



MO 21/17/1

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Prime Minister

To note the revised security arrangements now implemented by Mr Heseltine.

DMS
25/11

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PRIME MINISTERGREENHAM COMMON SECURITY

I have been reviewing our arrangements for security at Greenham Common, now that the GLCM delivery programme is complete.

No - this stage of the programme is complete & surely
 2. We reinforced the base very substantially over the weekend of 29th/30th October 1983 to ensure the security of the delivery programme. The reinforcement comprised substantial numbers of MOD police and RAF personnel, and up to three infantry battalions for a period. In addition the Thames Valley Police mounted a large operation outside the perimeter. After the events on Saturday 29th October when the women did some considerable damage to the perimeter fence, there was no further significant threat to base security. There have been no attempts at incursions over the last few days, and other than at weekends the women's peace camp rarely exceeds 100 in number.

3. Given that the delivery programme is now over and the current relatively low level of threat it is clearly neither necessary nor desirable to sustain any longer this size of operation and our eventual aim should be that security at Greenham Common, as at other USAF bases in this country, should on a day to day basis be handled by the USAF's own resources supplemented by a permanent core of 50 MOD police. Nonetheless, there is a continuing threat of attacks by the peace women who have demonstrated their ability to field some



2-300 demonstrators at short notice and our arrangements must be sufficient to prevent these leading to mass incursions or to large scale confrontations with the Aermicans.

4. Steps have therefore been taken to strengthen substantially the physical security arrangements at Greenham Common. A fixed lighting installation has been completed which affords a capability to illuminate the whole perimeter. An internal track-way has been constructed enabling the fence to be patrolled from the inside by vehicles throughout its entire nine mile length. A strong internal security fence has been erected around the whole perimeter. Watch towers have been erected at strategic points behind the security lighting. These improvements greatly enhance the capability to detect attempts at night-time incursion and to apprehend any trespassers who penetrate the outer fence well before they could get close to the sensitive areas. There is a corresponding trade-off in the manpower required to provide full security, and I have decided to withdraw both of the remaining infantry battalions, though placing a company from each at a high state of readiness.

5. The on-base forces, in addition to the USAF personnel, will now comprise some 400 MOD police and RAF personnel, together with a helicopter equipped with a searchlight and infra-red detectors. Outside the base the Thames Valley Police intend to continue their current operation at least until after the major demonstration planned for 10th/11th December, which will also require a substantial re-inforcement operation by us. I shall review the position next week, in the light of experience of this lower manpower level, and of any reactions from the peace movement once they have detected the smaller size of force on-base.

6. It is too early to make a judgement as to the longer term intentions of the women's peace movement in regard to Greenham Common and when it will be possible finally to withdraw the MOD reinforcements remaining. One factor in all this is the peace movement's declared aim



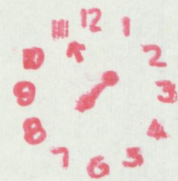
of preventing or disrupting the off-base deployment of GLCMs on training exercises. This in itself raises a range of problems and I shall be examining the whole question in detail shortly and will report to you as appropriate.

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

[Handwritten signature]

Ministry of Defence
24th November 1983

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10 DOWNING STREET

GR CF

I have asked MoD for
a note on where we
are in the delivery
programme.

DWS

30/11