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Prime Minister⁽²⁾

To note. There may be trouble at Greenham Common towards the end of the month, but on a relatively small scale.

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

17 September 1984

Dear David,

JMB
17/9

DEMONSTRATIONS AT GREENHAM COMMON: 20-30 SEPTEMBER 1984

The Home Secretary believes that the Prime Minister will wish to be aware that the women's peace movement is planning a series of demonstrations at RAF Greenham Common during the period 20-30 September, and to have a report of the plans which the police and Ministry of Defence are making.

The motivation for the demonstrations appears to have come from the Greenham peace women themselves and they appear to be responsible for their organisation. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has given over a limited amount of space in its publications for publicity for the demonstrations, but on a much reduced scale compared with previous occasions. Nationally, CND has shown no interest in organising the event and little in supporting it. The publicly declared aim of the demonstrations is to "recover" the base and the dates appear to have been chosen broadly to coincide with the Greenham peace camp's third anniversary. They also coincide with Operation Lionheart.

Some of the advance publicity for the demonstrations has anticipated 10 million people turning out in support of them. However the best assessment currently available from the Thames Valley Police suggests that the demonstrations will receive most support over the weekend 29/30 September, when something in the order of 3,000 demonstrators can be expected. The first weekend, 22/23 September is likely to be less well supported, as are week days. Some 300 can be expected during the week. You will appreciate that at this stage, these estimates are somewhat speculative; a more accurate assessment may only be possible a day or so before the event when the police have a clearer idea about, for example, the number of coaches that have been booked.

Whatever the attendance, however, the Thames Valley Police are expecting some problems with disorder and, as on previous occasions, attempts to breach the perimeter fence. They plan to maintain a 24 hour presence throughout the period and have obtained support from the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch. Otherwise, the Thames Valley Police expect to meet the policing requirement from within their own resources and do not, at this stage, envisage having to call upon mutual aid from other forces.

I understand from the Ministry of Defence that they are taking steps to reinforce the inside of the perimeter in line with their policy of keeping incursions to a minimum and preventing trespassers coming into contact with armed US personnel in sensitive areas. These steps include -

- (1) Increasing the established complement of Ministry of Defence Police from 50 to 200 by day and by night throughout the period, with additional dog teams.

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David Barclay, Esq

- (2) Increasing the number of RAF personnel from 120 to 250 throughout the period, with additional dog teams.
- (3) Making available a composite infantry battalion of 600 men to reinforce the base at any time during the period, but particularly weekends.
- (4) Keeping an RAF regiment on notice as additional reinforcements.

Command and control arrangements will follow the pattern successfully used in the past, whereby reinforcing units will come under the operational control of the Commander in Chief RAF Support Command, exercised by the RAF Commander on the spot. He will liaise closely with his USAF counterparts and with the Thames Valley Police.

I should also mention that on 12 September in the High Court, the Department of Transport obtained an order for possession of its land outside the main entrance to Greenham Common. I understand however that the Department of Transport does not intend to enforce the order until the demonstrations are over, an approach which has the full support of the Thames Valley Police.

We are remaining in close contact with the police and will, of course, report any significant changes in the assessment or planning before next Thursday.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Secretaries of State for Defence and Transport and to Richard Hatfield.

Yours ever
Nigel

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 September 1984

Demonstrations at Greenham Common

Thank you for your letter of 17 September, which the Prime Minister has seen and noted. She was grateful to be kept in touch.

(David Barclay)

Nigel Pantling, Esq.,
Home Office.

SSS