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MO 11/2/2



Prime Minister

Content will be proposed  
for public handling:

A. J. C. 24/10.

PRIME MINISTER

*We must discuss  
at Cabinet on  
Thursday.  
a low profile  
- pub*

DELIVERIES OF CRUISE MISSILES TO RAF GREENHAM COMMON -  
PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Major items of equipment for the first cruise missile flight will be arriving at RAF Greenham Common from 1st November onwards, with deliveries spread over the following week. I have minuted you separately on the contingency security arrangements. We need to consider the Parliamentary and public handling of the issue. Our approach at this stage needs to cater for the alternatives that the first cruise missiles themselves will arrive on 1st November or three weeks later, on which, for reasons you know, final decisions have yet to be taken.

*We await  
a reply  
from  
Chancellor  
Kole  
21/10*

2. I believe that in either case there is no sensible alternative to announcing the beginning of the arrival of "sensitive" items of equipment on 1st November (while of course maintaining our existing policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear warheads). Clearly there can be no question of revealing the timetable for equipment deliveries in advance. But we must work on the basis that the presence of sensitive equipments will become known on 1st November, given the increased level of activity at the base and the presence of transporter-erector-launchers. There is nothing to gain - and much to lose - from trying to be evasive. Defence is top for questions that day and there are a number of related questions on the delivery and deployment timetable. If it is decided that deliveries at the beginning of the month should exclude the missiles, I would propose to explain at question time that the launchers and other equipment were beginning to arrive but to make it clear that the missiles themselves had not arrived. If, on the other hand, the full programme including the missiles goes ahead, I propose instead to make a statement to the House after questions.



3. This statement would rehearse the collective nature of the NATO decision which led to deployment, note that we are proceeding with implementing a decision agreed 4 years ago, and emphasize our interest in securing an equitable arms control agreement and that deployments can be halted, modified or reversed in the light of progress in Geneva. It would also refer to NATO's decisions on reductions in warheads for shorter-range nuclear weapons, about which I am minuting you separately. Finally and crucially I should need clearly to draw and to emphasise the distinction between the operational deployment of the missiles (which we have always said would take place by the end of the year), and their delivery (which must be presented as another step in preparation for operational deployment).

4. Assuming the full delivery programme goes ahead that day, my aim in handling Parliament and the Press on 1st November would be to concentrate as much attention as possible on the Government's position before the Opposition and the "peace movement" had an opportunity to react. To this end I would hold a press conference in London on 1st November after the statement and I am considering following this with a photographic facility at Greenham Common itself.

*I believe both that things are under*

5. We need of course to take account of the international implications of our public line. We have already explained to the Germans that arrivals cannot be concealed. The Soviet Union might use an announcement as a pretext for walking out in Geneva, although this may not suit them in relation to seeking to influence German opinion prior to the Bundestag debate. In any case, as the arrivals cannot be concealed, they could use publicity about them as the pretext if they are minded to pull out at Geneva.

6. Prior to 1st November, I have no doubt that we should continue to make clear that missiles have not yet arrived, and add that Parliament will be kept informed of all significant developments in the delivery programme. Without this, any announcement may appear to be a concession to Opposition pressure rather than a positive decision by the Government. There will be a number of opportunities



for questions on the timing of deliveries to be raised next week, particularly during the debate on the Defence Estimates in the Lords on Tuesday and your Question in the Commons on Tuesday and Thursday. I enclose a suggested line to take for use then.

7. I am copying this minute to the Lord President of the Council, the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*MJA*

Ministry of Defence  
20th October 1983

LONDON

LINE FOR USE IN PARLIAMENT PRIOR TO 1ST NOVEMBER

The necessary preparations are proceeding at RAF Greenham Common in order to achieve NATO's aim of operational deployment of the first flight of cruise missiles in the United Kingdom by the end of the year, unless an agreement can be reached in the arms control talks in Geneva involving the total abolition of all missiles of this sort including SS20s. The House will be informed when the first cruise missiles and launchers arrive.

ll



10 DOWNING STREET

cc LPO  
HO  
FCO  
LPS  
CWO  
Co

19A

*From the Private Secretary*

24 October 1983

Deliveries of Cruise Missiles to RAF Greenham Common -  
Parliamentary and Public Statements

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

Mrs. Thatcher has commented that she would like to discuss the Parliamentary and public handling of Cruise deliveries at Cabinet on 27 October. She is inclined to think that the Government should adopt a low profile in relation to public handling and therefore has some doubt about the specific proposals in paragraph 4 of Mr. Heseltine's minute.

I am copying this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), David Heyhoe (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

Richard Mottram, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

# Press leak may affect cruise arrival date

By David Fairhall  
Defence Correspondent

Ministry of Defence officials meet this morning to decide whether to call for a change in the US Air Force plan to deploy the first nuclear cruise missiles at Greenham Common on November 1, now that the women camped in protest outside the gates of the Berkshire base are aware of the date.

Details of the delivery timetable — starting with the atomic warheads on the first aircraft so as to have them safely stored in underground bunkers before any demonstrations begin and continuing with launch vehicles and other operational equipment through to November 8 — were published exclusively

in later editions of the Guardian on Saturday.

From a security point of view, if the women demonstrators were considered a threat, the obvious response would be to change the dates. But this may not be easy. The Defence Secretary, Mr Michael Heseltine, who will want to make the first public announcement of the missiles' arrival, is away in Canada at a NATO nuclear planning group meeting — which will need to be briefed on the cruise missile deployment — until next Saturday.

Any substantial postponement, on the other hand, might cause difficulties for the USAF's 501st Tactical Missile Wing, which has been asked to demonstrate an "initial operating capability" with the first

flight of 16 missiles before the end of December.

A possible delay of three weeks has been allowed for the delivery of the missiles themselves—though not their conspicuous 50ft launch vehicles—apparently to give time for the

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Million march for peace, page 5; Terry Coleman, page 11; 400,000 at Hyde Park, back page.

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German Bundestag to debate Nato's controversial nuclear modernisation programme, which also includes the deployment of Pershing II ballistic missiles in West Germany.

What has not been allowed for in the US-British timetable, or so it seems, is the danger

that the Russians will use the weapons' arrival in Berkshire as an excuse to walk out of the Geneva talks where their numbers are under negotiation. The two governments have evidently taken the view that since the chances of a real breakthrough in the talks before Christmas is remote, that risk is worth taking.

Sooner or later, warheads and missiles must be brought in if the initial operating capability is to have any military meaning as a deterrent before the end of the year. Mr Heseltine will no doubt emphasise to the British public that installing them in the Greenham silos does not mean that they are operational.

A key factor in deciding whether to change the plan is

the extent to which the weapons physical security—and especially that of the 200 kiloton W-84 atomic warheads—can be guaranteed however many "Greenham Women Against Cruise" turn up to swell the protests of the 40 or so permanently camped outside the perimeter wire.

The most serious danger, as seen from Whitehall, is that some of the women might break through to confront the armed US troops escorting the warheads from aircraft to bunkers—probably with orders to fire on anyone who interferes with them. To avoid this possibility, however remote, armed British troops will be placed between the Americans and the outer cordons of RAF

Turn to back page, col. 2

## Leak may affect date for cruise

Continued from page one

Regiment guards and Ministry of Defence police. Up to four battalions of soldiers will be on call if necessary.

One surprising feature of the plan as disclosed to the Guardian—and not yet officially confirmed by the Ministry of Defence or the USAF—is that the warheads are being flown in with the first missiles, rather than being brought over separately from the US, perhaps by sea and then taken discreetly into one of the Berkshire base's secondary gates.

People living on the southern outskirts of Newbury under the approach to the main Greenham runway may be particularly concerned. Multiple safety catches should ensure that there is absolutely no possibility of a nuclear explosion, even if the warheads have been assembled. But a crash would obviously carry the risk of contaminating the area with highly radioactive material.

In the end Mr Heseltine may decide, if he believes his own speeches about having won the nuclear debate, that now the plan is out in the open the best policy is to press ahead with it. Nuclear deterrence is a function of credibility.

On the domestic political front, neither Mr Heseltine nor Mrs Thatcher will be pleased to be faced with such a difficult choice when they and the security forces had hoped to take the Greenham peace camp by surprise. The Prime Minister was warned by officials about the Guardian's disclosure before Saturday's edition went on sale and Downing Street indicated last night that an immediate investigation to find the source of the leak was expected.

Extract from The Guardian 24/10/83



Prime Minister.

*MF*

*ADL 24/10*

PM/83/82

PRIME MINISTER

Cruise Missile Deliveries

*OK with AJC*

1. I have seen copies of the Secretary of State for Defence's two minutes of 20 October, in which he suggests that in preparing a line for Parliament, we need to cater for the alternatives that the first Cruise missiles themselves may arrive either on 1 November or three weeks later.

2. On the timing of deployment of the missiles, the position as I understand it is that Chancellor Kohl has not responded to your message of 10 October in which you made clear your reasons for deciding to stick to the agreed timetable, which, of course, means deployment during the period 1 - 8 November. I gather that President Reagan has heard no more on the subject from the Germans, and Genscher made no reference to the point during the lengthy informal discussions between EC Foreign Ministers at Vouliagmeni this weekend.

3. In these circumstances, I see no reason to raise the issue with the Germans again, or to reconsider the decision on timing that we have already taken.

/4. I am

SECRET



4. I am copying this minute to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Attorney-General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
24 October 1983

SECRET



DEFENCE: INF  
PT 4



24 OCT 1983