

Foreign Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Foreign and Commonwealth Office's preparations for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, HC 1011

Tuesday 8 May 2018

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Members present: Tom Tugendhat (Chair); Ian Austin; Chris Bryant; Mike Gapes; Stephen Gethins; Ian Murray; Mr Bob Seely; Royston Smith.

Questions 1-94

Witnesses

I: Kevin Miles, Chief Executive, Football Supporters' Federation, Deputy Chief Constable Roberts, National Lead for Football Policing, and Robert Sullivan, Director of Strategy and Communications, Football Association.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Kevin Miles, Deputy Chief Constable Roberts and Robert Sullivan.

[In the absence of the Chair, Mike Gapes was called to the Chair.]

Chair: May I apologise to witnesses for the slight delay in starting? We had some important business that we had to resolve.

Welcome. I am temporarily taking the Chair because there was a Health question downstairs that Tom Tugendhat got on the ballot, so he is asking that question. May I ask you to say who you are and a few words about your organisations?

Robert Sullivan: Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence today. My name is Robert Sullivan. I am the Director of Strategy and Communications at the Football Association. Our responsibility is to prepare and organise the England team to attend major tournaments in this context. We also work in close co-operation with our partners in the police, the supporter groups and the Foreign Office to ensure that those tournaments can happen in a safe and secure way.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Good afternoon. I am Mark Roberts, Deputy Chief Constable at South Yorkshire Police. I lead for the National Police Chiefs Council on football policing matters—so that is, domestically, policy over legislation and liaison with the sporting bodies. At the time of tournaments, I take overall operational lead on the support we provide to the host country.

Kevin Miles: I am Kevin Miles. I am Chief Executive of the Football Supporters' Federation. As part of that responsibility, for the last 20 years, since I was a young boy, I have been responsible for the fans' embassy advice and information support service, accompanying England fans travelling abroad to tournaments and other games.

Q1 **Chris Bryant:** Obviously, a lot of people are worried about how the World Cup is going to pass off in Russia. I have to declare a bit of a lack of interest, in a sense in that I am Welsh, so we are deliberately boycotting this, as I think the Scots are, too. None the less, there are serious concerns about the safety of UK nationals travelling to Russia. How have you assessed the risks, and what do you think are the major risks?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Perhaps I can give the official line, and Kevin can give the perspective of people who are actually going to go out there as supporters. Clearly, we are aware of the issues that previously occurred with Russian supporters, most notably in Euro 2016. We are aware of those risks and, as everyone is, we are aware from media reports of some of the issues that attach themselves to Russian football domestically. The counterbalances to that are the reassurance we can take and the mitigation measures that we think the Russians will put in place to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

deal with those threats. It is the responsibility of the host nation to ensure the safety of visitors; that is very clear. However, for the past two years now, in conjunction with the Foreign Office and also with the FA and FSF, we have been trying to seek those reassurances from the Russian authorities. We have had a great number of meetings with them and every time we have met, there is a consistent reassurance that their aspiration is to put on a safe event that shows Russia at its best. So, yes, there are concerns, but what we are hearing and seeing from the Russians is a commitment to have a safe event.

- Q2 **Chris Bryant:** But Russian fans last time engaged in some of the worst violence, bullying, deliberate antagonism and provocation of supporters from other nationalities—and on top of that, you have the after-effects of the events in Salisbury. It just seems inconceivable, unless you can persuade me otherwise, that all those guarantees will be bankable.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: It is not a case of me persuading you. It is a case of me outlining that we recognise the threats and that we recognise the level of reassurance we can give to supporters. I am not going to give blank cheques about “everything will be fine”. We recognise the dangers. We will engage as much as we possibly can with the Russian authorities, because we need to maintain the relationship if we are to have any opportunity to influence their understanding of how British supporters behave and how best to deal with them.

We are acutely aware of the events in Marseille. One of my officers gave CPR to one of the injured England fans, so I am acutely aware of that. But even from that point of view, what we saw there was that at least the Russian law enforcement we worked with on the ground were really committed to trying to stop the disorder. We saw them act in a professional way and give information and advice, so even at that stage the authorities were seen on the ground to be trying to work with us to prevent disorder.

- Q3 **Chris Bryant:** But there has been plenty of evidence of the Russian state winding up its supporters and deliberately encouraging antagonism towards other nationalities. I’m sorry, but what you are saying sounds terribly naive.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I don’t think it’s naive at all. I am basing it on facts. We have to maintain a relationship with the Russian authorities in order for us to try to work with them, to influence and advise on their behaviours so that they treat our visiting guests in the best possible way. It is the responsibility of the host nation to ensure the safety of visitors. That is their responsibility. Our responsibility collectively is to work with them to try to get the best possible outcome for UK citizens.

Robert Sullivan: Just by way of context, it is probably worth saying that there have been five matches involving UK clubs in Russia since Marseille 2016, all of which have passed off without incident. That gives a balancing context to your remarks.

- Q4 **Stephen Gethins:** Like Chris’s declaration, I should note that I am



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Scottish, and we have undertaken a pre-emptive boycott of this World Cup, as with the past few.

It would be good to get your thoughts and experiences on past World Cups. How do you think that the risks, or your preparations, are different from those for the past couple of World Cups, in Brazil and South Africa? I put that question to all of you, given your different perspectives.

Kevin Miles: This is my 12th tournament and I have noticed over that period a gradual amelioration—improvement—in the process as we have learned from the experiences of previous tournaments. There has probably been, for this tournament, more extensive preparation than we have had previously and there has been closer co-operation between all the agencies involved. That is partly because of the destination, but we have had a lot of preparation like that and we have learned each time. It is routine now, from experience, to appoint a football attaché or a football liaison officer from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who focuses on those things. Each of those tournaments has thrown up different challenges that we have had to respond to in different ways, but I think we have learned from experience. We have refined the channel of communication that we have for information and support at every tournament so far.

I would say that among the regular travelling supporters who have been to a lot of tournaments there is a fair amount of cynicism about some of the horror stories and the threats and warnings that we get about tournaments. I can't remember a tournament when there haven't been dire warnings of terrible things that were about to befall us as we travelled abroad. Certainly for Poland and Ukraine, we got the same warnings of racist hooligans and that we were all about to meet our death on the streets of Donetsk or Kiev or wherever. For Brazil, we were all going to lose organs in favelas—shanty towns—and we were all warned about the crime levels and the murder rate in townships in South Africa. There has always been media hype around all those sorts of issues that has not been borne out by experience. Now, I don't think that that is being naive or complacent about it. I think that a bit of a sense of proportion is important as well.

Robert Sullivan: Speaking from our perspective, we have been really pleased with the preparation and the co-ordination between these two bodies and the support we have had from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Our security team has been impressed with what they have seen on the ground in Russia. Collectively, all the organisations went to the Confederations cup last year and I think were encouraged by what they saw. On the close co-ordination—the level of preparation—of course, you can never ultimately predict what may happen, but in terms of whether we feel prepared and whether we have had the right support that we needed from the official channels, certainly from the FA's perspective, we would say yes, we do feel that.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: May I make a couple of observations about the tournaments to put them in context, as Kevin says? Each

tournament is considerably different in terms of the threats that we can anticipate and its individual nature. Going back to Germany in 2006, we estimate that around 100,000 supporters made the trip out there. We moved through to Euro 2008, which was Austria-Switzerland, where the England team took the decision to support the boycott of the Scottish and Welsh teams and not attend that tournament, so there was no actual UK representation at that one. For the World Cup in 2010 in South Africa, we estimate that around 20,000 people went.

For Euro 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, I was deployed in Poland. Exactly as Kevin says, scare stories went round about racism and violence, and I spent the first week there trying to reassure the Polish police on the basis of UK media reports and negating false stories so that we could have the relationship with the Poles. ¹I think there were about 10,000 there.

Euro 2016 was a somewhat unique event, as we estimate that we had around half a million supporter trips. We were joined by the Welsh and the Northern Irish on that, so there were an awful lot of people from the UK, but because of the proximity of France, obviously, it was so much easier for people to go in and out.

In terms of the numbers here, I think we expect no more than 7,000 or 10,000 UK England supporters. Others may travel to watch Brazil and others. If we are looking at the travel patterns, it is probably going to be more akin to what we saw in Ukraine, rather than at any of the other preceding tournaments.

In terms of the point Kevin made about scare stories, those things do not happen in a vacuum. Over the weekend, I was approached by a tabloid newspaper, which said it had a 57-year-old hooligan on a banning order linked to a risk group in Middlesbrough called the smoggies who had good information that football groups from Manchester, Merseyside and the north-east were going to join together and seek revenge on Russian hooligans—absolute rubbish. I gave a comment on it and said it was nonsense and that it was dangerous nonsense. My comment was not used. They ran the article. There is no 57-year-old in Middlesbrough on a banning order. They will not be travelling if they are on a ban. We have the most effective legislation in the world. The risk groups, or the football fans from Manchester and Merseyside, typically do not follow the England team. Their risk groups would not work together and they certainly would not travel. That is rubbish and misleading, but we get more of these stories.

We have consistently invested a great deal of effort in explaining to the Russian authorities that the supporters who go to support England will be genuine supporters who will not cause trouble, who want to support the team and who follow them all over the world, and that they should gear their policing plans based on the fact that they will get some good people

¹ Clarification from witness, should read as 'In Brazil I think there were about 10,000 there.'

who will engage in the tournament, have a good time and not cause them issues.

The media reports here are relayed to Russia, which could have the impact of negating the message that we are trying to sell that the people coming are not a threat, and could engender some false view that we are going to send people there who could behave in a bad manner. That is something that we will see over the month to come, and it is something that we really have to fight hard against to make sure that what we are saying is responsible and reflective of the truth.

- Q5 **Stephen Gethins:** Just to be clear, you do not see any significant differences in how you approach this competition compared with how you would approach other competitions?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: No.

Stephen Gethins: No? Well, look—

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: No, sorry; we do. We learn from every tournament. Some of the things that we have brought in from last time include formalising liaison with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to have an officer embedded with it. Last time, we had an investigation team, which is set up and ready to go. Notwithstanding that we clearly do not have jurisdiction in another country, it was primarily focused last time on securing banning orders if people misbehaved. We secured 91 banning orders out of Euro 2016. Equally, in that case, we were able to work with the French and provide them evidence of people who committed offences against British nationals. Each tournament, we build on it and we look to enhance the operation, because the primary aim is keeping British citizens safe.

- Q6 **Stephen Gethins:** On that, in terms of your liaison with the Russian authorities, do you think that they have done enough so far to tackle any potential problems or potential hooliganism?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: It is very difficult to give an iron guarantee over how another jurisdiction is going to—

- Q7 **Stephen Gethins:** Sure, but I am not asking for a guarantee—just whether you think they have done enough so far.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: They have demonstrated a willingness to engage with us. A delegation of Russian officers came to the Champions League final in Cardiff to discuss how we police and to understand how we would act. Delegations have come over specifically for Champions League games in Manchester and Merseyside. We have been out to work with them, to speak to them and engage with them.

All the meetings we have had have been very positive. There has been a consistent message that they want to deliver a safe games. I have every confidence that, should they deploy their security apparatus to prevent disorder, they are perfectly well able to do that. I guess the question is whether the desire is there. Everything we have seen and been told and



HOUSE OF COMMONS

that has been fed back from the Foreign Office is that there is a desire to do that.

- Q8 **Stephen Gethins:** Finally, have you travelled to Russia to see how they police football matches in their country? If so, what were your takeaways from that?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I have been on two pre-visits; I have not been to matches. We have had people who have gone on the pre-visits, and obviously we have had Champions League teams playing there on a regular basis. The fact that we have not had issues in the Champions League, and that the fans got a good welcome, is encouraging.

The policing style is different from what you would experience in the UK. Kevin can probably talk of his experience in general, in terms of eastern Europe. It tends to be very much more about public order and people in riot kit—more of a paramilitary approach—than you would anticipate seeing in this country. However, that is not unique to Russia; it is something we see in many countries.

- Q9 **Stephen Gethins:** It would be quite interesting to hear your experiences of policing in Russia.

Kevin Miles: I have attended quite a number of matches in Russia now, and there are variations. I have attended domestic Russian football matches, which is obviously a very different experience. I operated a fans embassy service—our advice and information service—at the Russia-England game in Moscow in 2007, which was the qualifier. It is fair to say that there was a fairly hostile atmosphere. There were certainly similarities in the political tensions between the two nations at that time compared with recently. There were enormous numbers of military personnel involved where there was no real danger of anything getting out of control, just by weight of numbers alone.

I noticed seven months later at the Champions League final, which featured two English teams—Chelsea and Manchester United—playing in Moscow, that there was a definite difference in the atmosphere there. I actually take some heart from that, because I think, for that game, it was the Russians hosting an international event at which they were a neutral host nation. The emphasis then was very much about demonstrating their powers of hospitality and hosting; I think they were bidding for the Olympics at that time, so they were very keen to make a positive impression. That was extremely well handled. A very warm welcome was given to fans of both teams at that particular point.

I actually think that the World Cup will have a lot more in common with the Champions League final than necessarily with the partisan England versus Russia game in 2007. That was a very important competitive game in which the Russians stopped us from qualifying for Euro 2008 and went in our stead.

I also had the privilege of attending the Confederations cup last season, which, as you know, is effectively a dry run for the World Cup



HOUSE OF COMMONS

arrangements. It is not exactly like the World Cup, because there aren't massive numbers of visiting fans there—it is primarily a Russian audience—but for the security systems and everything, it was a dry run for the tournament this year.

I have to say that I was surprised, because I thought, on first sight, that the security provisions were too elaborate and wouldn't work. I was wrong. The controls of entry into the stadiums were as tight and as rigorous as you would get when going through an airport here. I honestly thought, with the numbers involved going into a stadium, that they would never all get in on time. I was wrong. They got them all through.

There was a fascinating mixture of those involved in stewarding the crowds between people with foam fingers smiling at you and pointing you in the right direction right next to officers in full military uniform. There was no shortage of manpower. Where they didn't have fences yet built they replaced them with personnel standing shoulder to shoulder. Huge numbers were dedicated to the task.

There was no question in my mind, both at the stadiums and the city centres, and the fan zones created there, that those areas were very secure.

Obviously, there are differences when you wander off the beaten track in the different parts of town, but I think that is the case for every country hosting a tournament from that point of view. Generally speaking, the experiences that we have had of matches there—it is true what Robert has said; we have played games there since the problems in Marseille—have been pretty good.

In fact, to add one more note, if there is anybody who has learnt from experience as a collective group not to judge an entire nation by the actions of a minority, it is probably English football supporters, because we have been cursed with having a very disorderly small minority at stadiums in the past who have displayed shameful behaviour, and the whole of the supporters base has suffered since then for many years by being judged by those standards and by having that sort of behaviour expected of us, and we have been policed on the basis that we were all potential hooligans. We have done a lot of work on a multi-agency basis in partnership with the police and the Football Association right across the board to try to change that perception. It was only ever a minority, but I think we have gone a long way towards changing that. Particularly from the point of view of English football fans, we would be very reluctant to fall into the trap of making the same sort of generalised prejudicial conclusions about Russian football fandom generally, based on the actions of a very small and unpleasant number in Marseille, for instance.

[Tom Tugendhat took the Chair]

- Q10 **Ian Austin:** I accept all that, and that is all to be applauded, but the reason people are sceptical and concerned about all this is because of the unprecedented levels of violence at the European championships. Mr



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Roberts himself said, "They are highly organised and determined to carry out sustained violent attacks at a level of aggression I have not encountered in the past 10 years...I cannot recall such a toll of serious injuries and this is a cause for serious concern." So that's one thing.

The second thing is the Russian authorities' attitude to all this. When you have got Russian MPs saying, "I don't see anything wrong with the fans fighting; quite the opposite. Well done, lads. Keep it up," and the Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, criticising the French response and accusing other countries of provoking the violence, I think that is why people are concerned about what might happen in Russia and sceptical about the Russian authorities' determination to deal with this effectively. What are your observations on that?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I absolutely stand by my description of the violence at the time. It was horrific. There were really serious injuries that some people are still living with the consequences of. So make no mistake about it: that is exactly as it was and that is the level of concern. Yes, there were different views expressed within the Russian authorities. That is a matter of record. What I seek to go by are the actions of the Russian police who we were working with at the time in Marseille, who I am absolutely confident did everything they possibly could to try and prevent that from happening by providing information and support to the French authorities. In every contact we have had since that time with all the Russian authorities, they have made an avowed commitment to make sure that this is a safe event.

What you have got there is clearly a really worrying scenario that played out in Marseille. The counterbalance to that is a repeated intention to deliver a safe event. Those are the things that we try to balance out. We will give the information, working with all the interested parties, to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office so that it can give credible advice that we can all stand behind as supporters.

- Q11 **Mr Seely:** I think you are right, Kevin. The likelihood is that this is going to go off very well. Russia has not had a great year in its relationship with the West, and deservedly so. They are doing appalling things in Syria. We know about the Skripal poisoning. They probably do not want to make things worse. They probably want to present a positive showcase because it is in their interests to do so. The point that we are getting at, and that you are not reassuring maybe us, but certainly me, about is the fact that, as Ian has rightly said, there is an undercurrent that has a very different culture, and you are not addressing that apart from saying, "Well, we have to deal with the people we deal with." That is what you were saying, Mark, although I am not trying to take your words out of context. So there is an undercurrent of significant violence, and we have seen some of that violence supported by the Russian state—football hooliganism, biker gangs, and by extension into other areas of leisure—and we have seen Russian politicians who think that actually, beating the hell out of each other is somehow macho and somehow gives Russia this tough macho response, and there is no response from you on that. I agree that it's probably going to go okay, because it is in Russia's interests for it to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

do so, but none of you are addressing the fact that actually there is an undercurrent of political support for extreme football violence, modest though it is in certain areas.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I am not sure how you would anticipate me addressing Russian culture. I can recognise the risk that you talk about; I can tell you what we perceive from our engagement with the Russians; and we can give advice to the supporters about how to minimise the risk to themselves, such as being a good guest. What may be considered acceptable in our culture may cause great offence in Russia and other places, so that's why we give fans the advice about how to conduct themselves and how to show sensitivities to particularly sensitive sites, bearing in mind that the first fixture will be in a place that has got a pretty significant military history.

So we are working with the fact that the team are going, there will be England supporters who go and we have got to work with the Russians to try to maximise the chance of keeping all our people safe. And that's what we're doing. We give fans the advice and as much information as we can, so that they can make informed decisions about where they go, how they behave and what they do when they get there. But I think there are some wider issues that you allude to that aren't particularly within my gift or within the gift of any of the broader groups to resolve before June.

- Q12 **Mr Seely:** No, and I'm not suggesting there are. It's just recognising that there has been a culture of violence, which is in part talked up by some irresponsible politicians, and it is just recognising that there is an undercurrent of threat there. And it's about mitigating that, because I don't think it will happen but if things do turn nasty we will be powerless—the British state will not have the power—to protect those fans if there is organised violence against them. That's the point I'm trying to make.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: But every country we go to, we work on a degree of influence; we have no powers. I cannot command a German police commander, a French police commander or a Russian police commander to police the games in the way that I would police a game within the UK. What we can do is to try and seek to influence, and in order to do that we need to build an effective relationship with the hosts.

- Q13 **Mr Seely:** But Russia is different from Ireland and France—I mean, you would accept that. It's maybe more difficult, maybe because of the politics.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: They are all different, but certainly there are particular challenges around this particular deployment.

- Q14 **Chris Bryant:** We are only trying to make sure that British nationals who go to Russia will be safe. Of course I take your earlier point that the Russian authorities have a legal responsibility, by taking over the World Cup, to provide a safe games. Also, under the Geneva convention, they have a legal responsibility to protect UK diplomats, but President Putin personally persuaded the Russian youth organisation to harass,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

intimidate and bully the British ambassador in Russia for three years. So that's why we're just a little bit sceptical about quite how all of this might play out.

However, may I ask you a specific thing, because you just said that you rightly provide advice to British nationals going elsewhere to moderate their behaviour? What is your advice to LGBT British travellers and fans?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Well, a significant amount of work has been done on that; I don't know whether Kevin or the FA want to touch on it, because they have driven this.

Kevin Miles: We produce advice and information for all football fans travelling to all places, but we are aware of the particular issue around LGBT+ fans travelling to Russia. So we have done quite a thorough job. We convened a meeting of all the LGBT groups involved in football and beyond: Stonewall, Pride in Football and many of the other groups as well.

We have also taken advice from the LGBT networks in Russia about their experiences. We have tried to take into consideration the variation in conditions between some of the different cities. For instance, there is a very different regime in St Petersburg compared with some of the other host cities.

I will not attempt to recite it all here, but I can certainly provide you with a copy. We have three or four pages in our guidebook on advice around LGBT—

Q15 **Chris Bryant:** For instance, around staying in a hotel—would a gay couple be okay to have a hotel room?

Kevin Miles: Generally speaking, there is no specific advice not to do that. With all of these things, you have to trust your instincts and common sense. Probably you are exercising caution on all these various different issues, but—

Q16 **Chris Bryant:** Is the Rainbow flag allowed, or not allowed?

Kevin Miles: The Rainbow flag is allowed. We have had reassurances from FIFA and from the Russian FA as well that a display of the Rainbow flag will not be a problem in football grounds.

The advice of the LGBT groups in Russia is to take that with a pinch of salt and therefore—

Q17 **Chris Bryant:** I was going to say: they get beaten up when they are carrying it—by the police.

Kevin Miles: The chairman of the LGBT network in Russia was arrested last weekend for displaying a Rainbow flag at a Pride event, so their advice is, on all these things, to err on the side of caution, and I think that is particularly the advice that we would give fans who are travelling. It's something we have given a lot of consideration to.

Q18 **Chair:** What if you are travelling as a gay couple? How does one err on



HOUSE OF COMMONS

the side of caution if one is sharing a hotel room?

Kevin Miles: Well, there is advice against public displays of affection. I am travelling with a team of volunteers. We all share twin rooms and, at least in our hotel rooms, we don't particularly draw attention to our sexuality or sexual orientation in the context of that. Sadly, we have had to reflect the fact that in Russian society there is a different attitude towards public displays of affection.

Q19 **Chair:** I **understand** that, and of course you are travelling for work and I do understand, therefore, you are travelling in a set environment. But for many people this will be their big holiday of the year. It is perfectly normal that they would wish to go with their partner. It is perfectly normal that they will not just see a football match; they may do other things culturally—whatever they want to. So it would be a bit odd, to put it politely, if they were expected to behave differently.

Kevin Miles: Sadly, it wouldn't be the first instance. I am particularly sympathetic to the issues around LGBT fans travelling, but it would not be the first place that we have been to where we have had to respect the fact, reluctantly, that different attitudes and cultural norms apply. There is clearly not as liberal a regime around LGBT rights in Russia as we enjoy in this country. They have a long way to go in that respect. Our advice, my advice, to fans travelling is this: perhaps think twice before making a political demonstration of your discontent with the regime that currently applies in Russia in that particular context if you are there to enjoy a tournament. That is the reality facing LGBT groups in Russia for their entire existence, and one of our considerations is to try not to make things worse for the LGBT communities who live there and have to continue their existence there after the tournament.

Q20 **Mr Seely:** May I follow that up? I am not trying to be critical, but that answer is slightly falling short for me, because you are saying, "We're not going to give advice. Different cultural norms apply"—

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: But we have given advice.

Q21 **Mr Seely:** It seems to me that you should be giving advice.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: We have been.

Kevin Miles: We have. There are three pages of advice. I'm quite happy to forward it—

Q22 **Mr Seely:** Well, Chris just asked a very pertinent question: if you are a gay couple, should you be sharing hotel rooms? And you're saying, "Well, common sense." Common sense says you should, because you've got as much right to sleep with someone as anyone else. *[Interruption.]* Let me just make the point. But actually, common sense in Russia, with different cultural norms, fits into those cultural norms and not our cultural norms. I think genuinely that the advice that you give, if it is wrong and not clear, could get people into a lot of trouble; this is potentially dangerous.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Kevin Miles: We have not given specific advice against same-sex couples booking hotel rooms together, because there are clearly—

Q23 **Mr Seely:** Do you think you should?

Kevin Miles: No, I don't. We take our lead, as I say, partly from the Foreign Office travel advice, but also from the LGBT groups, both in this country, with the experience of travelling to Russia, and in Russia itself, and at no stage have they advised us to carry that advice.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as with all travel matters, has primacy on advice and giving the advice to the public. We will feed our views in to them. It is not realistic for us to go through a very prescriptive checklist of what is acceptable and not acceptable. We will contribute to the advice from the Foreign Office to give a general tone of what people can expect, and if there is specific advice, we will give specific advice. We have to deal with the environment that people are going to go into and try to reflect, as best we can, what to expect, so they can make informed decisions, but I don't think it is possible to give an entire checklist, because immediately you say something is safe or is not safe, people make a decision on that and—sod's law—that will be the chance where someone meets with an unfortunate event. So we will give the very best advice we can that is available to us, but we cannot give a prescriptive list of dos and don'ts. The Foreign Office would not do that, so it would not be a process we would subscribe to.

Q24 **Stephen Gethins:** The FCO's advice for those travelling is this: "Most visitors experience no difficulties but racially motivated attacks do occur. People of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent may attract unwanted attention in public places and should take care, particularly when travelling...at night." What would your advice be?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: That is the national advice.

Q25 **Stephen Gethins:** That is the FCO advice, so do you have concerns about racially motivated—?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: The advice is the FCO advice. We contribute to a process, the output of which is the FCO advice. We would not deviate or say anything different from that. As Kevin has referenced and can certainly give more detail on, the fans' travel book, which is going to be published—

Kevin Miles: It goes to print at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: —has three pages of advice about that specific issue. It is one we are alive to, and we will give as much information as we can, but travel advice is a Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsibility.

Q26 **Stephen Gethins:** So that is a concern you share with the Foreign Office?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: We stand behind that advice.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Kevin Miles: Just for reference, in the guidebook, the advice section for black, Asian and minority ethnic fans is precisely those words that you have just read out.

- Q27 **Stephen Gethins:** Is that more of a concern within Moscow or outside Moscow? Have you made any kind of assessment of what fans travelling might meet in different parts of Russia?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: That is the advice as it stands.

- Q28 **Stephen Gethins:** Sure; sorry, but the point I am making is whether that—

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I take your point. If we have specific regional variations, we will of course feed that in to the Foreign Office and they will take the decision about how to relay that advice. The best, most up-to-date information from all of us will be funnelled into the Foreign Office and their Be on the Ball website, which is up and running now and gets traction with the fans. That is the definitive point for the UK to offer travel advice to its citizens.

- Q29 **Chair:** Of course, the Russian games offer a particular challenge, given the very long distances to Nizhny Novgorod, Kaliningrad and Volgograd, don't they? You are talking about people being on trains for a number of hours, unable in reality to leave an enclosed space, with a group of people who may or may not be sympathetic to their behaviour.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Absolutely, and part of the advice we would reiterate is that people need to have firm plans in place for accommodation and travel. We have negotiated with the Russian authorities and Russian Railways. There will be dedicated trains between the venues, and if you have the Fan-ID and a ticket, you can secure that free of charge. Our advice is that the trains that they are recommending supporters go on should be policed, and that is the expectation, so supporters should be able to travel free of charge on specific trains with a police presence on them.

- Q30 **Chris Bryant:** Alcohol or no alcohol on the train?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: No alcohol.

- Q31 **Chris Bryant:** On a 14-hour train journey?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: That is our understanding.

Chris Bryant: I am definitely not going.

- Q32 **Royston Smith:** To bring it back to policing and security, the Russians, by virtue of the fact that they have been given the World Cup to host, have a responsibility to keep the visiting fans safe. But—as Bob tried to tease out with you—people would have something of an expectation, albeit incorrect, about what our police can do while they are there, to protect our fans in the event that something happens. Kevin said that there was no shortage of manpower, that there were military personnel, and that he felt that the security was good, but I would think their



HOUSE OF COMMONS

policing is different from ours. You talked about your conversations with your counterparts and how there was no shortage of commitment, and Bob made the point that they will want to make this a successful event, especially with a lot of the bad media they have had recently. What, though, in your professional capacity, do you see as their ability to keep our fans safe? Their policing will be different. It might be more hostile, or different from the consensual way that we police in this country. What are your thoughts on that?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: We expect there to be potentially variations around the country. That is not particular to Russia, which is obviously quite a big and diverse country in its own internal makeup. Even when we worked in France for the Euros, there was difference in policing style, approach and command structures within each of the different regions of France. That is something we are used to. We have done pre-visits. We will have a senior police officer who is extremely experienced in football policing, going out with a team of spotters. He has already had pre-visits with the police he expects to deal with.

The role for ourselves, as with any deployment, is first to advise the local police on what are appropriate tactics. On many occasions we will seek to calm down local police. We have seen in numerous countries that antisocial behaviour that we would take a rather low-level approach to can be seen by other forces or other countries as the precursor to serious disorder. We often find ourselves trying to mitigate it and saying, "If you want them to leave, stop serving them beer, let them drift off and calm that down." That is generally where we have most of our success.

We will also liaise with the supporters. If Kevin is there, or people we recognise, or fans' groups—the spotters have relationships with different fans' groups—we will try to say to them, "This is how your behaviour is coming across. You are increasing the risk to yourselves." It is really multi-dimensional. The people we send are really experienced, good officers.

Q33 **Royston Smith:** Are they uniformed personnel?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: On this occasion, they will be in plain clothes. That is at the discretion of the hosts. It generally suits our policing better as well, because if we want to out ourselves as police officers to the England fans that is quite straightforward; we can always wear bibs. If we want to gather evidence on them, sometimes it is easier in plain clothes, and sometimes if people have consumed too much alcohol and are in a group, a uniformed English police presence can be a catalyst to antisocial behaviour, rather than the reverse.

We will consider all those things, but we often describe the role of the overseas delegation as that of a cultural interpreter—both to explain to the local police what is going on and what we think they should do, and to explain to the supporters how they are being perceived, and try to stop any unfortunate incidents due to misunderstandings.

Q34 **Mr Seely:** What powers do you have, or what powers are the Russians allowing you to have?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: None. We never have powers.

Q35 **Mr Seely:** But you are collecting evidence that could be used to prosecute back in the UK?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: We will collate evidence that is potentially usable for a banning order application, not a prosecution. If there were an extremely serious offence, where a British national attacked another British national, we could potentially prosecute here, but in the main we collect evidence for banning orders, or we collect evidence that we could share with another authority, as we did with the French.

Q36 **Mr Seely:** So you have very limited powers. I am sorry to labour this point, but you are sort of implying that Russia is no different from France or Ireland—

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: No.

Mr Seely: Hold on. Then you said, "All countries are different." There is a significant difference between western European police forces and police forces in eastern Europe. You have sort of said as much, because they tend to be more paramilitary, and maybe a bit more thuggish. I don't mean that—

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: There's no kind way of saying that.

Q37 **Mr Seely:** They have a different approach to law and order. Maybe I shouldn't have used that term, but there is a difference, and there is a more significant difference between a Russian police force, especially one out in the provinces, and Irish, French, German and British police. Do you not see that to be the case?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Absolutely. Just to try to correct something, I think you have misrepresented what I said there. I have not said that the Russian police are the same as the French or German police. There are differences, and there are regional differences within each of those countries as well. The policing style in eastern Europe—I have seen it in Ukraine and other places—tends to be more paramilitary, with absolute weight of numbers to dissuade anything happening. That is what we can anticipate. Our role is to engage with the Russians and try to explain what is appropriate. The reassurance will be in the Champions League games that we have seen this year. It has gone fine without any issues.

Q38 **Mr Seely:** And you are happy that those relationships will be built up in the World Cup, and you are happy that you are in as good a place as you can be with your Russian police interlocutors?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Yes. I think we have maximised everything we can.

Q39 **Ian Murray:** Apologies for being a bit late; I had a question in the Chamber. You may have covered this already, but I was just wondering if you could give a simple analysis of how challenging this has been for both



HOUSE OF COMMONS

the police and the FA compared with other European championships or other World Cups, and where does this one rank? Is it the most difficult, and the most challenging?

Robert Sullivan: From an FA perspective, I would say that this has been challenging but, as we have said previously, all tournaments are challenging because they have unique issues involved. I think we have been really encouraged by the support that we have had from the police, the FCO and the fans' groups.

There is the fact that we have had a good long run at this as well. Obviously we have known that we were going to Russia for a long period of time. We have been able to prepare and work in co-ordination. Although it has been challenging, we certainly feel as if we have had the right support structures, advice and guidance. No matter what twists and turns the politics may have taken in recent days, we feel as if, as Bob described it, we are in as good a place as we can be.

Q40 **Ian Murray:** But I don't worry about our police force, our supporters association and the FA. I worry about Russia. This is not really about whether you have the support from the agencies here.

Does the FA make any representations to FIFA about how challenging these issues are, and whether FIFA should look at a system whereby countries that cannot guarantee the safety of their citizens who travel and of supporters should not be allowed even to apply to host the World Cup, let alone be granted it in the end? What representations do you make to FIFA about the feedback on this?

Robert Sullivan: There are two parts to that question. First, yes—we are in constant dialogue with FIFA's security team. The FA's own security counterparts will talk to FIFA's security team on a regular basis. We share our experiences, and we have very experienced people from several tournaments, as have they. That is an ongoing discussion.

The second part is that it is FIFA's responsibility. If they can't get the guarantees they think are required, in terms of safety and security, Russia should not be hosting tournaments. It is the advice of our Foreign Office that that isn't the case in Russia, and therefore there is no issue in that sense here.

Q41 **Ian Murray:** But we will only know that in hindsight—after the tournament.

Robert Sullivan: Yes, but in terms of the best we can, and in terms of what is in front of us, we feel like we are as prepared as we can be. We are receiving the advice we should be.

Ian Murray: When I say "we", I mean the Royal we. You can tell by my accent that I don't have any skin in this game.

Chris Bryant: We've done that gag several times.

Ian Murray: I keep saying "we"—I didn't mean we.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Chair: We will move on to someone who does have skin in the game.

Robert Sullivan: You mean you're not supporting England?

Ian Murray: I am, yes. I want all the supporters to come back safely.

- Q42 **Ian Austin:** Well, I'm English and an England fan, but I'm not sure I would be going myself, if I'm honest. I am interested in how we can be so relaxed about the Russian authorities' commitment to keep England fans safe when the Government booted out the British official responsible for making those preparations. That doesn't fill me with confidence about how seriously the Russian Government is taking the safety of England fans.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I wouldn't say we are relaxed. We are going into this cognisant of the challenges and doing everything within our power collectively to make sure we keep England—

- Q43 **Ian Austin:** Well, okay. "Relaxed" is a little unfair. You said that you have not detected any shortage of commitment on the part of the Russians, in terms of the preparations, but they have booted out the official responsible for making those preparations on our side.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Absolutely. We have been working with the relevant people in the Foreign Office for over two years. Has it helped that some of the people we have been working with are no longer in post?

- Q44 **Ian Austin:** Do you think the expulsion of that official has affected the preparations that guarantee England fans' safety?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Clearly, if you have been working with someone for the best part of two years, and part of that team is removed from the equation, that is not optimal. However, if the question is whether we still think that, collectively, we can provide a really effective service to the UK nationals going, yes we do.

- Q45 **Ian Austin:** I'm not doubting your commitment—

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I'm not trying to be defensive, but my take is that the Foreign Office will still give a really good service.

- Q46 **Ian Austin:** Look, I completely understand that your responsibility is to do everything you possibly can to guarantee the safety of England fans. I'm not questioning that at all, I promise you. What I am questioning is the Russian authorities' commitment to ensuring the safety of England fans.

Robert Sullivan: From everything I have understood, the commitment about the operational support, in terms of the Local Organising Committee and the policing, is strong. Obviously, there is a political issue in play relating to the Foreign Office's ability to meet their commitments to UK citizens abroad. They have plans in place to deal with that suspension. I think they are in front of you tomorrow, and I am sure they will be better placed to discuss how that will—



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q47 **Ian Austin:** Yes, and obviously we will be asking the Minister. Given that you are liaising with the British officials responsible for this, I wanted to get your take on it in advance of the session tomorrow.

Robert Sullivan: Let me put it another way: we haven't seen a drop-off of the support we have required from the FCO since they lost that individual from Moscow.

Q48 **Mike Gapes:** Our job as a Committee is to scrutinise the FCO's policy, administration, finances and organisation. What is your assessment—each of you—of the Be on the Ball campaign, including the website and all the advice that is given? Is it effective? Do fans actually take any notice of it? Are they aware of it? Do they change their behaviour as a result of it?

Kevin Miles: The Football Supporters' Federation works in very close partnership with the Foreign Office. We think that we add a very useful—probably vital—supplement to the usual channels. For the Be on the Ball information stream, we partner with them to get it particularly targeted at the football fans who are travelling.

Q49 **Mike Gapes:** Do you have any say over the content of it?

Kevin Miles: We have had a lot of discussion about the content.

Q50 **Mike Gapes:** And have they changed it as a result of what you've suggested?

Kevin Miles: I don't think there have been any changes to the formal Government travel advice, but we have made more accessible how we sell, relay and explain that to football fans in a way that they relate to. We produce this guidebook as a joint publication between the Football Supporters' Federation, the FA and the—

Q51 **Mike Gapes:** That is the guidebook, but the website is entirely a Government website.

Kevin Miles: Yes, but we link to it through our portals. Because I have been doing this for 20-odd years, I know a lot of the football fans. Football fans come to us for their information, regardless of the tournament. We produce an information fanzine for every single England game that is played. We have a high recognition factor and also a very high credibility and confidence factor. It is a fact of life that football fans will accept information and advice from a football fans' organisation that they might think twice about accepting automatically from even the police, and certainly the FA—

Q52 **Mike Gapes:** Or from their club. I'm a West Ham fan, okay? I understand well.

Kevin Miles: Even from the Foreign Office, although I think the Foreign Office advice does rate quite highly in terms of being the experts on the ground in each of the countries that we visit. That has been the case across the bulk of the tournaments. The guidebook and the online presence around it—that sort of thing—is a very good way to amplify and



HOUSE OF COMMONS

target the Foreign Office Be on the Ball advice. It is a mutually beneficial partnership for conveying that.

Q53 **Mike Gapes:** Do you want to add anything to that?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I have been involved in a number of tournaments now. The working relationship with the whole group—FA, fans, FCO, UKFPU and police—continues to develop. Some of us have been doing tournaments for a long time. We have got familiar people, and practice has really come along. The support we get now from the FCO is really strong.

Q54 **Mike Gapes:** Have they changed their website advice as a result of suggestions that have come from you, as the police?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: It would be difficult to pinpoint an individual item, but their messages reflect the advice we give them. It is generated as a composite product between us all. We take heed of everyone's opinions and then something is produced that we are all—

Q55 **Mike Gapes:** When I logged on to it a little while ago, it said it was established in September last year and was updated on 6 April, which is a month after the attempted murders in Salisbury. I am interested to know whether they have significantly modified the advice that they are giving publicly to the England fans over recent months.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I think that would be a matter of record, just to go through the website and check what the advice is and how it has changed.

Robert Sullivan: One thing I would add is that, like all these things, you need a range of different ways to communicate and engage with people. There is Be on the Ball, there is Free Lions and there is also the England Supporters' Travel Club. We are doing fans' events around the country. We did one in Walsall a couple of weeks ago and we are in Leeds tonight doing an event with England fans for them to come and talk to our security advisers, so that they get the sense that if they have any concerns, they can come and discuss the issues.

Like all these things, you need a range of different ways to communicate with people, to ensure that they have got the message and understood the advice, and that they feel confident that the support is there, as and if and when it is required.

Q56 **Mike Gapes:** Since Salisbury—since March—have you made any changes, or recognised any changes the Government has made, in terms of preparations or advice that is different from what it was before then?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I would have trouble pointing to a specific item, but it is a rolling programme where we take all the information from all the relevant people, which then ends up in the Government's travel advice, via the site.

Q57 **Mike Gapes:** I understand that, but I am trying to get to the essence of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

this issue. Is it your perception that after the events in Salisbury, the Government changed the way that it presents advice to England fans who might or might not choose to go to the World Cup?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I think the advice as currently given by the FCO is entirely consistent with what we see and fit for purpose.

Q58 **Mike Gapes:** That's not my question. My question is: has it changed?

Robert Sullivan: It hasn't changed from our perspective, but maybe the Foreign Office could be clear tomorrow about whether their official messaging has changed.

Q59 **Mike Gapes:** But you haven't noticed any change.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: It is updated on a regular basis.

Q60 **Mike Gapes:** It might be updated, but you haven't pointed to any significant changes.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: No. I think that would be a matter of going through the various iterations of the website.

Q61 **Mike Gapes:** Kevin, have you got anything?

Kevin Miles: I am struggling to think, because I have checked the advice on a regular basis when compiling the guidebook. I think there may be something, but please don't take me to the Tower if I have got this wrong.

Mike Gapes: I don't have that power alone. We would have to get a motion through the House.

Kevin Miles: It's always a worry. There may be some reference to increasing tensions between the countries, and that sort of thing, but in terms of the actual substantive advice to fans on the ground, I did a trip to Russia with the police and the FA to the group-stage venues at the beginning of February. In fact, the day we came home was the day of the Salisbury event. I remember thinking at the time that it was probably a good time to be leaving the country and coming back. The biggest factor for us on that trip was the weather, which was very cold. That limited our effectiveness, but we were well supported by the police and the Foreign Office staff there. When I went back to do the knock-out stage venues in April, we were deprived of the company of the FCO staff who had accompanied us so effectively on the first trip.

Mike Gapes: Because they had been removed and sent home.

Kevin Miles: Because they had been removed. But what I did not notice was a deterioration in attitude of people on a local level—the local organising committee officials in the various different cities, the host cities, the venues and the stadium management. All of the people we collaborated with on the Russian side were still as positive and friendly as they had been previously. Whether it had not filtered down at that point or it just didn't impact on their existence in the same way, I don't know.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

- Q62 **Mike Gapes:** You have been to all the venues, so you have been to Kaliningrad. Kaliningrad is a very militarised area, and it is separated geographically from the rest of Russia. Do you notice any significant difference in the way things will be organised in Kaliningrad, compared to the other venues?

Kevin Miles: No. I am personally aware of the background. Until 70-odd years ago, Kaliningrad was a German city rather than a Russian city. What struck us more was how similar—how Russified—it had become over the course of those 70 years. There are particular bits of information and advice that we have to give, as people look at the map and see the geographical position and think, “We can pop there from Gdansk. It will be relatively easy.” We have to make the point that, for instance, they told us they are preparing a fast track for those with a “Fan-ID” to get across the border by road.

- Q63 **Mike Gapes:** From Poland?

Kevin Miles: Yes. That could cut the waiting time at the border right down to four hours. Obviously, people are very aware that that is a good thing.

- Q64 **Chair:** Cut it down from what time at the moment?

Kevin Miles: The crossing time can be up to 12 hours, apparently.

Chair: Frictionless borders, here we go!

Kevin Miles: To enter the city of Kaliningrad you need a tracking device on your coach—a GPS tracking device has to be fitted to your coach. Not all the foreign tour operators would necessarily be aware of that. So there are specific arrangements around Kaliningrad that we have had to pass information on about. But the general feel of the venue—certainly the stadium, but even the city—was very much of one of the Russian World Cup venues. You have to remember that a lot of these arrangements around the tournament are very much a FIFA roadshow. For all the differences between the various different host countries—there are huge cultural differences between Russia, Brazil, South Africa and Germany, to take the last few—there is also a huge amount in common. When the FIFA roadshow rolls into town—how they do things, how much direction they give and the sort of events they want to do—you are struck by the similarities as well.

- Q65 **Chair:** We have been focusing on the three areas where the England team will be playing their first few games. Clearly, England fans will be supporting other teams and they may find themselves winning the lotteries for different tickets in different parts of the country. What work is being done on those areas? Or is it very much focused on the three?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: It is very much focused on the three primary sites, because that is where the bulk of fans will go. My experience from different tournaments, notwithstanding the particular issues around this one, is that when people travel independently like that,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

we tend not to see any issues beyond what you would normally see for tourism.

- Q66 **Chair:** But you, Deputy Chief Constable, will be as confident as I am that we will see England progressing through the group stages and into the knock-out stages, so presumably you have planned ahead and you have your wall diagrams.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I am tempted to say that I have been more confident about some of the other things I have discussed with you today. Pre-visits have been undertaken for the other potential host venues. As and when that hopefully arrives, we will move the effort and focus on to those and aim to give the same level of reassurance, as far as we can, for each of those.

- Q67 **Chair:** But you will then be responding in a much shorter time frame, because you will be trying to do what has taken six to 12 months of organisation in the past.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: There have been pre-visits already.

- Q68 **Chair:** So you have visited other sites.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: As part of the delegation I have the FA, the FA security advisers and the Football Supporters' Federation. We have not done the other venues as yet, but we would move to do that, as and when. Obviously, we have the feedback from the other people who were part of that delegation.

- Q69 **Chair:** If, say, it was a venue that had previously been used by the French, would you co-operate with the French police and talk to them about how they had found it?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Yes. We have really good bilateral relationships with lots of countries, as you can imagine. Obviously, the ideal would be that we could speak to the Scots or Welsh about their experiences in the city, but that has been denied to us.

- Q70 **Chair:** I'm not sure that is terribly useful right now.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Whichever country it is, we will have a relationship with them. We will speak to them. We will exchange information about how it has gone. Obviously, if there has been a Champions League game or a Europa League game, we will tap back into what we know in terms of both information and contacts.

Robert Sullivan: From an FA perspective, our security team have scouted all our potential venues throughout the potential different routes of the tournament.

- Q71 **Stephen Gethins:** Unlike Mr Murray, I very much hope that England do progress to the later stages of the World Cup, but if you are in Kazan, Rostov-on-Don, Samara and then who-knows-where—you have done work in these areas—are there any distinct differences that you are looking at between a football match in, say, Moscow or St Petersburg—



HOUSE OF COMMONS

you mentioned the Champions League a few years ago—and out in the regions? What kind of differences are you anticipating once you get outside Moscow and St Petersburg?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: In terms of the engagement we have had on the pre-visits, it has been noticeably consistent in terms of what we have been told, the feel of it and what we can expect. I think once the tournament is up and running, we will take feedback from other countries who have played there, because some of the venues are ones that traditionally won't be a Champions League venue. So that has denied us an opportunity to take that information forward. There could be a rolling base as we go through the tournament.

There is an international co-ordination centre where we will have officers during the tournament. That really becomes the fulcrum from all the information that comes in from the various games, so they will be privy to the information and debriefs from the events that are held in each of the stadiums throughout the tournament.

Q72 **Stephen Gethins:** You will have to react quite quickly as the Chair indicated. Is it just that you have not been able to do as much work or because you haven't had the experience?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: We would not always do visits to all the venues in a host country, because of the various permutations. It is nothing particularly unusual and it is not something that gives massive concern, because there are other ways we can feed the information in, either by pre-visits or existing information or from what will come through the international co-ordination centre in Moscow.

Kevin Miles: As I said previously, when you go to some of these venues, the match day experience is incredibly similar, despite the difference between the various different cities. Despite the difference between Sochi and Kazan and some of the others, the stadium entrance is absolutely identical. That is not always the case, but it clearly has been built for Russia; they have exactly the same. You could take a photograph of the entrances of different stadiums and you would not be able to tell the difference between them. In terms of transport to the stadium, entry procedures into the stadiums, the creation of the fan zones and even the geographical relationship towards where the fans are staying, there is far more in common between the cities than there is that sets them apart, although clearly the cities are very different.

In terms of the fan experience, you suddenly find out which route you are following; depending on whether you finish top of the group or second in the group, you pretty much know what to expect in terms of your match day experience as you go from city to city.

We have a parallel through an organisation called Football Supporters Europe. We have similar contacts with the fan groups and fan organisations from the other European countries. We will be sharing information with them as we go along about what their experience has been city to city.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

To go back to your question earlier about the number of people who will pop off to see matches of other teams, the geography of the country means that compared to Euro '96, for instance, where you could have tickets to follow Germany or go to all the games at Old Trafford and then go to Hillsborough or Anfield to watch a match on the following day, a lot of times you are talking about venues which are hundreds if not thousands of miles apart. The opportunity to take in many other games is probably precluded, except for relatively small numbers who are not committed to following the England team from venue to venue.

- Q73 Royston Smith:** I want to pick up on Mr Gapes' point about whether your preparations have changed post-Salisbury. They do not appear to have changed very much. That may well be because you are very experienced, you know what you are doing and there is not much to change. Mark, how often do you meet with your Russian counterparts? Has their attitude changed at all, in either the way they are preparing or the way they deal with you?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: There are two types of meeting, in effect. There is the regular bilateral contact we have through a range of European football policing meetings—they carry on as normal—and, as I have said, we have arranged specific visits to Champions League games and other games, and we have been across to Moscow and had meetings with the Russian authorities there. In terms of those bilateral contacts, there has been no discernible difference. We have not had a regular set of meetings, just because they have not been planned in, post-Salisbury, but so far—and certainly in the contacts we have had with them in Europe at the regular meetings—that has been fine. It is just a case of that position hopefully maintaining itself as we work through.

Of course we are very much cognisant of the broader political picture, but our role is to try to keep Brits going to the World Cup as safe as possible, and my view—and I think our view—is that that is best served by maintaining an effective relationship with the Russian authorities that we deal with so that we can try to have a mutual aim of keeping everyone safe throughout the World Cup.

- Q74 Mr Seely:** I am sure I misunderstood, but did you say you have not had any meetings with your Russian counterparts since Salisbury?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: There has not been a regular rhythm. We have had set-piece meetings that have been arranged around particular events. There have been meetings that have taken place in the normal run of the mill of things in European policing. Nothing has been cancelled in terms of us going out there. There is nothing—

- Q75 Mr Seely:** You say “European policing”. Is that with the Russians, or is that just with other Europeans?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Including the Russians.

- Q76 Mr Seely:** So these meetings have gone ahead.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Yes.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q77 **Mr Seely:** How many have you had since Salisbury?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I would have to check. I can give you a supplementary answer with that detail.

Q78 **Mike Gapes:** Were those meetings in Russia or in other European cities?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: No, in other European cities.

Q79 **Mr Seely:** So planning for the World Cup has gone on despite the fact that, as Ian said, our representative who was dealing with the World Cup got expelled as part of the diplomatic expulsions over Salisbury?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Clearly, there have been implications for the Foreign Office and the staff that they have had. The policing plan has not changed. We still anticipate the same number of officers going as we did pre-Salisbury. Our level of representation is commensurate with the other larger nations, so in terms of our planned and deployed personnel, that has not changed.

Q80 **Mr Seely:** How many is that due to be?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: As a matter of operational need, we tend not to confirm before a tournament how many officers we are actually sending on the ground. There will be two in the co-ordination centre, which is a regular thing and is consistent with what we have done previously, but, just as for any deployment, we will not—I hope for obvious reasons—say how many officers we are going to send in a spotting role before the event.

Q81 **Mr Seely:** In that case, can I ask you whether it is hundreds, dozens or under 10? Can you give us just a little bit of guidance? Are we talking dozens? Are we talking more than 20?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: If I refer to the historical position, it varies massively. In Germany I think we had 53 or 58; in France we had 11. It is purely dependent on what the hosts request of us.

Q82 **Mr Seely:** So the hosts tell you how many you can bring?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Yes, and we are consistent with the other countries of a similar standing to England.

Q83 **Chris Bryant:** All the international assessment of Russian policing suggests that the Russian police service is one of the most corrupt in the world, and a very regular feature of most people's daily lives is that they have to bribe police officers. What advice are you providing on that to British travellers?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I do not think it is currently factored in to the overall Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice. If we get specific information about specific behaviour in an area, we will feed that in and it can be considered.

Q84 **Chris Bryant:** So none?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Not at the moment, no.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q85 **Chris Bryant:** The Government have announced that no VIPs are going, as I understand it. I do not know quite where the level of VIP-ness stops, if you see what I mean. *[Interruption.]* Well, obviously it is a long way above us. But it is a serious point. I just wonder who is going. Who is going from the FA?

Robert Sullivan: The FA will be represented at matches by the chairman and—

Q86 **Chris Bryant:** Who is the chairman?

Robert Sullivan: Greg Clarke.

Q87 **Chris Bryant:** Greg Clark?

Robert Sullivan: Not the Cabinet Minister—there is an extra e on the name. The delegation and executive activity on the ground will be led by Martin Glenn, who is the chief executive.

Q88 **Chris Bryant:** And that's it? You're not taking any guests or other footballers?

Robert Sullivan: Not in an FA official ambassador capacity, no.²

Q89 **Chris Bryant:** At the Sochi Winter Olympics, although we had a tense relationship with the Russian Federation, we none the less decided to provide security and intelligence support, rather than policing support, because we wanted to make sure that the Winter Olympics happened safely. As I understand, the Russians were particularly grateful for that.

We have been talking about fan-on-fan violence and things like that, but the threat to a major event like the World Cup might be completely different from what we are talking about today. As I understand, we have suspended intelligence support to Russia since Salisbury. Is that the case for the World Cup or not?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I would not comment on intelligence matters, but let me explain our command structure. I am in charge of public order deployment, which supports the public order operation. In parallel to that I am linked in with the senior national co-ordinator for SO15, so that we have visibility and are joined up in what we are doing. Equally, we are joined to the national DVI lead—the south-west region is on call for that period, so there is a gold commander in terms of national DVI should we have any sort of mass casualty incident. We are joined up and aware, but it is not really for us to comment on the intelligence.

Q90 **Chris Bryant:** But it must surely be a concern that in Russia—I guess that their major concern would be more about Chechen issues. If you look at the last 15 years, they have had significant numbers of terrorist incidents in Russia, and quite often they have responded with very

² Clarification by witness: The answer is fine in the context of the discussion about FA Board members and ambassadors and is entirely accurate, but in terms specifically of “guests”, England sponsors will be attending the World Cup and will be afforded the same protection as FA staff.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

extreme violence, such as during the theatre siege and at Beslan school. I wonder whether that is factored into your anxieties at all or not.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: For information on that type of threat, the relevant people are engaged in the overall threat assessment process, and that will feature appropriately in the advice to people travelling.

Robert Sullivan: Terrorism threats are unfortunately a part of major international sporting events now, and organisations such as FIFA, the FA and others have had to get good at understanding those risks and working with the authorities to make sure that they can be mitigated as best as they possibly ever can be.

Chris Bryant: My anxiety is just that the way the Russian authorities have tended to deal with such incidents has led to rather a lot of dead people at the end of the day.

Q91 **Mr Seely:** On that point, again I know you are trying not to be complacent—you are definitely not being; you are doing what you can and I understand that—but when it comes to Chris's points about gay issues, I think there is a sense of "Yeah, well, we'll see what happens."

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: I am not saying that.

Q92 **Mr Seely:** Okay. During the Russian hostage siege, about 170 people died, most of whom were innocent bystanders and victims. If you are looking at terrorism issues and fears in Russia, the dynamic is different. They tend to kill the terrorists, but without necessarily that much bother about who else dies in the process. Are you aware of that?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Yes, I am aware of that, but it is dealt with through existing national structures led by SO15. SO15 and all the relevant agencies are engaged in the overall process to ensure that the information we give out via the FCO is cognisant of all the threats and represents that, so that we can give the best possible information to British citizens.

Q93 **Chris Bryant:** I have one final question: how effective do you think football banning orders are?

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Essential. I think they are very effective and perhaps I can give you some stats to back that up. For Euro 2016, we had about 1,800 banning orders in place at any one time, and at the moment it is 1,751. We do cross-checks with the Passport Agency. We ensure that there is a surrender from people who are banned who have got passports. At the time of the Euros, 1,406 people were on a ban and had a passport and so could have gone. We recalled 1,403 of those passports. The other three people were wanted for crime, so had they presented themselves or tried to leave the country, they would have been arrested.

Q94 **Mike Gapes:** I am interested in going back to the earlier discussion about VIPs. We are going to have quite a few media people out there, including some people who will be working for channels of South African, Australian



HOUSE OF COMMONS

or American television companies. They sometimes will get in a British footballer or ex-footballer or a British manager. Does the FA or do any of you have some special advice for those people? They will be wealthy individuals normally, and they will clearly be targets for robbery, kidnapping and all kinds of other things. Have you got a way to deal with that? Although VIPs may not be going, very well-known people will be going.

Robert Sullivan: Does the FA have any advice for the media prior to a World Cup? Let me think. To answer your question seriously, the Foreign Office are providing a specific security briefing for all British media personnel travelling there, because I think you are absolutely right—

Mike Gapes: Not just working for British media companies.

Robert Sullivan: That is a fair point. I do not know whether those briefings will extend beyond British media outlets.

Mike Gapes: When I am abroad, I turn on a sports channel and there is some ex-player who is making money in China or wherever.

Robert Sullivan: I am sure they would not intend to make it exclusive. That might be something to request of them tomorrow.

Deputy Chief Constable Roberts: Generally the Foreign Office would give the advice as a matter of course. It is consistent advice that is appropriate to all individuals, but if people have been sent there by a private company of massive means, surely it is incumbent on them to conduct their own risk assessments and to take relevant measures.

Mike Gapes: Sure. Thank you.

Chair: I thank all three of you not only for appearing this afternoon, but for the enormous amount of work you have put in over the past few weeks and months. We hope very much that when we see you after the games, it will be to congratulate you and to thank you again for keeping so many people safe.

Mike Gapes: And that we will not go out at the group stage.