



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 February 1983

*Rev M. Robinson*

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has asked me to thank you for your letter of 14 February about the General Synod debate on 'The Church and the Bomb'. Mr Pym believes that the debate has done much to promote greater public understanding of nuclear deterrence and disarmament.

We were very grateful to receive the text and motion considered by the General Synod, and remain very ready to help in any way we can - for example through the International Affairs Committee of the Board of Social Responsibility - in the continuing debate within the Church on these very important issues.

*Very sincerely,  
R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

W D Pattinson Esq  
Secretary-General  
General Synod of the Church  
of England  
Church House  
Dean's Yard  
LONDON SW1P 3NZ

C Flo

24 February 1983

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 14 February sending a copy of the main motion adopted by the General Synod and the various texts and amendments considered during the debate.

A J COLES

W.D. Pattinson, Esq.

**DRAFT:** LETTER  
minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

**TYPE:** Draft/Final 1+

**FROM:**

Reference

A J COLES

**DEPARTMENT:**

**TEL. NO:**

**SECURITY CLASSIFICATION**

**TO:**

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

W D Pattinson Esq  
 Secretary-General  
 General Synod of the Church of England  
 Church House  
 Dean's Yard  
 LONDON SW1P 3NZ

**Copies to:**

**PRIVACY MARKING**

**SUBJECT:**

.....In Confidence

**CAVEAT**.....

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 14 February sending a copy of the main motion adapted by the General Synod and the various texts and amendments considered during the debate.

*ADL 24. 2*

Enclosures—flag(s).....

Defence: Public Opinion  
& Debate on Nuclear

Weapon Issues  
Oct '82



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 February 1983

*Gen. John.*

*Type letter pl.*

*A.J.C. 24/2.*

General Synod Debate: The Church and the Bomb

Thank you for your letter of 16 February about the General Synod debate.

/ Mr Pattinson has written in similar terms to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. In our reply (copy enclosed) we have said we are ready to do whatever we can to help the continuing debate within the Church, and we shall be making a point of maintaining the contacts we have developed with some of the leading churchmen involved. We doubt whether there is any need for your own reply to do / more than acknowledge receipt. I enclose a draft letter.

*John*

*R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

Defence: Nuclear Issues & Public Opinion  
Oct '82



DEFENCE

CC 17 CD

BU

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 February 1983

Who promised  
- was today?

General Synod: the Church and the Bomb

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from the Secretary General of the General Synod of the Church of England which in turn encloses the official texts of the motions and amendments considered by the Synod on 10 February, together with the voting figures.

I should be grateful for your advice on whether something more than a simple acknowledgment should be sent and, if so, for a draft for my signature on behalf of the Prime Minister. Could your advice kindly reach me by Tuesday 22 February.

Handwritten mark consisting of three vertical lines and a horizontal line pointing to the right.

A. J. COLES

R.B. Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Handwritten initials 'HLL'

010

# THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Church House Dean's Yard London SW1P 3NZ. Telephone 01-222 9011

14th February 1983

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
10, Downing Street,  
London SW1.

*Dear Prime Minister*

FEBRUARY 1983 GENERAL SYNOD : THE CHURCH AND THE BOMB

I am sending you herewith the official texts of the motions and amendments considered by the General Synod on Thursday, 10th February, together with the voting figures. As I think you know, the main motion which the Synod carried incorporated an amendment moved by the Bishop of Birmingham. The text of the motion as amended and finally approved is at paragraph 5 of the attached Extract from the Record.

*Yours sincerely*

*W.D. Pattinson*

W.D. Pattinson  
Secretary-General



The Church and the Bomb : A Report by the Board for Social Responsibility to which was appended the Report of a Working Party under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Salisbury.

Motion 1

1. The motion 'That this Report be received' was carried.

Motion 2

2. The motion 'That this Synod recognising -
  - (a) the urgency of the task of making and preserving peace;and (b) the extreme seriousness of the threat made to the world by contemporary nuclear weapons and the dangers in the present international situation,  
calls upon H.M. Government, together with our allies in NATO,
  - (i) to reduce progressively its dependence upon nuclear weapons in its programme for defence; and
  - (ii) to work to strengthen international treaties especially as they apply to the possession and use of such weapons'

was moved.

3. The Bishop of Salisbury moved as an amendment:

Leave out all words after "HM Government" and insert:

- "(a) to announce the UK's intention of carrying out, in consultation with its allies, a phased disengagement of the U.K. from active association with any form of nuclear weaponry, involving:
- (i) bringing to an end the Polaris strategic nuclear system, and cancelling the order for the proposed Trident replacement;
  - (ii) discontinuing all nuclear weapons wholly or mainly of British manufacture;
  - (iii) negotiating Britain's withdrawal from the manning of nuclear weapons systems manufactured by others;
  - (iv) negotiating an end to agreements for the present or future deployment of nuclear weapons systems on British soil;

- (b) to invite other governments to make positive responses to the British initiative by comparable measures either of renunciation or restraint;
- (c) to continue to prosecute vigorously disarmament negotiations of all kinds; and
- (d) to devote resources to positive programmes for the building of peace and the fostering of international confidence along the lines indicated in the remaining Recommendations of The Church and the Bomb (namely nos.2-17 and 21-22)"'

The amendment was lost. The voting was as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NOES</u>
100	338

4. The Bishop of Birmingham moved as an amendment:-

Leave out all words after 'international situation' and add:

and (c) that it is not the task of the Church to determine defence strategy but mindful of its duty to give a moral lead to the nation:

- (i) affirms that it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government and her allies to maintain adequate forces to guard against nuclear blackmail and to deter nuclear and non-nuclear aggressors;
- (ii) asserts that the tactics and strategies of this country and her NATO allies should be seen to be unmistakably defensive in respect of the countries of the Warsaw Pact;
- (iii) judges that even a small-scale first use of nuclear weapons could never be morally justified in view of the high risk that this would lead to full-scale nuclear warfare;
- (iv) believes that there is a moral obligation on all countries (including the members of NATO) publicly to forswear the first use of nuclear weapons in any form;
- (v) bearing in mind that many in Europe live in fear of nuclear catastrophe and that nuclear parity is not essential to deterrence, calls on Her Majesty's Government to take immediate steps in conjunction with her allies to further the principles embodied in this motion so as to reduce progressively NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons and to decrease nuclear arsenals throughout the world.

The amendment was carried after a division of the whole Synod. The voting was as follows:-

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NOES</u>
275	222

5. The motion amended to read 'That this Synod recognising -
- (a) the urgency of the task of making and preserving peace;
- and (b) the extreme seriousness of the threat made to the world by contemporary nuclear weapons and the dangers in the present international situation;
- and (c) that it is not the task of the Church to determine defence strategy but rather to give a moral lead to the nation;
- (i) affirms that it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government and her allies to maintain adequate forces to guard against nuclear blackmail and to deter nuclear and non-nuclear aggressors;
  - (ii) asserts that the tactics and strategies of this country and her NATO allies should be seen to be unmistakably defensive in respect of the countries of the Warsaw Pact;
  - (iii) judges that even a small-scale first use of nuclear weapons could never be morally justified in view of the high risk that this would lead to full-scale nuclear warfare;
  - (iv) believes that there is a moral obligation on all countries (including the members of NATO) publicly to forswear the first use of nuclear weapons in any form;
  - (v) bearing in mind that many in Europe live in fear of nuclear catastrophe and that nuclear parity is not essential to deterrence, calls on Her Majesty's Government to take immediate steps in conjunction with her allies to further the principles embodied in this motion so as to reduce progressively NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons and to decrease nuclear arsenals throughout the world'

was carried. The voting was as follows:-

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NOES</u>	<u>ABSTENTIONS</u>
387	49	29

Motion 3

6. After the main debate (on Motion 2), the Synod carried by show of hands after a short debate a motion in the following terms:

'That this Synod believes that indiscriminate mass destruction in war cannot be justified in the light of Christian teaching and calls upon the dioceses to study and pray about the issues raised in the report The Church and the Bomb, and in particular the theological and moral issues, so

as to enable Christian people to make a more informed and committed contribution to the making and preserving of peace and to search for ways of resolving conflicts other than by war.'

W.D. Pattinson  
Secretary-General

Church House, SW1.  
11th February 1983

as to which direction would be best to take...  
and to avoid any way of...  
war.

U.S. Embassy  
Washington, D.C.

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16 FEB 1983

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