1. MR COLES AR 29/1.

2. PRIME MINISTER

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND PUBLIC OPINION

Your meeting on Monday should be directed at establishing quickly effective machinery for prosecuting a persuasive campaign to sell Government policy and to counter Russian propaganda and the CND campaign.

You should not get bogged down in the detail of a Government campaign.

Problem

The main problem remains divided responsibility and the lack of adequate campaigning resources. We have been - and to a large extent still are - fiddling while Rome burns.

We need machinery which brings together in working partnership predominantly the MoD and FCO. But over and above this we need machinery which marshals the resources of Government as a whole, and its friends outside, and provides not merely the message but also a plan of campaign, and then makes sure things happen.

All my experience teaches me that effective campaigns are seldom conducted in Government without Prime Ministerial endorsement and direct interest. You need therefore to find a way of identifying yourself closely with the campaign (without taking too much on yourself) and in such a way that Government believes you want action this day.

Ministerial Level

I agree with the Foreign Secretary's suggestion of January 13 that you need a group of senior Ministers, under your chairmanship, to take charge of the operation.

I see advantage of an executive team of Ministers, as proposed. This team would be responsible for making things happen and should report weekly to you. You will wish to consider whether the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, while otherwise a highly desirable chairman, is the right man as chairman of the Party with responsibility for fighting an election.

Official Level

The executive group of Ministers would need servicing. This cannot be achieved by putting either the MoD or FCO in the lead; we need to weld the two into one fighting force and to mobilise Government as a whole.

Again, I believe the Foreign Secretary is right in proposing a small unit of officials in Cabinet Office. I believe that unit should be a combination of administration and information specialists of equal weight and carefully selected for their positive approach to the presentation of policy.

The question is whether it should be chaired by me, as the co-ordinator of presentation at official level, or an outsider of Sir Donald Maitland's calibre.

Again for special efforts of this kind - and a major special effort is called for if we are to make up for lost time - I think we should make special arrangements and appoint an "outsider" of relevant experience.

But it will be of the utmost importance for that leader to keep in the closest touch with myself, and the Heads of Information in MoD, FCO and Home Office and to involve us in the planning of his campaign.

I would therefore see the following organisational structure:

2

1. Cabinet Group.
2. Executive Group of Ministers.
3. Cabinet Office Planning Group (ie."Sir Donald Maitland", Chief Press Secretary and Head of Information of MoD, FCO and Home Office).
4. Cabinet Office Action Unit.

I should add that I am sure my colleagues in MoD, FCO and Home Office could work effectively with Sir Donald.

Campaign

Here the main requirements are:

1. Preparation of overall message on one side of paper; keep it simple;
2. speed of response to Russian or other propaganda;
3. building up of Government campaign and mobilisation of total resources;
4. devising ways of neutralising CND publicity and creating a positive impact of our own;
5. monitoring trends and results.

B. INGHAM

28 January 1983

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Since this meeting will be attended by some who are not members of MISC 7, you will wish to avoid going into detail on the more delicate issues.

2. You may like to ask the Foreign Secretary to outline his ideas and then invite others to comment.

A. J. C. 28/1

DEFENCE

10 DOWNING STREET

Mr. Ingham

The pp. which you wished to see are on this file.

Would you please note that some of them are personal and private.

The meeting is on Monday.

A. J. C. 27/1.