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From the Private Secretary

8 May 1979

SALT

The Prime Minister has seen the paper prepared by officials for incoming Ministers on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. The Prime Minister has made the following comments on the paper:

Paragraph 3(i):

The Prime Minister has expressed doubts over the statement that the requirements placed on SALT II by the deterrence strategy of the Alliance are satisfied by SALT II's provisions.

Paragraph 3(iii):

The Prime Minister has expressed the view that it is vital that the Protocol to SALT II should not be renewed.

Paragraph 3(iv):

The Prime Minister is not convinced by the statement that the constraints imposed by SALT II mean that the Soviet Union is able to undertake fewer strategic military programmes than would otherwise be the case. She takes the view that the Russians have taken care to ensure that these constraints represent the ceiling of their actual capacities.

Paragraph 8:

The Prime Minister has expressed doubts over the statement that the rejection of SALT II would set back the process of arms control and undermine the possibility of restraining Soviet theatre nuclear forces in the future.

The Prime Minister has made the general comment that, despite these reservations about SALT II, she will do nothing and say nothing which could undermine the authority of the President of the United States of America.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (FCO) and Roger Facer (MOD).

B. G. CARTLEDGE

Martin Vile, Esq.,  
Cabinet Office.

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