVIDENT AN INCREASING TENDENCY HERE TO CRITICISE THE BELGIAN AUTHORITIES, AND IT IS THE BELGIANS WHO ARE NOW AS MUCH IN THE FIRING LINE AS OURSELVES, IF NOT MORE.

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7. YOUR OWN PRESENCE IN ITALY AT STRESA AT THE END OF NEXT WEEKS PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A GESTURE OF SOME KIND. SUBJECT TO THE VIEWS OF THE AMBASSADOR, WHO WILL BE IN LONDON ON 3/4 JUNE FOR THE COMMUNITY HEADS OF MISSION CONFERENCE, ONE POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE FOR YOU TO FLY TO TURIN TO MAKE A BRIEF CALL ON AGNELLI, PRESIDENT OF JUVENTUS AS WELL AS OF FIAT. IN HIS STATEMENT RELEASED YESTERDAY HE TOOK A FIRM LINE ABOUT THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LIVERPOOL HOOLIGANS, WHICH HE PUT A LONG WAY AHEAD OF THE SECONDARY FACTOR OF BELGIAN NEGLIGENCE, AND SAID THAT UNTIL THE VIOLENCE BY BRITISH SUPPORTERS, DEMONSTRATED ON SO MANY OCCASIONS, WAS BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL BRITISH TEAMS SHOULD NOT PLAY ABROAD. AT THE SAME TIME, BOTH IN THE PRESS AND LATER IN A DIGNIFIED AND RESTRAINED APPEARANCE ON TELEVISION, HE PAID TRIBUTE TO BOTH THE LIVERPOOL AND JUVENTUS PLAYERS FOR THE SPORTSMANSHIP WHICH BOTH HAD SHOWED IN THE MATCH WHICH FOLLOWED THE DISASTER. ANOTHER POSSIBLE GESTURE WOULD BE TO OFFER TO TREAT SOME OF THE NUMEROUS INJURED ITALIANS IN SPECIALISED BRITISH HOSPITALS, FOR EXAMPLE STOKE MANDEVILLE. BUT, AGAIN, WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE INJURED AND SOME MIGHT NOT WELCOME AN OFFER OF TREATMENT IN ENGLAND.

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[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

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PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR LUCE

INFO D

LEGALADUS

PS/MR RENTON

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

CHIEF CLERK

MR JENKINS

MR BARRINGTON

COPIES TO:

MR MACFARLANE

MINISTER OF SPORT DOE

PS/NO 10 DOWNING ST

PS/MR SHAW

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