

2 No



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALING 01-218 2111/3

MO 21/17/1

13th September 1984

De lill

*adpam
DMS
13/9*

Thank you for your letter of 3rd September 1984 about the land transfer arrangements to be effected at RAF Greenham Common.

I was, of course, pleased to hear of the action you have in hand to enforce your rights of eviction against the peace women camped on your land outside the main gate of RAF Greenham Common. I am content that you should proceed as you propose.

On land transfer arrangements, I am advised that agreement has been reached by both our Departments and the local authorities concerned on the land to be transferred and on the steps that are necessary; I understand that what is now required is for the PSA Estates Surveyor to draw up detailed maps to enable the transfers to be formally concluded, and that this is in hand.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

jos
mm
[Signature]

Michael Heseltine

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP

DEFENCE
Army of
Demos
Feb 83

19 SEP 1984



aspl



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

Rt Hon Michael Heseltine
Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SWIA 2HB

R/PSO/8382/84

3 September 1984

*nb pm
DNB
4/1*

Dear Michael

Thank you for your letter of 1st August about the proposed land transfer at Greenham Common: you will have seen Leon Brittan's letter of 10th August to me.

I am now seeking an order under the procedure in Order 113 of the Rules of the Supreme Court to obtain possession and clearance of the highway land outside the airbase main gate. The hearing will be held at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, on Wednesday, 12th September and I expect that the order will be granted with immediate effect. It will be for the Under Sheriff of Berkshire to clear the land on a date to be arranged between 13th and 20th September, the Thames Valley Police being on hand to deal with any obstruction or breach of the peace. Clearance after 20th September will probably be impossible because I understand that the peace protestors are holding a 10 day rally at Greenham Common to celebrate the third anniversary of their protest.

My original intention had been to seek the court order after the rally had taken place but 10th October is electoral registration day at Newbury and the district council are naturally anxious to avoid residence claims being made by a large number of protestors attracted there by the prospect of another tilt at 'authority'.

Notice of the application and the hearing arrangements have now been made public: this is a requirement of the Order 113 procedure. It will inevitably alert the news media to speculate about a date for clearance - which we shall have to keep to ourselves in order to avoid a repetition of last April's events.

/ Now that the

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Now that the arrangements for initial clearance are under way, my officials are in touch with Newbury District Council to use their wardens to prevent to re-establishment of the peace camp on highway land. This will continue until the land is transferred to your Department. While on the subject of the land transfer, my officials tell me that they are still waiting for yours to put forward proposals for the amounts of highway and common land to be transferred. I do hope that this will be shortly forthcoming so that we may jointly make progress.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, Lord Chancellor, Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Scotland, Wales and Environment, to the Attorney General, Lord Advocate, the Home Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Imran

Nicholas

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

DEFENSE : Policing of Military Bases

Feb 83

CONFIDENTIAL



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

10 August 1984

GREENHAM COMMON

In her letter of 2 August to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary, your Private Secretary explained that on 1 August, you and I, together with Douglas Hurd, discussed the actions which your Department might take in respect of protestors and their encampments which have returned to the Transport land outside the main gate at RAF Greenham Common, now that the roadworks there have been completed. In your letter of 26 July to me, you had agreed that action should be taken, in the interval before the land is transferred to the Ministry of Defence and brought within the base perimeter fence.

We were clear in our discussion that we were not concerned with concerted action by the landowners at Greenham which had been considered, and put to one side, at the meeting which the Prime Minister chaired on 5 March. In that context, 'concerted' meant both that all the landowners would apply together to the court for an order covering all the land, and that they would pursue jointly every measure of enforcement available, up to and including, if necessary, the imprisonment of protestors.

By contrast, the nature of the action which your Department would take would be in line with the alternative approach agreed at the meeting on 5 March. The relevant parts of the record of that meeting read:

"The more effective approach would be gradually to make occupation of the land more inconvenient. This could be achieved by action at a local level, and without concerted recourse to the courts, if the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Transport authorised the Newbury officers to act on their behalf." and

"Summing up, the Prime Minister said that the possibility of concerted civil action through the courts should not be pursued at present, although an order for possession might need to be sought at a later stage. The various public authorities involved, including the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Transport, should exercise their rights to remove trespassers, using the Newbury officers where possible."

Thus the objective is not to try to clear the land once and for all, insofar as that might require constant enforcement action and possibly the imprisonment of protestors, but rather to increase the inconvenience to them, as the other, local authority landowners are doing in their periodic actions to deal with trespass at Greenham.

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley, MP

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

The particular remedy to adopt, and the pursuit of its enforcement, are of course matters for your Department, as the landowner to decide. As you mentioned at our meeting, and as your Private Secretary's letter records, your intention is to apply to the High Court for an order for possession of the land. We noted in our discussion that such an application may attract publicity, but the key factor will be to enforce the order without generating major opposition and reviving the protest. It would, of course, be sensible to avoid giving early advance publicity to the first or any subsequent date of enforcement action: when it was made public some weeks in advance that the land was to be cleared for the roadworks on 2 April, some hundreds of protestors gathered on that day to resist the bailiffs and the police.

The understanding of your officials was that it might take about two weeks to secure an order for possession, and that thereafter 28 days would need to pass before the order could be executed. In the interim, it might be possible to follow the example of the local authorities. Once or twice a week, with a police presence to deal with any breach of the peace, the enforcement officers engaged by Newbury District Council and who also act on behalf of Berkshire County Council, remove protestors' tents and other structures from Newbury's common land or Berkshire's highway land, as the case may be. With structures on the common land, the officers exercise the power of removal conferred by the byelaws which apply to it. For the action against structures on Berkshire's highway land, the officers give practical effect to the County Council's powers, as the landowner, of 'self help'. As the paper by officials noted, 'self-help' can be a potentially controversial measure if people are removed and force is used. But the experience of the other landowners involved suggests that the use of self-help to remove structures from your Department's land, which could be embarked upon as soon as enforcement officers were ready, should not excite controversy.

I should be grateful if your officials would keep in touch with mine about the plans for acting against the trespass on Transport land as well as the timetable for the later transfer of the land to the Ministry of Defence not least so that the police may be alerted as necessary.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Quintin Hailsham, Geoffrey Howe, Jim Prior, Michael Heseltine, George Younger, Nick Edwards, Patrick Jenkin, Michael Havers and Kenneth Cameron, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Leon B. ...

CONFIDENTIAL

DEFENCE
Training of Demos
Feb 83



CCND

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALLING 01-218 2111/3

MO 21/17/1

1st August 1984

Dr Hill

*stop - end
3/8*

Thank you for your letter of 20th July about the possible transfer of land at Greenham Common to the Ministry of Defence.

I am concerned that the Highways and Council land near the main gate at RAF Greenham Common should be enclosed within the base as soon as possible. The discussions now taking place at official level between our two Departments and Newbury District Council should enable us to confirm that land transfers are feasible, to identify precisely the steps required, and to estimate how long these should take. I shall write to you again once this information is available.

I naturally welcome your decision to take action against protestors camping on the Highway land while it remains within your Department's control. (Your letter of 26th July to Leon Brittan refers.) To be successful the eviction of trespassers from land around the base needs to be co-ordinated by the three major landholders concerned - the Department of Transport, MOD and Newbury District Council. I have therefore instructed my officials to assist and co-operate with your Department as much as possible on this matter.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Scotland, Wales and the Environment, to

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP



the Attorney General, the Lord Advocate and the Home Secretary
and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

yes mr

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "MH" followed by a flourish.

Michael Heseltine

Defence Feb. 83
Military
Planning at Air bases

AUG 1984





DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

2

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
Secretary of State for the
Home Department
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON SW1H 9AT

Pa
DWS
30/7

MS

26 July 1984

Pine Martin

Dear Leon

Dr

GREENHAM COMMON

27/7

Thank you for your letter of 24 July. I think it will have crossed with my own letters of 20 July to Quintin Hailsham and Michael Heseltine which I copied to you.

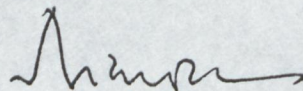
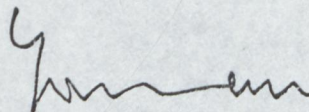
As you will have seen, I remain concerned that any attempts to evict the protesters from highway land will be difficult to enforce in the period before MOD acquire the land for the extension of entrance area of the Airbase. I also believe that a series of evictions beginning soon will give the protesters more publicity, another cause, increase their number, involve repeated police action and disturb the neighbourhood still more.

However, in the spirit of the note of the meeting of 5 March, I must accept that colleagues involved very much wish to see action taken against the protesters as trespassers on Government property. I have therefore today instructed my officials to begin action through the Courts to obtain an Order to re-possess the land now occupied by the protesters. I have asked them to call a meeting of Departments involved so that the implications can be fully appreciated and any further necessary action put in hand.

CONFIDENTIAL

My Department's actions will need careful presentation to the public at large and especially to people living in the Greenham Common area. Local people will want to be reassured that the proposed acquisition of land by MOD to take the main gate fencing up to the edge of the road and so to exclude the practical possibility of its use by protesters, will be going ahead as quickly as possible. Officials of MOD and my Department are meeting about this on 1 August.

/ I am copying this letter to those who received copies of your letter of 24 July.



NICHOLAS RIDLEY

CONFIDENTIAL

Defence 2183

Pricing of Bases

27 JUL 1984

11 12 1
9 8 7 6 5
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CONFIDENTIAL

CCNO



HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

25 July 1984

*nbpm
JMS
26/7*

Dear Nicky

Greenham Common

Thank you for your letter of 20th July and for sending me a copy of your letter to Michael Heseltine.

Whilst I appreciate your policy concerning travellers and the difficult decisions which are needed when they hardly travel and when they have camped in the same place for years, I still see our present problem quite differently. I think that your attitude towards these women should depend on the ownership of the land concerned by the Crown rather than on your functions as a highway authority.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Leon Brittan, Geoffrey Howe, Jim Prior, Michael Heseltine, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Patrick Jenkin, Michael Havers, Kenneth Cameron and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yrs :

The Right Honourable
Nicholas Ridley, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Transport.

CONFIDENTIAL

Policing of Semiconductors : DEFENCE. Feb 83



26 JUL 1984





QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

24 July 1984

2 Nick,

JMS
24/7

GREENHAM COMMON

Thank you for your letter of 23 May about future action in respect of those pieces of land at RAF Greenham Common owned by your Department from which demonstrators were excluded whilst contractors were engaged on the roadworks there but which were not taken up by the works. Michael Heseltine has copied to me his letter of 28 June to you about this, and Quintin Hailsham has similarly copied to me his letter of 6 July to Michael.

The proposed transfer from your Department to the Ministry of Defence of the land which is surplus to highway needs is, of course, a matter for your two Departments. But I strongly support it, and hope it can be effected as quickly as possible. The broad result will be to bring within the base perimeter land on which protestors have hitherto, except during the roadworks, sited their major camps.

But this leaves the question of whether or not in the interim your Department should act against the protestors as trespassers, perhaps, like Berkshire County Council, employing the services of the enforcement officers engaged by Newbury District Council. Like Michael and Quintin, I would ask you to reconsider your position on this and very much hope that you will feel able to do so.

The meeting on 5 March chaired by the Prime Minister, put on ice the proposal that there should be concerted civil action by all the landowners, moving jointly to have protestors moved. But the alternative which we agreed was that the various public authorities involved, including Government Departments, should exercise their own powers to remove trespassers. That clear conclusion did of course leave it to each Department to decide the precise way of doing this. The road improvement scheme provided a basis for removing protestors from the land while those works were being undertaken; but now that that is over, the Department should surely use its ordinary powers as a landowner to remove trespassers. I feel very strongly that we should not now act in such a way as to allow the protestors on to Government land while at the same time we are encouraging local authorities to evict them from theirs.

The Chief Constable of Thames Valley tells me that that is what is happening. The number of protestors round the base, and the sites of their camps, vary but on a typical day, 13 July, of about 30 encamped protestors some 25 were on the Transport land. The meeting on 5 March took account of a letter from the Thames Valley Police Authority urging greater central co-ordination of action. The Authority have repeated that request in a letter to my Department. Whatever happens at Greenham, the police will have to carry the burden of their proper duties. But it will not be easy to reply to the Authority if we have to acknowledge that your Department's land is to continue to be made available to protestors. I understand that if your Department were to act to remove the

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley, MP

protestors as trespassers it would be making an exception to its normal practice, and the protestors might be able to exploit this. But I very much doubt whether this would really enable them to attract fresh supporters to oppose removal action. I think that there would be general support for the view that the protestors have had every legitimate opportunity to exercise their democratic right of peaceful protest to which you refer, and that the circumstances at Greenham more than justify an exception being made to the Department's normal practice.

The bullet of enforcement will have to be bitten in any event when the land is brought within the base perimeter. The alternative to explaining taking action to remove the protestors as trespassers from Transport land is having to explain convincingly why such action is not being taken, against the background both of the activity of the local authorities and of the public perception of the action your Department took, in removing protestors, during the road improvement works.

We certainly need to develop a defensible public line on your Department's policy in relation to its land at Greenham. If, as I hope, you are able to conclude that action should be taken against the protestors as trespassers, it might be better if that were simply put in hand, without any public announcement which might attract opposition, although it would be helpful if your officials would liaise with mine in advance so that the police could have prior notice. If we have to wait for the transfer of the land to Michael's Department, which I very much hope will not be the case, I share his view that an early public announcement of that intention could help to reassure our supporters. The Written Answer on 9 July, in which you told Richard Tracey that you were considering the transfer, seems helpful. Perhaps it could in that eventuality be followed up by an Answer announcing that the transfer is in hand, as soon as that can be made.

I very much hope, however, that you will feel able to decide to act against the trespass of the protestors and would also appreciate it if I could be kept in touch with the timetable of the transfer of the land to the Ministry of Defence.

If you still feel that it is difficult to take action of this kind, I would like to have the chance of discussing the matter with you.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Quintin Hailsham, Geoffrey Howe, Jim Prior, Michael Heseltine, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Patrick Jenkin, Michael Havers, and Kenneth Cameron, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

W
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DEFENCE: Policing of Military Bases
Less 83

24 JUL 1984

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CONFIDENTIAL

*cepc
P.Y.*



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2HB

20 July 1984

Dear Michael

Thank you for your letter of 28 June agreeing that the surplus trunk road land outside the Greenham Common Air Base main gate should be acquired by your Department to provide extra space for the administrative area. As you know, I announced the news to the House on 9 July.

Provided that you can acquire the necessary common land from Newbury District Council, you will be able to move the air base perimeter fence close to the trunk road carriageway. Thus any subsequent encroachment by protestors on trunk road land would constitute an obstruction, and the civil police will be able to act. The land acquisition arrangements can be left to our officials, but must include the stopping-up of public rights of passage over the land.

As you say, the case is unusual. It is a protest of great durability on public land, both highway and common. There is no doubt that the protestors are trespassing. But they are not actually obstructing the highway. I would agree that, on the face of it, it would be possible to use landlord common law rights, or to seek the approval of the courts, to evict them. There can be little doubt that a court would grant an application.

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But there are three factors which influence my view that to seek eviction would not be the best approach.

First, there is our policy towards travellers. The situation of these people and the Greenham Common protestors is, I believe, in law much the same. They both trespass on the highway. Yet in the case of travellers, we condone it.

Secondly, if I evicted the protestors, there would be the problem of enforcement. It is very doubtful that applications for eviction would actually clear the camp site. This is why I have been chary about the question of eviction, whether it be by Newbury's wardens or in execution of a Court Order. I fear we would be faced by a series of continuous applications to the courts to seek the eviction of different sets of individuals. Our action would not only be ineffective for some time, but would be seen to be so.

Thirdly, I believe any attempt to evict the protestors now would bring them more publicity when Press interest is muted, and give the women a further cause. In the summer period, action might attract more attention and people to Greenham Common and particularly students during their vacation.

I believe that the proposal for the base to extend its boundaries represents the best means of ending the protest around the immediate main gate area, regarded as a focus for peace protestors generally. At this stage I

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see no practical benefit in evicting the protestors. The affair is low-key at present, although I gather there is a prospect of a major demonstration by camping around the air base for 10 days to celebrate the third anniversary of the protest. That apart, there is surely little to be gained in provoking confrontation and reviving media interest. It could add to the aggravation and inconvenience caused and do nothing to assist the longer term interests of local residents.

I recognise it will not be possible to arrange transfer of my Department's land to your Department quickly; but, like you, I am anxious we should get ahead with the necessary arrangements as quickly as possible. My officials are standing by for the proposed meeting with your officials and Newbury District Council.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to the other recipients of our correspondence.

*Y
Lonsdale*

Nicholas

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

CONFIDENTIAL



23 JUL 1994

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JUL 23
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CONFIDENTIAL

cc/k



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

The Rt Hon The Lord Hailsham of
St Marylebone CH FRS DCL
Lord Chancellor
House of Lords
LONDON SW1A 0PW

20 July 1984

*no pm
DMS
23/7*

Dear Quintin

Thank you for the copy of your letter of 6 July to Michael Heseltine about Greenham Common. I have written to Michael today as enclosed.

We all share the view that the case is unusual. But I do not believe there is a clear distinction between travellers and the protestors. Certainly some of the former live a nomadic life, but my Department's experience as a highway authority is that significant numbers do not. There are cases where they are camped on highway verges and have been there for years. Where they are safe and do not interfere with traffic, we have, in line with established Government policy, not attempted to harass them to be on their way.

Whether travellers or protestors, they both trespass on and illegally occupy the highway verge on which they camp. Should I proceed against the one but not the other? I do not think that at present I reasonably can. To do so would require a general change in our policy towards travellers. For this and the other reasons explained in my

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reply to Michael Heseltine, I am not persuaded of the wisdom of eviction now, which means trying to keep the protestors off the land until it is taken behind the air base perimeter fence. I say "trying" because I doubt in fact that our efforts would prove effective and we might bring upon ourselves more problems than we would solve.

/
Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine and to the other recipients of the correspondence.

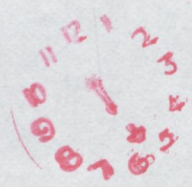
Johnson

Nicholas

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

CONFIDENTIAL

23 JUL 1984



CONFIDENTIAL

CEPC



HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

6 July 1984

no pm ans
9/7

My dear Michael:

GREENHAM COMMON

In your letter of 28th June 1984 you ask Nicholas Ridley to reconsider the position he has taken that these women should be treated in the spirit of his Department's general policy of toleration towards gypsies and other itinerants who are not evicted from highway land provided that they do not cause obstruction or danger to traffic.

I share your view that we are not dealing with the usual case. These women are not itinerants who have nomadism as their cultural tradition. Neither are they lawful users of the highway. They are trespassers.

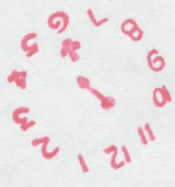
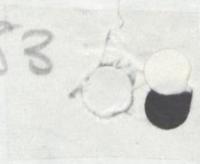
Our policy, which we agreed in March with the Prime Minister, must surely apply to land owned by the Crown and in our immediate control just as it does to that of other landowners including Newbury Council.

I am copying this letter to Nicholas Ridley, to the Prime Minister and to the others to whom you copied yours.

yrs:

The Right Honourable
Michael Heseltine, M.P.,
Secretary of State for
Defence.

Defence: Policing of Demos Feb 83



1984 JUL 6 -



cc for PC
P. S. [signature]

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALLING 01-218 2111/3

MO 11/2/2

28th June 1984

nbpm
DUB
3/7

John Hill

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 23rd May to Leon Brittan, in which you discuss the future of those surplus pieces of highway land which remain now that road works at RAF Greenham Common have been completed.

As you will be aware, MOD and PSA officials have been in contact with the Department of Transport and with Newbury District Council, to consider the possibility of incorporating the surplus highway land and some common land into the base. Not only would such a transfer of land provide welcome extra space in the administrative area of the base, but it would make the situation outside the main gate much tidier. Under such a transfer, the perimeter fence would follow the road carriageway as closely as sight lines and safety considerations allow thus eliminating the area currently available to campers, and putting to use the residual highway land which has no highways value. I hope you will agree that officials from your Department and mine should meet as soon as possible to conclude arrangements to transfer the surplus highways land.

It is, of course, most important that the repositioned fence should follow exactly the boundary between what would then be

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP

CONFIDENTIAL



Ministry of Defence land, and the remaining Transport land; so that on the one hand there is no Ministry of Defence land outside the perimeter fence (which I regard as an essential condition for the proposed transfer), while on the other hand any trespass or camping on the remaining Transport land would constitute a highways offence to be dealt with by the civil police. I attach diagrams on which the approximate position of the proposed new perimeter is marked; the exact position will be worked out in the light of detailed safety and sight line considerations.

The diagrams also show the areas of common land which it is proposed should be incorporated into the base, and of Ministry of Defence owned common land which would be transferred to the Council in exchange. This exchange both gives the Ministry of Defence useful administrative space in return for rough ground, and means that it will no longer be responsible for land outside the fence on the eastern side of the base. Negotiations with the Council to complete this exchange are bound to take a little longer than arrangements to transfer surplus Transport land. You will appreciate that I would not wish my Department actually to take possession of the Transport land until my staff have completed negotiations with the Council, and the newly acquired land can all be properly fenced in.

So far as preventing access to your land by peacewomen is concerned I appreciate that you would not wish to act against the spirit of your policy towards itinerants, but I am sure you will agree that this particular case is unusual. It was clear when we met with the Prime Minister in March that our policy was that all the landowners involved should exercise their landlord rights to remove trespassers, using the Newbury officers where possible. We are in danger of returning to the unsatisfactory position which existed before, where the Department of Transport would not act, and because of that Newbury Council would not clear their area - all of which causes the local police unnecessary extra trouble. I do ^{not?} believe that this would be acceptable to our supporters. I wonder therefore whether



you would reconsider the position you take in your letter; and take action, perhaps by inviting the Newbury bailiffs (as the Ministry of Defence has in the past) to act on your Departments' behalf until the transfer arrangements are finished, to remove those who set up new camps on the land. I understand that in fact a number of women have already moved back onto it.

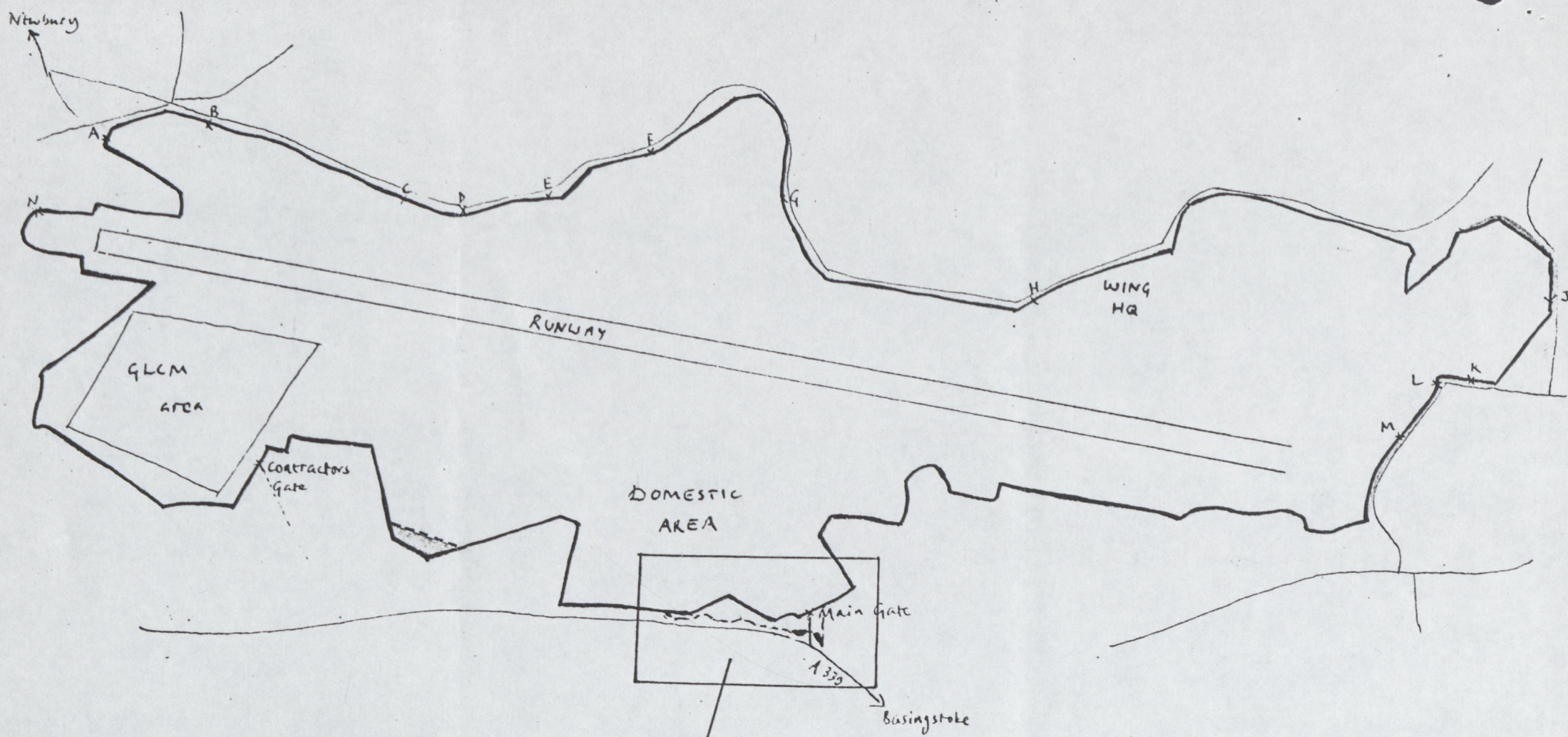
If you still feel unable to act to prevent the peace camp re-establishing itself on your land pending the land transfer arrangements, then it may be necessary, as soon as officials have worked out the precise arrangements, to consider an early announcement of our intentions if only to reassure our supporters locally.

Copies of this letter go to those to whom your letter to Leon Brittan was copied.

Yes em
M.H.

Michael Heseltine

RAF GREENHAM COMMON

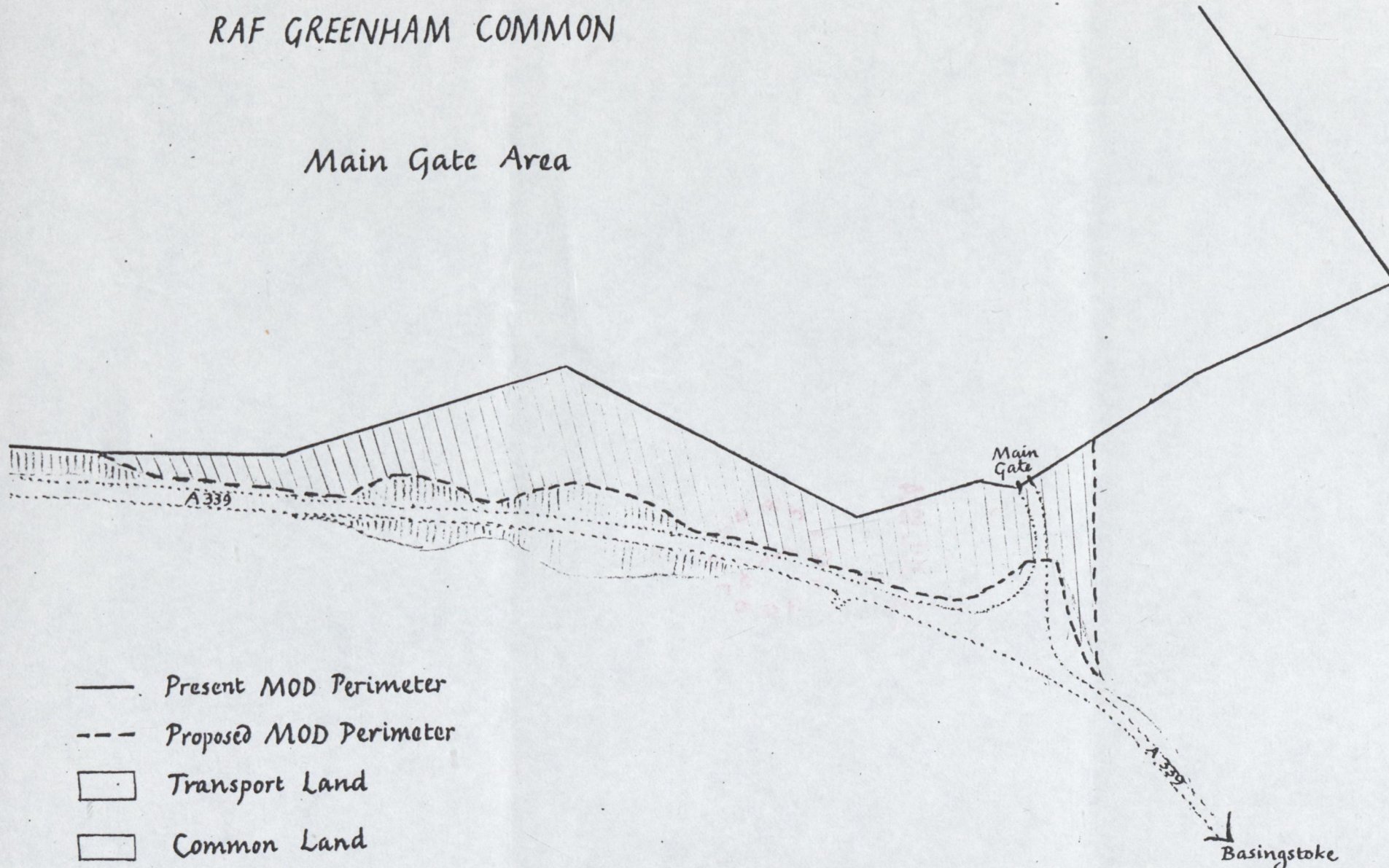


- Present MOD Fence
- - Proposed MOD Fence
- DTp land for transfer to MOD
- ▣ MOD land for transfer to Council
- Council land for transfer to MOD

See Annex B

RAF GREENHAM COMMON

Main Gate Area



- Present MOD Perimeter
- - - Proposed MOD Perimeter
- Transport Land
- Common Land
- ▨ Land for transfer to MOD

DEFENCE : Policing of Demos : Feb 83.

23 JUL 1984



CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON SW1H 9AT

*Await Home Secretary
ad MOD*

23 May 1984

Dear Leon

GREENHAM COMMON

Following discussions earlier this year about the possibilities for concerted, co-ordinated action against the Greenham Common women, the Prime Minister agreed that I should press ahead with the minor road improvement scheme outside the air base main gate. As you know, the women were evicted on 4 April and work began immediately: I expect it to be completed during the first half of June.

When the works are complete the temporary restriction of the public rights of passage over the land will automatically come to an end and the area at present fenced off must be restored to the highway. Not all the trunk road verge has been incorporated into the carriageway, and there is a strong probability that as soon as the fence is taken down the women will immediately seek to reoccupy what remains.

My officials have been discussing with the Ministry of Defence the suggestion that arose in our earlier discussions that they should acquire the surplus highway land and incorporate it within the air base. The advantage of this would be to bring the perimeter fence down virtually to the edge of the trunk road carriageway and deny any permanent re-establishment of the camp at that site. But this is less straightforward than at first appeared, since MOD would also have to acquire some intervening common land owned by Newbury District Council.

The women could still camp on other areas of land and I think it is for Michael Heseltine to consider whether it is worth going through what are bound to be complex and somewhat time-consuming procedures to bring the gate nearer the trunk road. Officials of my Department will however continue discussions with Newbury about the exchange of some surplus highway land for a small piece of common land on the south side of the trunk road to construct a bus layby.

*See Mtg
record
6.3.84*

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Whatever we do it is clear that the legal procedures involved cannot be completed before the current roadworks are finished. There will therefore be at least a period of time when the women could re-occupy the trunk road land. I do not think that on highway grounds I can act to prevent this. My Department, in common with others, has a well established policy of toleration towards gypsies and other itinerants. We do not evict them from highway land provided that they do not cause obstruction or danger to traffic. Similarly, in my view, it is not for me, acting as highway authority, to prevent the Greenham women from exercising their democratic right of peaceful protest. I should, of course, expect the police to take action if the women presented an actual obstruction or hazard to road traffic.

In passing, perhaps I should add that within the past few days another, but much smaller camp has been set up on highway land at the junction of the A1 and A14 trunk roads about 1 kilometre from the main entrance to RAF Alconbury, south of Peterborough. My Department thinks that the presence of the campers constitutes a potential hazard to traffic on these very busy roads and has served warning notices on them under section 143 of the Highway Act to remove their structures. We have also let the local police know that if an actual risk to road safety were to appear imminent we should expect them to take action at once.

We have not however - despite pressure from the County Council - taken any action to evict the women forthwith for trespass. This would be out of line with our attitude hitherto at Greenham Common and, to be consistent, would require a change in our current policy to gypsies and others who use road verges. There is also no certainty - as our earlier discussions showed - that we could effectively prevent determined protesters from constantly returning. I would of course be ready to take a tougher line about trespass on highway land if a general decision were taken to alter our policy towards gypsies or to take concerted action at Greenham. But in the absence of such decisions I think the only action I can publicly defend must be based on the rights and safety of road users.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Quintin Hailsham, Geoffrey Howe, Jim Prior, Michael Heseltine, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Patrick Jenkin, Michael Havers, and James Mackay and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours
Nicholas*

NICHOLAS RIDLEY



Pa
DMS
9/4

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Greenham Common

The Department of Transport say the bailiffs will be trying again to repossess the Department's land at Greenham Common at dawn tomorrow. The Department are in close touch with the police.

DMS

3 April 1984