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FM BRUSSELS 030900Z JUN 85
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 175 OF 3 JUNE 85
INFO PRIORITY ROME
INFO PRIORITY PARIS

MIPT : FOOTBALL VILENCE

MF

SUMMARY

1. THE BELGIANS GENERALLY THMSELVES RECOGNISE THAT THERE WERE ERRORS OF ORGANISATION AND POLICE CONTROL. THE FACT THAT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE DISPOSITION IN BRITAIN TO TRY TO SHIFT THE BLAME AWAY FROM BRITISH HOOLIGANS HAS EARNED US SOME CREDIT.

DETAIL

2. AS PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE HEYSEL DISASTER CONTINUES , FEW IN BELGIUM DOUBT THAT THERE WAS SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN ORGANISATION AND POLICE CONTROL. THE MAIN HEADLINE IN TODAY'S LE SOIR (CENTRE) IS QUOTE ARE THE BELGIAN ORGANISERS OF SPORTING EVENTS INCOMPETENT? UNQUOTE. SOME PRESS REPORTS CLAIM THAT INTERNAL ENQUIRIES HAVE REVEALED ASTONISHING LAPSES IN PREPARATION AND COMMUNICATION AND THERE IS SPECULATION THAT SOME GENDARMERIE OFFICERS MAY FACE DISCIPLINARY ACTION. THE AUTHORITIES ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE AND ANXIOUS TO REMIND EVERYONE, NOT LEAST IN ITALY, THAT WHATEVER MISTAKES MAY HAVE BEEN MADE IN DEALING WITH THE BRITISH HOOLIGANS, IT IS THE HOOLIGANS WHO MUST BEAR ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TRAGEDY.

3. FROM THE START THERE HAS BEEN RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION HERE , BY GOVERNMENT , MEDIA AND PUBLIC, OF THE ATTITUDE DISPLAYED

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BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MOST OF THE BRITISH PRESS IN NOT TRY-
ING TO SHIFT BLAME AWAY FROM THE SUPPORTERS WHO CAUSED THE FATAL
DISTURBANCE. BUT FOR THIS FACTOR ANTI-BRITISH REACTIONS WOULD
CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN STRONGER. AT THE SAME TIME THERE HAS BEEN
SOME RESENTMENT AT THE AMOUNT OF BBC TELEVISION COVERAGE (SEEN
HERE ON CABLE) DEVOTED TO INTERVIEWS, EG WITH BRITISH FOOTBALL
OFFICIALS AND LIVERPOOL FANS, BLAMING PROVOCATION BY JUVENTUS
SUPPORTERS OR INACTION OR OVER-REACTION BY THE BELGIAN POLICE
(CF INTERIOR MINISTER NOTHOMB'S REMARK THAT HIS SHARPEST COMMENTS
ON BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY WERE PROVOKED BY THE TONE ADOPTED BY A
BBC INTERVIEWER).

COLTMAN

FOOTBALL TRAGEDY

LIMITED

CONS D

WED

CRD

NEWS D

INFO D

LEGAL ADVISERS

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PS/MR LUCE

PS/MR RENTON

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CHIEF CLERK

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR JENKINS

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