

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Prime Minister (2)

For information.

MBA 3/4

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HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

3 April 1985

Dear Mark,

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MOLESWORTH

The Home Secretary thinks that the Prime Minister may wish to have a note about the demonstrations organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which will take place at RAF Molesworth during the Easter weekend; and about the police preparations and plans to deal with any disorder which may arise.

We understand that there are to be two (relatively small) marches on Easter Sunday from Corby and Huntingdon, the second of these via RAF Alconbury where a short demonstration may take place. The police do not expect more than 1,000 people to take part in these marches. On Sunday night there will be a vigil at the base. The major demonstration, when the maximum attendance is expected to be 20,000 or more, will take place on Easter Monday. On present plans CND will encircle the base on three sides, using the eastern and western bridleways immediately outside the perimeter fence and, on the northern side, a bridleway at a little distance from the northern perimeter fence. At 2 pm on Easter Monday the demonstrators will tie ribbons and place pennants against the fence after ringing bells for ten minutes.

The base can be reached only by narrow lanes and there is nowhere on public land where a demonstration of any size can gather. These geographical features, taken together with the numbers expected to attend, mean that there is bound to be considerable disruption to the life of the local community, and some demonstrators will find their way onto private land, with consequent possible damage to crops. Some people may try to breach the perimeter fence. CND are not overtly encouraging or discouraging this, but are at least

Mark Addison, Esq

asking that such action does not take place before 3.30 pm so that demonstrators who do not wish to take part in that form of action have had a chance to leave the scene.

The police have been in close touch with the local community and with the CND organisers. Their approach is to try to minimise the disruption to the local community, without seeking to try to prevent the protesters from gathering at the site, since any attempt to frustrate the demonstration would be likely to cause more rather than less disorder. Substantial numbers of police - 2,000 in total - will be made available, some of whom will be on mutual aid, and 200 officers will be deployed at 'Peace Corner' which is expected to be the focal point of the demonstration. MOD police officers, who will be primarily concerned with the security of the base itself, will also be present. Arrangements are being made to ensure that the protestors can be collected and moved quickly once the demonstration is over. Particular care has been taken in formulating plans to deal with attempts to breach the fence. We believe that the arrangements the police have made will minimise the amount of disruption and disorder, and will ensure that the police are prepared for any disorder which may occur.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Defence.

Yours ever,
Nigel
N A PANTLING

23 APR 1985

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g. ball cc

MOLESWORTH LAND DISPOSAL: LINE TO TAKE

"No-one could seriously expect the Government to sell land at Molesworth to people who might use it to interfere with the development of the base by mounting demonstrations at great inconvenience to the local community."

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BACKGROUND NOTE

1. It has been the long standing policy to return surplus Ministry of Defence land to productive use, in this case most probably agricultural.
2. Former owners have an unconditional first option to purchase. Should they not exercise the option, it is the intention to dispose of the surplus land by private treaty to neighbouring farmers.
3. The Property Services Agency are acting as MoD's agents in this matter. The private treaty arrangement means that we are not obliged to accept the highest bid. There is no intention of knowingly selling to people who are either members of the peace movement, or who would make the land available to the peace movement for mounting demonstrations.
4. A copy of a recent letter from Secretary of State to John Major MP on this subject is attached.
5. There is no question of MoD/PSA using unconventional (ie surveillance) methods in order to ascertain whether or not an individual is associated with the peace movement.
6. A copy of this morning's "Guardian" article on this subject is attached.

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