

Defence

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ARMED FORCES

D/MIN(AF)/PB/3/2

21 December 1982

Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

A.F.C. 27/12

S. R. Hylam

NUCLEAR PUBLIC RELATIONS

I believe you may wish to know the progress that has been made on this front since our meeting on November 24 and to hear of a number of encouraging developments in our campaign.

Our plans for a finger-post advertising campaign are proceeding. We aim to place the first advertisement in the national press in early March which will contain an eye-catching message about nuclear deterrence and encourage the readers to send for a booklet on the subject of deterrence and disarmament. Two booklets are now in preparation, catering for the more and the less sophisticated readers. The analysis from the Opinion Poll which I drew to your attention yesterday will be valuable in helping us target the correct audiences.

Following my round of contacts with the Churches the interdenominational group mentioned in the Report we considered in November is due to have its first meeting in early January and plans a public launch later that month. The group will be making selective contact with members of the Church of England Synod before their important debate on the Church and the Bomb report in early February. I am in touch with John Gummer about the Synod.

With regard to the media, in January I will be making my fifth and sixth visits to meet groups of editors of regional and local newspapers and radio stations and plan to follow up with further visits in the subsequent months. We are also writing to a range of television and radio producers and editors stressing the importance of balance in their reporting of the nuclear debate and indicating the availability of Ministers to take part.

You have kindly agreed to consider making a major speech on deterrence and disarmament early in the New Year. I have written to a number of members of the Cabinet urging them to make similar speeches and offering the help of this Department in providing suitable drafts.

/Four ...

The Prime Minister

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Four films about nuclear deterrence are now in prospect. One, on the case for Cruise missiles, is being made for this Department by the COI. It will be ready for distribution in March before the major CND events planned for Easter. (Our existing film "The Peace Game" has now had several hundred showings since its launch two months ago.) A second new film, on NATO and the importance of nuclear deterrence, is being made privately with help from this Department as a supporting film for the next James Bond epic due for release next summer. A third is being made by Central Television, quite independently of this Department, to balance John Pilger's film "The Truth Game" and both will be shown in the New Year. Finally, I am discussing with Euan Lloyd, the producer of the film "Who Dares Wins", the making of a hard-hitting film about nuclear deterrence for release on the commercial circuit in support of a major feature film. This will probably have to be financed privately in order that Lloyd can have the freedom he requires to make his points with the necessary force. (He wishes this project to be treated as absolutely confidential.) These are all important projects and the films designed for the cinema circuit and for television stand to reach an enormous audience.

Finally, Douglas Hurd and I are encouraging the BAC to make greater efforts to explain NATO's policies. They are now working on plans for considerably expanded activities in 1983. I believe they need to concentrate on local activities although there is also a role for them in the debate at national level and to this end I am arranging for a number of their key people to have training in television techniques at our own facilities (on a repayment basis). Douglas and I shall be continuing to brief selected MPs.

While we are increasing the tempo I believe we must search constantly for new opportunities and means to put over our case. Our opponents will be making a major effort in 1983 and we will need a positive and vigorous approach to contain them and to win the debate.

I am copying this letter to John Nott, Francis Pym, John Biffen and Cecil Parkinson.

*Yours ever,
Peter*

PETER BLAKER