

1 8

Ref A09543

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

In the light of these minutes, can you agree to the formula proposed by Lord Carrington, with the addition proposed by Sir John Hunt?

at 'X' below?  
JH  
11/5

SALT

1. In his minute of 11 May 1979 the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary says that he would like to discuss briefly at the meeting of OD arranged for 11.30 am on Monday 14 May what the Government's immediate public line on SALT II should be. He promises a more substantive paper on the Agreement for a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

2. I know you have reservations about whether the Americans have struck a good bargain in SALT II and there are indeed aspects of it which worry officials. But I am convinced that whether or not the Americans could have stuck out for more, this SALT II is better than no SALT II. Do we need however to take a public line (with all your reservations) on an Agreement to which we are not a party and for which we have no responsibility? You heard what Chancellor Schmidt said this morning. President Carter has gone out of his way to make it clear that he expects his major allies to give him their support: otherwise the lack of this will be exploited by his opponents in the Senate. He cannot of course demand this support from a new Government, since you are not bound by what Mr Callaghan said at Guadeloupe. Nevertheless I do believe that, particularly after you have gone out of your way to stress your support for the Alliance, he would much resent it if we alone of the Allies appeared to stand aside, and that this could prejudice his attitude to matters where we want his help (in particular the deterrent and also Rhodesia).

No - other than the hope it will be ratified as I said at the press conference.

3. The question then is how to find a form of words which will be sufficiently warm for Alliance purposes and yet avoid trouble domestically. On the whole I think Lord Carrington's formula does this: it calls

See copy out

X ||| SALT II "an important step" but makes it clear that we are not committed to the small print. The only question is whether it would be worth adding a last sentence saying "we shall of course be ready to join in consultations about the next steps in this process" (This would be forthcoming in tone but also signal that we shall have close interests and views to express on SALT III).

*John*

JOHN HUNT

11th May 1979

*I don't like the sentence I have marked*

*as*