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DEFENCE:  
INF Part 4



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Prime Minister  
Important. Contact with these  
arrangements:

A.J.C. 24/10.

Yes mb

PRIME MINISTER

RAF GREENHAM COMMON:  
CRUISE MISSILE DELIVERIES AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

Deliveries by USAF aircraft of warheads, missiles and associated equipment necessary to meet the objective of achieving initial operational capability by the end of the year are to be made to Greenham Common in the period 1st-8th November 1983. The warheads will arrive on the first aircraft on the first day. We can expect some sort of reaction by the anti-nuclear movement to these deliveries. You will wish to know the security arrangements we have accordingly made, in close liaison with the Home Office, the Thames Valley Police and the American authorities.

Depending  
on refs  
from  
Channel  
Kohl.

2. Despite some initial low-grade reports that the anti-nuclear movement had plans to mount a major demonstration at around this time there is currently no hard evidence to suggest either that they are aware of the delivery timetable or have made any concrete plans. Experience has shown that to mount a major demonstration they must first advertise the event widely, and well in advance, and take other overt steps such as booking coaches. None of these things has yet happened which makes it unlikely that at least for the period of the delivery programme we need fear any planned activity on a major scale. The anti-nuclear movement's main emphasis is on the October 22nd demonstration in London. For Greenham Common it looks at the moment as though the most likely forecast is of a relatively minor, and by now traditional,



demonstration by the resident peace camp and its supporters over the Halloween period (29th/30th October) and perhaps a larger demonstration in December, as last year, on the anniversary of NATO's INF modernisation decision, with random and probably determined outbreaks of action from those at the camp site once they get knowledge of the deliveries.

3. The Thames Valley Police, who have been kept discreetly informed of our plans, are on the alert for an increased activities by the anti-nuclear movement and are ready to respond. As for our own arrangements, I have directed that a plan be drawn up on a contingency basis so that sufficient UK reinforcements are available at Greenham Common to contain any trespass which the civil police are unable to prevent, to prevent any interference with the delivery programme, and to prevent confrontations between demonstrators and armed US personnel. I have further directed that our plans should be sufficiently comprehensive to deal with attempted incursions on a larger scale than anything seen hitherto, or anything we currently have cause to expect. It is essential that we are effective against any level of threat.

4. Any early deployment of reinforcements (unless a demonstration has already built up) would give warning to the peace camp. Our present intention is that on the evening before the first aircraft deliveries, RAF personnel should be inserted covertly into the base to be reinforced by substantial numbers of Ministry of Defence Police who would arrive very shortly before the first aircraft landed. To cater for the possibility that the anti-nuclear movement will attempt to attract supporters to the base as soon as the delivery programme is noticed, up to four infantry battalions will be held in reserve. The entire force will be available for deployment in part or in full from 28th October 1983. All these arrangements will be made very discreetly, in close co-ordination with the Americans own security arrangements.



5. The period of greatest risk is when the warheads are being transferred from the transport aircraft to the GLCM facility, an operation which will be cordoned by the armed American guards permanently based at Greenham Common and who are charged with the direct protection of these weapons with rules of engagement exactly the same of our own. While our security arrangements already minimise the risk of any demonstrator getting sufficiently close to warheads as to necessitate the use of firearms by the US guards, the political implications of a demonstrator being shot by an American guard would, at this stage of initial deployment, be very grave. I have therefore directed that the screen of UK personnel which will support the USAF guards on this particular part of the delivery programme should include a small number of armed RAF personnel, operating very close to the armed US personnel and with the same rules of engagement. Therefore any determined demonstrator who managed to penetrate the perimeter fence and its guard force, and was then able to penetrate the next screen of unarmed UK personnel, would finally confront an armed British Serviceman rather than an armed American. I believe this to be a prudent precaution although I would stress that the situation is highly unlikely to arise.

6. I shall be minuting you separately about the Parliamentary and Public Relations aspects.

7. I am copying this minute to the Home Secretary, to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, to the Attorney General and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*MJH*

Ministry of Defence  
20th October 1983

SECRET



Jo VC  
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copy in  
DEFENCE  
INF Part 4.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

24 October 1983

RAF Greenham Common: Cruise Missile  
Deliveries and Security Arrangements

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 20 October on this subject.

She is content with the security arrangements which have been made.

We agreed on the telephone that the second sentence of Mr. Heseltine's minute was subject to any further messages that we might receive on the timetable for deployment from the Federal German Chancellor and the President of the United States.

I am copying this letter to Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office), Brian Fall (FCO), Henry Steel (Attorney General's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

AJ 1008

SR

Richard Mottram, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET