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Prime Minister

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we should await
H/see comments before
putting back to PM)

EUROPEAN CUP FINAL: BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE REPORT

I am sure you will want to see the enclosed letter from the Chief Constable of the British Transport Police. It covers a report on the events in Brussels, prepared by Mr McGregor their Assistant Chief Constable (Operations). In addition to Mr McGregor's report, Appendices F and G are particularly useful. I have congratulated the Chief Constable and his officers on their splendid efforts.

In view of some of the comments in the report, I recommend that the documents should be treated in confidence.

I believe that the report is valuable and constructive. The BTP are in close co-operation with the Chief Constable of Merseyside and a copy of the report is being sent to him.

On pages 4 and 5 of his letter, the Chief Constable makes three associated recommendations on matters affecting the policing of hooligans generally. I support these recommendations but I should be grateful to know if you agree and to have the views of Leon Brittan and Neil Macfarlane (to whom this letter and enclosures are copied) before we respond in full to the letter. It would be particularly helpful to be able to tell the Chief Constable that his Force could have direct access to the Police National Computer, and that their Mobile Support Units could have access to the local forces radio network via the multi-channel radio ART 177. These are practical ways in which overall police effectiveness in combating hooliganism can be quickly improved.

British Transport Police



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Chief Constable's Office

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K.H. Ogram QPM
Chief Constable

y/r
o/r CC/HP

Date 4 June 1985

Dear Sir,

I forward for your consideration a report submitted by my Assistant Chief Constable (Operations), Mr. McGregor who, together with nine other members of this Force, travelled to Brussels as liaison officers in connection with the Liverpool-v-Juventus match played on 29 May 1985. They were accompanied by a police officer from each of the Kent and Merseyside Forces. Whilst performing their liaison duties, which were undertaken at the request of the Chief Officer of police in Brussels, these officers wore plain-clothes but were identifiable by specially produced and clearly displayed badges.

For many years this Force has policed the movement of football supporters throughout the United Kingdom by both British Rail and London Regional Transport and has been well aware of their propensity for disorder and violence. Liaison with the civil police forces and within the transport industry has been developed to such an extent that, on occasions when football matches are to be played, all relevant parties are notified in advance of the anticipated number of supporters intending to travel or actually travelling together with an indication of their mood or previous history.

The fact that alcohol adversely affects behaviour has long since been recognised and in August 1980 action was taken to control possession and consumption of alcohol on British Rail trains and railway premises by the introduction of a bye-law. - (B.R. bye-law 3(a)).

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The large scale participation by British Clubs in European Football competitions led to this Force forging links with the various police forces of the E.E.C., other continental policing agencies and ferry operators.

In 1983 formal contingency plans were drawn up for disseminating information about the movement of football fans abroad which included direct contact with football clubs, the Football Association, UEFA and British Consulates throughout Europe.

In 1984, subsequent to the publication of the Department of Environment Working Party Report on Football Hooliganism, the role of the British Transport Police for monitoring the movement of football supporters was formally recognised by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

The report prepared by Mr. McGregor contains his "Final Observations" and it is appropriate for me to add my own comments and, where necessary, recommendations, which I shall confine to Part A of Mr. McGregor's observations since these relate to general matters affecting the Force.

I shall refer to those observations in order :-

1. The British Railways Board maintains a fully trained and equipped police force of some 2,000 officers at considerable cost which over the years has seen its role extended from assisting the commercial operations of the industry to include a more general law and order enforcement role. This is perhaps typified by our role in connection with the movement of football supporters. The British Railways Board is totally committed to the principle of maintaining "in-house" police services by means of a professional body dedicated to the specialised role of the industry. However, the increasing commitment to a general law enforcement role often leaves our resources very stretched. For example, it is not uncommon for trains containing several hundred football supporters to be escorted by only four or five police officers with limited radio communication. This situation occurs quite regularly simply because of the increasing work load. In 1984 police escorts were required on 3,840 trains which often travelled long distances and through areas where, for technical reasons, they were out of radio contact.

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2. The success of the operation clearly indicates the need for a co-ordinating body.
3. I have already submitted a paper to the Department of Transport concerning the proposed introduction of legislation similar to Part V of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980, concerning the experience of the Force whilst enforcing restrictions on the possession and consumption of alcohol on the railways following the introduction of British Railways Board bye-law 3(a) in August 1980.
4. & 5. Clearly a restriction on the sale of alcohol by Masters of ferries was a significant contribution to the success of the overall operation. However, it cannot be said that all vessels carrying Liverpool fans to the continent were alcohol free and it is almost certain that Masters would not have been prepared to co-operate had they not been guaranteed a police presence.
6. Experience over the years has shown clearly that trouble is minimised by timing the arrival of supporters as closely as practicable to the commencement of the football match or sporting activity, thereby restricting the opportunity to consume alcohol or indulge in general mischief. This applies equally to the arrival points of supporters and I endorse moves which have been taken and which are planned to facilitate the routing of football traffic to specially built or modified stations or halts close to major stadiums.
7. The linking of all tickets sold to supporters travelling away, to an identifiable mode of travel assists supervision and control.
8. It has been suggested that legislation might be introduced which would give powers to police at sea and airports to prevent the embarkation of persons known to have criminal convictions for public order and related offences. It has also been suggested in some quarters that restrictions should equally apply to known members of extremist organisations. Clearly legislation couched in these terms would be beneficial but to restrict it to points of embarkation would perhaps limit its effect and it might be more appropriate, in the case of those intending to travel by rail, to endeavour to detect such persons before they commence their journey.

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Similarly, although I endorse the suggestion of issuing identity cards to persons attending football fixtures, the practicalities will require careful consideration. For instance, if they were to be used as a method to control undesirable people travelling by British Rail to the various matches, including continental fixtures, it would be necessary to examine documents at the point of departure as opposed to arrival at the point of embarkation.

My personal observations lead me to make three specific recommendations :-

- (i) That consideration be given to contributing to costs of the British Transport Police in relation to its public order role should any approach be made by British Railways Board.
- (ii) In order for this force effectively and properly to carry out its duties in connection with present or proposed legislation, I consider it essential that the previous decision to refuse direct access to members of this Force to the Police National Computer should be reviewed as a matter of urgency. Though, generally, co-operation exists between individual forces and British Transport Police it is a fact that the rules contained in the Home Office Consolidated Circular on Crime and Kindred matters (Paragraph 1.45b) has led to some variance in the response from various forces when assistance has been urgently requested. The rules are seen by members of this Force to be unnecessarily restrictive and to deny them access, not only to information which they require to perform their duties efficiently but also to deny them access to information intended to warn them about persons known to be violent or likely to inflict harm upon themselves.

It must be stressed that British Transport Police officers often work in exposed and isolated situations and for them to be disadvantaged vis-a-vis their Home Department colleagues, particularly in the field of public order, is unnecessary and undesirable.

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- (iii) The question of radio communication between this Force and the various Home Department Police Forces with whom we work closely on a daily basis has been the topic of recent discussion and I am aware that both the Department of Transport and the Home Office are anxious to help. The provision of Home Office 'ART 177' sets to my Mobile Units which are frequently deployed in a public order role would be of considerable operational benefit and I will again raise this with those concerned.

Finally I must stress that this letter is my immediate response to the report prepared by Mr. McGregor and, consequently, the points I seek to make are restricted. There are a number of other issues which I would welcome the opportunity to ventilate should future meetings be held.

Yours faithfully,

K. O. G. [Signature]