

DEFENCE

Ref: BO6749

PRIME MINISTER

c Sir Robert Armstrong

MISC 7: Policing of Demonstrations at
Military Bases

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the meeting is to review the adequacy of the measures being taken to prevent demonstrations at military bases over the Easter weekend resulting in incursions into the bases themselves, and widespread public disorder. The precautions are set out in the Defence Secretary's minute of 18th March, covering a report by Home Office and Ministry of Defence officials, which follows up the minute of 9th March by the Home Secretary.

Flag A
Flag B

2. CND's timetable for demonstrations over the Easter weekend is as follows.

- a. Thursday 31st March: a blockade of RAF Greenham Common (up to 2,000 women) and the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) Burghfield, continuing overnight.
- b. Friday 1st April: the blockade at a. continues until 6.00 pm. In the afternoon 40-80,000 people form a human chain linking Greenham Common, ROF Burghfield and the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Aldermaston.
- c. Saturday 2nd April: CND intend to encourage their supporters to travel to Glasgow for a demonstration; there are no indications that this is planned to affect the Clyde Submarine Base.
- d. Sunday 3rd April: CND traditionally organise a demonstration in London on Easter Sunday, but there is no information that one is planned this year.

3. In the medium term, CND are threatening a blockade of Upper Heyford (the American F 111 base, from 31st May to 3rd June).

CONFIDENTIAL

4. Thursday 31st March is assessed as being the day with the largest risk of public order problems and incursions into a base (Greenham Common). 31st March is a working day, and steps will have to be taken to maintain access to the site by contractors' traffic in the face of the blockade. Although CND have hitherto co-operated with the Police and kept their demonstrations within the law, the womens camp at Greenham Common means that the prospect of illegal action cannot be ruled out.

5. The report by officials attached to the Defence Secretary's minute sets out the measures being taken to counter the threat to the sites. These are -

a. Greenham Common Some measures have already been taken to improve the security of the perimeter fence, and additional barbed wire is being laid to make it more difficult for demonstrators to reach areas manned by United States Air Force personnel (which carries the risk of escalating the confrontation). Clearance of undergrowth inside the fence to make unobserved intrusion more difficult is taking place in high priority areas. New security lights will be available before Easter, and helicopters will be available to provide night illumination and to move security forces rapidly. In addition to the Thames Valley Policy (1,000 of whom will be deployed to deal with all the demonstrations on Thursday, with 1,200 on Friday), the Ministry of Defence security forces will be augmented substantially, to a total of 200 Ministry of Defence Police (with dogs), RAF Police and ancillaries. A further 100 men of the RAF Regiment will be on standby as reinforcements. Nevertheless, the security of the ten mile perimeter fence cannot be guaranteed, but there is confidence that the GLCM area and other sensitive points can be safeguarded.

b. AWRE Aldermaston There is no evidence of a planned blockade at Aldermaston, although it forms the pivotal point of the human chain on Friday 1st April. The security of sensitive areas of the site is assessed as adequate against the perceived threat. Steps are being taken to minimise the risk of confrontation between demonstrators and the armed Ministry of Defence police who guard special nuclear materials. 184 Ministry of Defence police, with dogs, will be on duty by day over the period.

CONFIDENTIAL

c. ROF Burghfield Is planned to be blockaded on Thursday and form an extremity of the human chain on Friday. The special weapon storage area and other sensitive sites are assessed as being adequately protected. 100 Ministry of Defence police will be on duty by day. Similar precautions relating to those carrying firearms will apply as at Aldermaston.

In addition, the Chief Constable Ministry of Defence Police will have on call a reserve of about 170 men.

6. In general, it is concluded that the substantial police presence should be sufficient to maintain public order outside the bases, but the blockade of Greenham Common might result in incursions which could create serious presentational problems. The human chain is likely to cause traffic disruption and other public order difficulties.

7. Upper Heyford, because of its bisection by a public road and extensive perimeter, presents even more difficulties. A blockade could pose a real threat to its operational capability. It is not, however, assessed to be a likely target for demonstrators before the end of May. The note attached to the Defence Secretary's minute recommends that the protection of Upper Heyford should be reviewed in the light of experiences elsewhere over Easter.

8. The Chief of the Defence Staff has been invited to attend.

HANDLING

9. You could first invite the Home Secretary to report on the latest assessment of CND's intentions for demonstrations over the Easter period and any information on the likely activities of the "peace women". The Defence Secretary could then be invited to comment on the detailed measures being taken to deal with the expected demonstrations at each of the bases. Points to establish in subsequent discussion are -

a. Is the meeting generally satisfied with the plans that have been developed, and the additional precautions that are being taken. Is the risk of an incursion at Greenham Common acceptable? Can it be avoided? Are there any further useful measures which could be taken before Easter?

b. In the longer term, should it be the aim to establish better defences at Greenham Common and Upper Heyford? Could we ever reach a position of confidence that the defences could not be breached?

Prime Minister
 Mr. Heseltine
 plans to go to
 Berlin - see letter
 attached.
 A.J.C. 2/3.

c. What steps are being taken to counter the widespread publicity which CND and other "peace" movements will receive from their activities over Easter? What are the PR arrangements at the bases referred to in paragraph 15 of the Home Office/Ministry of Defence note? Should Ministers make a conscious effort to be available for interviews with the media over the period?

CONCLUSION

10. Subject to the points made in discussion, you could guide the Meeting
- i. to endorse the measures which have already been put in hand to police the expected demonstrations at military bases over Easter;
 - ii. to invite the Secretary of State for Defence, in consultation with the Home Secretary, to report to colleagues after Easter on the handling of the demonstrations, and any lessons learned;
 - iii. to invite the Secretary of State for Defence to consider the need for further long term strengthening of the defences at Greenham Common and for additional measures to help control any demonstrations at Upper Heyford; and to report;
 - iv. to note the plans which have been made to counter the publicity accruing to the "peace" movements as a result of the Easter demonstrations.

David Goodall

25th March 1983

A D S GOODALL



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

30 March 1983

AR 5/4
h.a.

Dear John,

You asked to be kept in touch with developments at Greenham Common on Friday.

Our Police Department is arranging to receive periodic reports from Thames Valley police and will alert us if there is anything significant to report. We in turn will let you know of developments on the same basis.

If you need to contact us our home telephone numbers are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Tony Rawsthorne | (01) 778 6420 |
| Colin Walters | (01) 852 5253 |
| Lesley Pallett | (01) 657 5197 |

Those receiving the reports from the police will be Joe Pilling (0865 50370) and Peter Honour (213 6249).

Yours,
Tony

A. R. RAWSTHORNE

A. J. Coles, Esq.

30 MAR 1985



RE: Policing of Demos at Military
Bases.



S/S DeLancey to
PM 18/3.

10 DOWNING STREET

Caroline

Please arrange. I think the
P.N. means this week.

pl. consult Tim about

participation :-

DeLancey Sec.

Home Sec

FCS

Cabinet Office

+ ?

AD $\frac{21}{3}$