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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute of 4 August in which you seek her agreement that Sir Michael Quinlan should be allowed to publish two pieces on the morality of nuclear deterrence.

The Prime Minister believes that these two pieces are of high calibre. She therefore would be delighted to see them published, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 7 of your minute.

N.L. WICKS

5 August 1986

SR

Ref. A086/2266

MR WICKS

Yes - I should be delighted to see them published. They are of such high calibre.

Prime Minister
Agree that Sir

Michael Quinlan's pieces should be published, subject to the conditions in § 7?
at trap

N. L. W.
4.8

In a submission on 27 March 1984 (Ref. A084/963) I sought the Prime Minister's agreement that Sir Michael Quinlan should be allowed to publish in a United States periodical called "Science, Technology and Human Values" an essay he had written on the ethics of nuclear deterrence. The then Secretary of State for Defence shared the Prime Minister's high opinion of the essay, but felt that it would not be right for a civil servant to publish a personal view of this sort on a subject of such acute political controversy as nuclear deterrence. The Prime Minister reluctantly shared this view, and concluded that Sir Michael's essay should not be published. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary agreed. Sir Michael Quinlan entirely understood and accepted the decision.

2. In December 1984 Sir Michael Quinlan asked if the Ampleforth Journal - a publication issued by Ampleforth College, the Benedictine School in Yorkshire - might be allowed to publish the text of a private talk on nuclear deterrence which he had given to the sixth form at Ampleforth in October 1982. The talk was an expanded and developed version of a talk which he had given in St James's, Piccadilly in March 1982, which had (with Ministry of Defence agreement) been reproduced in books of essays both here and in America. The then Secretary of State for Defence took the same view as before, and the request for permission to allow the text of the Ampleforth lecture to be published was refused, without reference to the Prime Minister.

3. In May 1985 a publication called The Modern Churchman published a version of the text of the St James's, Piccadilly, talk. That has aroused no comment or controversy.



4. Sir Michael Quinlan has recently renewed his request to be allowed to publish in low-key contexts both the 1984 essay and the Ampleforth talk; he has been strongly urged by serious and knowledgeable people who have seen the pieces to allow them to be published. The present Secretary of State for Defence thinks that the quality of the pieces justifies their publication and would on balance be content to accept the slight risk of controversy which publication might bring.

5. Sir Michael Quinlan says that, if agreement were given, he would ensure that the vehicle for publication would not be anything of large circulation or high profile. He would publish both pieces wholly unamended and ensure that it was evident that they had been written some considerable time ago.

6. I think that the position now differs from that described in my minute of 27 March 1984: it is apparent that texts of talks by Sir Michael Quinlan on the ethics of nuclear deterrence have been published (following permission given by the Ministry of Defence some years ago), one as recently as May 1985; Sir Michael's arguments and views are thus already on public record; and there are no signs that any criticism or comment has been made.

7. I therefore hope that the Prime Minister will agree that Sir Michael Quinlan should be allowed to publish the two pieces in question, provided that:

- a. The Secretary of State for Employment does not object;
- b. Publication is in vehicles of suitably serious purpose, low circulation and low profile;
- c. The texts are unamended, and the fact that they were written a considerable time ago is made evident;



d. It is made clear that they were a private and personal contribution to discussion written by Sir Michael as a private citizen, not as a representative of the Government, and any views expressed are personal views, not reflections of Government policy.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

4 August 1986



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