



MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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D/MIN(AF)/PB/3/2/7

5 January 1983

Prime Minister

*It appears that we are not yet  
winning the public argument on  
Cruise. A.S.C.  $\frac{5}{1}$*

*Dear Prime Minister,*

NUCLEAR OPINION POLL

*Copy: Sir A. Parsons / Mr. Tackling.*

I sent you on December 21 the preliminary results of the opinion poll on the principal questions in the nuclear debate carried out for us by NOP. As promised I am now enclosing the more detailed analysis of those results, together with a commentary by our statisticians.

The final figures have been weighted by demographic factors and differ only slightly from the earlier results. Not surprisingly ignorance of our plans to introduce Trident and Cruise missiles is much greater among the youngest group surveyed (15-24) and socio-economic groups D and E. While, overall, a majority of those aware of our plans to introduce Trident support them, there is a majority against in the 15-34 age groups, in socio-economic groups D and E and in Scotland and the north of England. Overall a very small majority of those aware of our plans oppose the deployment of Cruise missiles, with a clear majority against among women, the 15-34 age groups and socio-economic classes D and E.

We shall now need to consider urgently how those results should guide our efforts to educate and persuade. I plan to have the poll repeated after an interval to measure trends and before then to have more detailed questions asked on Trident and on Cruise missiles. I will keep you informed of the results.

I am copying this letter with the enclosure to John Nott, Francis Pym, John Biffen, Cecil Parkinson, Michael Jopling, George Younger and Nicholas Edwards.

*yours ever,  
Peter*

PETER BLAKER

The Prime Minister

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#### NATO (Table 1)

1. Of the 76% who said they knew what NATO is, 76% thought Britain should remain in it, while 10% thought Britain should leave. Knowledge and support of NATO was higher amongst men than women, and was lowest in age-group 15-24, and in the lowest class, DE.

#### Disarmament (Table 2)

2. The poll confirmed that the great majority of people are against unilateral disarmament. Overall 74% said that Britain should keep her nuclear weapons if other countries were not prepared to give up theirs. More importantly, the table shows little variation across the board in the percentages holding this view; in other words this view is not restricted to any particular section of the people.

3. Slightly more men than women (18% compared to 15%) thought Britain should give up her nuclear weapons. Again, the strongest opposition came from the 15-24 age-group which showed 20% against, as compared with 13% for the over-55's.

4. The most popular reason for giving up nuclear weapons was that it would encourage others to do the same: overall, 36% held this view, as did 50% in the 15-24 age-group. In Scotland, however, the most popular reason was that it is morally right.

#### Trident (Table 3)

5. Surprisingly, there were high proportions who said they did not know of the Trident plans - 38% overall. In all categories fewer people said they were aware of Trident than knew about NATO. In 3 categories, women, the 15-24 age-group and social class DE, less than half said they were aware of the plans. Even in the (usually) most knowledgeable class, AB, almost a quarter did not know of the plans. Some of the contrasts are striking. Three quarters of the men interviewed said they were aware of the Trident plans, compared with slightly less than half the women. Knowledge declined rapidly between social classes AB and DE.

6. While a slight majority (42% to 36%) of those who did know of the plans also agreed with them, opinion is split different ways in different categories. There is a large percentage in the "Undecided" and "Don't Know" categories (22% overall and 29% of women). More men than women agreed with the plans (but the DK element among the latter is very high). In Scotland, contrary to the overall result, more disagreed than agreed. The proportions agreeing with the plans increases consistently with age.

7. In all categories, cost had a clear lead as the main reason for disagreeing with the plans.

#### Cruise (Table 4)

8. More people said they were unaware of the Cruise plans than Trident. However, there is still a very sizeable minority who said they were unaware.

9. For those aware of the plans, opinion is much more evenly split than for Trident. Overall, 42% agreed while 43% disagreed, but men, older people and people in classes AB, C1 favoured the plans whereas women, the young and those in the other social classes opposed them. Although more people have definite opinions on Cruise than on Trident there is still a substantial proportion who said they were undecided.

10. There was very little variation between the main categories on the reasons chosen for disagreeing: clearly the most popular reason was "It makes Britain more of a target".

## Cross Analysis

11. We thought it would be useful to cross-analyse some of the results though the result is a rather complicated table of results. Table 5 analyses the results of question 3 against questions 5 and 6 and 7 and 8.

12. As Table 2 shows the majority of people are against unilateral disarmament (74 per cent). Perhaps not surprisingly among this group over half agree with the plans for Trident and over half agree with the plans for Cruise though we do not know whether these are the same people (however, one would guess they were). Conversely about a quarter of this group disagree in each case with the Trident and Cruise plans.

13. Of the 16 per cent who favour unilateral disarmament, very large majorities disagree with the Trident and Cruise plans, as might be expected. Among the undecided on unilateral disarmament, there is very little support for either Trident or Cruise.

NOP SURVEY      DECEMBER 1982

Table 1

	Total	Sex		Age				Class				Standard Region				
		Male	Female	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Scott-land	North	Mid-lands & West	Wales & West	South East
TOTAL (= 100%)	1957	934	1024	357	340	618	642	301	426	594	637	185	519	314	256	684
<u>Question 1</u>																
<u>Do you know what NATO is?</u>																
(a) Yes (%)	76	87	66	69	77	81	74	88	85	75	65	74	73	78	74	79
(b) No/Not sure (%)	24	13	34	31	23	19	26	12	15	25	35	26	27	22	26	21
THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY (= 100%)	1489	815	674	248	262	502	477	266	364	447	413	137	379	244	190	539
<u>Question 2</u>																
<u>Do you think that Britain should remain in NATO or leave it?</u>																
(a) Remain (%)	76	80	71	67	80	78	75	83	79	77	67	71	74	73	79	78
(b) Leave (%)	10	10	10	15	8	8	11	6	9	9	14	10	9	13	10	9
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide (%)	4	3	5	5	2	3	5	3	1	5	5	7	5	4	3	2
(d) Don't know (%)	10	7	15	12	10	11	9	8	10	9	14	12	12	10	8	10

NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

	Total	Sex		Age				Class				Standard Region				
		Male	Female	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Scot-land	North	Mid-lands	Wales & West	South East
TOTAL (= 100%)	1957	934	1024	357	340	618	642	301	426	594	637	185	519	314	256	684
<u>Question 3</u>																
<u>If other countries were NOT prepared to give up their nuclear weapons, do you think Britain should give up or keep her own?</u>																
(a) Give up (%)	16	18	15	20	18	16	13	16	18	17	15	17	17	15	20	15
(b) Keep (%)	74	74	73	72	72	75	75	74	73	74	74	73	74	74	72	75
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide (%)	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
(d) Don't know (%)	6	3	9	5	6	6	7	5	5	6	8	6	6	7	6	6
THOSE ANSWERING 'GIVE UP' ONLY (= 100%)	319	166	153	73	62	98	86	47	77	100	94	32	87	46	50	103
<u>Question 4</u>																
<u>Looking at this card, please tell me the main reason why you think Britain should give up her nuclear weapons?</u>																
(a) It is morally right (%)	27	25	29	24	27	24	34	34	32	24	23	45	21	27	26	27
(b) It would make Britain safer (%)	22	17	28	12	22	28	25	25	16	23	26	17	19	27	16	29
(c) It would encourage other countries to give up their nuclear weapons (%)	36	41	30	50	36	29	31	29	39	35	37	30	43	24	48	31
(d) Other reasons (%)	12	16	7	11	11	16	7	8	10	15	11	5	12	20	8	11
(e) Don't know (%)	3	1	5	2	4	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	5	3	1	2

NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

	Total	Sex		Age				Class				Standard Region				
		Male	Female	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Scott-land	North	Mid-lands	Wales & West	South East
TOTAL (= 100%)	1957	934	1024	357	340	618	642	301	426	594	637	185	519	314	256	684
<u>Question 5</u>																
<u>Do you know about the Government plans to replace the Polaris nuclear missile system with Trident?</u>																
(a) Yes (%)	62	76	49	49	64	68	61	77	69	62	49	63	59	64	61	63
(b) No/Not sure (%)	38	24	51	51	36	32	39	23	31	38	51	37	41	36	39	37
THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY (= 100%)	1209	711	498	174	218	423	395	232	296	367	315	116	305	201	156	432
<u>Question 6</u>																
<u>Do you agree or disagree with these plans?</u>																
(a) Agree (%)	42	46	37	36	38	42	47	48	40	43	38	34	39	49	42	43
(b) Disagree (%)	36	38	34	47	40	34	31	36	34	37	39	45	41	29	42	32
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide (%)	10	9	11	5	11	11	10	9	10	9	10	9	7	8	8	13
(d) Don't know (%)	12	8	18	12	10	13	12	7	16	11	13	11	12	13	9	13
THOSE ANSWERING 'DISAGREE' ONLY (= 100%)	439	271	169	82	88	145	124	83	100	134	122	53	126	59	65	137
<u>Question 6b</u>																
<u>Looking at this card, please tell me the main reason why you disagree with this?</u>																
(a) It would be too costly (%)	45	49	39	50	47	42	44	45	45	48	43	47	45	55	42	41
(b) It would mean other defence spending would be reduced (%)	14	12	17	5	18	19	12	15	9	15	17	11	16	10	18	14
(c) Britain does not need an independent deterrent (%)	24	24	24	30	16	26	23	29	21	25	22	31	25	18	19	25
(d) Other reasons (%)	15	15	14	12	15	11	19	12	22	9	16	4	13	13	18	19
(e) Don't know (%)	2	•	5	3	3	2	2	4	3	2	7	7	1	4	3	1

\* less than 0.5%

NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

Tab

	Total	Sex		Age				Class				Standard Region				
		Male	Female	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Scot-land	North	Mid-lands & West	Wales & West	South East
TOTAL (= 100%)	1957	934	1024	357	340	618	642	301	426	594	637	185	519	314	256	684
<u>Question 7</u>																
<u>Are you aware of the Government plans to site Cruise missiles in Britain?</u>																
(a) Yes (%)	68	80	57	58	68	72	69	86	74	67	56	59	63	70	68	74
(b) No/Don't know (%)	32	20	43	42	32	28	31	14	26	33	44	41	37	30	32	26
THESE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY (= 100%)	1330	750	581	207	232	447	445	258	314	400	359	108	326	220	174	503
<u>Question 8</u>																
<u>Do you agree or disagree with this proposed action?</u>																
(a) Agree (%)	42	49	34	35	39	43	48	46	45	45	35	38	41	45	39	44
(b) Disagree (%)	43	41	45	49	43	42	40	36	38	44	50	49	43	40	46	41
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide (%)	7	7	9	6	12	8	6	12	8	6	6	7	6	9	9	7
(d) Don't know (%)	7	4	12	10	6	8	7	6	9	6	9	6	9	7	6	8
THESE ANSWERING 'DISAGREE' ONLY (=100%)	569	305	264	102	100	188	178	94	120	175	180	53	141	87	80	208
<u>Question 9</u>																
<u>Looking at this card, please tell me the main reason why you disagree with this?</u>																
(a) The missiles will be under American control (%)	22	23	21	29	21	23	18	22	23	21	22	20	25	25	19	20
(b) It makes Britain more of a target (%)	51	51	51	42	54	48	58	49	49	53	53	57	49	59	48	49
(c) It is more likely to cause a nuclear war (%)	21	20	21	23	20	22	18	23	22	20	19	15	18	12	28	25
(d) Other reasons (%)	5	5	5	6	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	6	3	4	6
(e) Don't know (%)	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	4	2	1	1	1

Question 3. If other countries were NOT prepared to give up their nuclear weapons, do you think Britain should

	Total	Give up	Keep	It depends on too many factors to decide	Don't know
TOTAL (= 100%)	1957	319	1445	71	122

## Question 5

Do you know about the Government plans to replace the Polaris nuclear missile system with Trident?

(a) Yes (%)	62	71	62	66	28
(b) No/Not sure (%)	38	29	38	34	72
THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY (= 100%)	1209	228	901	47	34

## Question 6

Do you agree or disagree with these plans?

(a) Agree (%)	42	4	55	6	9
(b) Disagree (%)	36	88	23	56	21
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide (%)	10	2	10	36	6
(d) Don't know (%)	12	6	12	2	63

TOTAL (= 100%)	1957	319	1445	71	122
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## Question 7

Are you aware of the Government plans to site Cruise missiles in Britain?

(a) Yes	68	75	69	71	37
(b) No/Don't know	32	25	31	29	63
THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY (= 100%)	1330	239	997	50	44

## Question 8

Do you agree or disagree with this proposed action?

(a) Agree (%)	42	2	55	11	7
(b) Disagree (%)	43	96	29	66	32
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide (%)	7	2	7	23	22
(d) Don't know (%)	7	.	8		39

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*Kevin Pelt*

6 January 1983

Nuclear Opinion Poll

The Prime Minister has read with interest Mr. Blaker's personal letter of 5 January on the preliminary results of the opinion poll carried out by NOP.

JOHN COLES

R.P. Craine, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

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*Registered*  
*PE 31/12*

MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES

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

24 December 1982

Dear Mr Parkinson,

*attached to Blaker's copy 31/12*

*Wh*  
*4/1*

I am attaching the preliminary results of the opinion poll carried out for us by NOP in early December, after the Labour Party Political Broadcast but before the Greenham Common demonstration. These are for your personal information and I would be grateful if they could go no further at this stage.

Taken as a whole the results are heartening. They show that the opposition to Trident and to the deployment of Cruise missiles is smaller than other recent opinion polls have suggested, and the answers to questions 2 and 3 on NATO and on unilateral disarmament generally are satisfactory.

As you can see the polling technique involved identifying and eliminating from the detailed questioning on each topic those who were unaware of our plans. The figures in this category are large. In general, it is clear that we have a considerable educational task before us.

We have considered whether it would be to our advantage to seek publicity for these results but our preliminary reaction is that the small majority against Cruise missiles would be considered the most newsworthy item and given most prominence. However, we intend repeating the poll in a few months time and if this shows a trend in our favour on Cruise and Trident we could consider some publicity at that time.

I am sending a copy of this letter, without the enclosure which they already have, to the Prime Minister, John Nott, Francis Pym, John Biffen and the Chief Whip, with reference to the penultimate paragraph.

*Yours sincerely*

*SHall for*

PETER BLAKER

*Drafted by Mr Blaker  
and signed in his absence*

Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson, MP  
Paymaster General

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
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D/MIN(AF)/PB/3/2/7

21 December 1982

Dear Prime Minister,

NUCLEAR OPINION POLL

Following the meeting of your Liaison Committee on November 24 I commissioned an opinion poll on the principal questions in the nuclear debate in order to obtain a fairer measure of public support for our policies (the questions asked by some other polls were biased) and to obtain a full analysis of the opposition to and ignorance of our policies to guide the production of further films and pamphlets. I now have the preliminary results and the fuller analysis will be available in early January. I believe you will wish to be aware of them.

The technique used by the pollsters (NOP) which had not been used in other recent polls on this subject was to ask questions on NATO, Trident and Cruise, only of those who professed to some knowledge of the policies concerned. The results were (of those aware of the policies):

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| a. | Support for the replacement of Polaris with Trident | 41% |
|    | Opposed   | 36% |
| b. | Supporting the siting of Cruise missiles in Britain | 42% |
|    | Opposed   | 43% |

As expected support for our membership of NATO and opposition to unilateral nuclear disarmament was high:

- c. Of those aware of NATO 75% wished Britain to continue as a member.
- d. 74% supported Britain keeping her nuclear weapons if other countries were not prepared to give up theirs.

The message I derive from these results is that the opposition to our policies is somewhat smaller than recent polls suggested but the degree of ignorance of these policies is greater. There is clearly no room for complacency and we must continue to make every effort to persuade our opponents of the correctness of our course and to educate the uninformed about our policies.

/An ...

The Prime Minister



An interesting footnote is that of those opposed to Trident 46% were opposed because they believed it to be too costly and 24% because they did not believe Britain needed an independent deterrent. On Cruise of those opposed 51% based their opposition on the belief that it made Britain more of a target and only 22% because the missiles are to be under American control.

... Full details of these preliminary results are attached below. I will forward a more detailed analysis in due course. The polling was conducted between the 2nd and 7th of December, after the Labour Party Political Broadcast and before the demonstrations at Greenham Common.

We shall be considering whether these results should be published and if so how.

I am sending a copy of this letter and the enclosure to John Biffen.

*Yours ever,  
Peter.*

PETER BLAKER

NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

TOTAL	1964	100%
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Question 1Do you know what NATO is?

(a) Yes	1463	75%
(b) No/Not sure	501	25%

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THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY

1463	100%
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Question 2Do you think that Britain should remain in NATO or leave it?

(a) Remain	1093	75%
(b) Leave	144	10%
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide	61	4%
(d) Don't know	165	11%

NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

<u>TOTAL</u>	1964	100%
<u>Question 3</u>		
<u>If other countries were NOT prepared to give up their nuclear weapons, do you think Britain should give up or keep her own?</u>		
(a) Give up	313	16%
(b) Keep	1456	74%
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide	67	3%
(d) Don't know	128	7%
<hr/>		
THOSE ANSWERING 'GIVE UP' ONLY	313	100%
<u>Question 4</u>		
<u>Looking at this card, please tell me the main reason why you think Britain should give up her nuclear weapons?</u>		
(a) It is morally right	85	27%
(b) It would make Britain safer	68	22%
(c) It would encourage other countries to give up their nuclear weapons	114	36%
(d) Other reasons	37	12%
(e) Don't know	9	3%

## NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

<u>TOTAL</u>	1964	100%
<u>Question 5</u>		
<u>Do you know about the Government plans to replace the Polaris nuclear missile system with Trident?</u>		
(a) Yes	1172	60%
(b) No/Not sure	792	40%
<hr/>		
THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY	1172	100%
<u>Question 6</u>		
<u>Do you agree or disagree with these plans?</u>		
(a) Agree	486	41%
(b) Disagree	424	36%
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide	116	10%
(d) Don't know	146	12%
<hr/>		
THOSE ANSWERING 'DISAGREE' ONLY	424	100%
<u>Question 6b</u>		
<u>Looking at this card, please tell me the main reason why you disagree with this?</u>		
(a) It would be too costly	195	46%
(b) It would mean other defence spending would be reduced	60	14%
(c) Britain does not need an independent deterrent	100	24%
(d) Other reasons	59	14%
(e) Don't know	10	2%

NOP SURVEY DECEMBER 1982

<u>TOTAL</u>	1964	100%
<u>Question 7</u>		
<u>Are you aware of the Government plans to site Cruise missiles in Britain?</u>		
(a) Yes	1302	66%
(b) No/Don't know	662	34%
	<hr/>	
THOSE ANSWERING 'YES' ONLY	1302	100%
<u>Question 8</u>		
<u>Do you agree or disagree with this proposed action?</u>		
(a) Agree	550	42%
(b) Disagree	556	43%
(c) It depends on too many factors to decide	100	8%
(d) Don't know	96	7%
	<hr/>	
THOSE ANSWERING 'DISAGREE' ONLY	556	100%
<u>Question 9</u>		
<u>Looking at this card, please tell me the main reason why you disagree with this?</u>		
(a) The missiles will be under American control	125	22%
(b) It makes Britain more of a target	284	51%
(c) It is more likely to cause a nuclear war	109	20%
(d) Other reasons	28	5%
(e) Don't know	10	2%

21 DEC 1982

