

see Mr. Sanders.



PRIME MINISTER

PM/79/58

I think it is rather detailed in para 3. -
others in agreed out

Prime Minister

If you are content with this revised line, you could if necessary use it in questions tomorrow: it would in any case be helpful to have it on record before Tokyo.

SALT II: The Government's Public Response

[A]

1. In my minute PM/79/56 of 18 June I said that I was arranging for a thorough scrutiny of the text of the SALT II agreement. This has now been done by officials from the FCO and MOD (including representatives of the Chiefs of Staff and Defence Intelligence Staff). There are no major surprises in the details.

2. The text of the agreement is long and in places extremely complicated. Indeed one of the most striking points about the full text seen as a whole is the impressive thoroughness with which details of great technical complexity have been addressed. We cannot, of course, exclude that over time there may be differences of interpretation on particular details which may give rise to problems between the Russians and the Americans. But I see no reason to change the approach suggested in my minute of 18 June, particularly since we have already satisfied ourselves that our interests are safeguarded on the issue of most concern to us, the non-circumvention provision and the American interpretation of it.

[B]

3. I therefore hope we can agree now to use in public the line in the attached draft. This is the text enclosed with my earlier minute of 18 June amended to take account of the points in the Defence Secretary's minute to me of 19 June with which you agree.*

4. The Americans will seek general support for SALT II at a special meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on 29 June. I would like to instruct Sir J Killick to be as constructive and as positive as possible at the Council meeting. I hope therefore that we can agree on the Government's public response before we leave for the Tokyo Summit.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to other members of OD and to Sir John Hunt.

C

(CARRINGTON)

* i.e. which is in line with your wish to bring out the fact that the "equal limits" are numerical. 2/1/76

D R A F T

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO SALT II

The British Government welcome the Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union which was signed in Vienna on 18 June.

Successive British Governments have strongly supported the efforts of the US Administration to negotiate balanced and verifiable agreements limiting strategic arms.

SALT II must be seen as a carefully balanced compromise between the different interests and attitudes of the two sides. It breaks new ground in placing equal ceilings on the strategic systems of both sides, which will involve the dismantling of some Soviet delivery systems, and in applying qualitative limits. It is thus an important step in the continuing process of arms control, which the Government see as complementary to the Alliance's defence capability. For this reason they hope that it will be ratified.

Throughout the negotiations leading to the new agreement, the United States has kept its Allies informed of progress and has consulted them particularly on aspects of special concern to them. The Government are satisfied that the agreement will not interfere with continued nuclear and conventional cooperation between the United States and its allies and that the essential security interests of the Alliance are safeguarded.