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MR POWELL CDY 1617

13 July 1984

ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS AND ARMS CONTROL

1. In preparation for Monday's meeting I return the Prime Minister's copy of my minute, which she may like to keep by her.
2. She queries a point in paragraph 4. Perhaps this was not very clearly expressed. The reasoning is as follows. Given the present high numbers of offensive missiles, only large scale violations of an agreement on ceilings would matter. Verification could therefore be rough. But if there were deep cuts in offensive missiles numbers would start to matter more and even a few extra ICBMs on the other side could be crucial. It is difficult to monitor accurately numbers of such missiles, particularly with the existence of such new developments as cruise missiles and mobile ICBMs. Therefore there is considerable reluctance to make serious cuts in numbers. If, however, there were defensive missile systems, a few more offensive missiles would not matter, since to get through defensive screens a lot of such offensive missiles are needed. Given the existence of such defensive systems, cuts could be carried out in the numbers of offensive missiles even though verification remained rough and ready.
3. Having said all this I should add that this was merely an illustration and one of the arguments in what is a complex debate. My main point was to illustrate that there are arguments on each side, at least if the question is viewed from a purely US standpoint.

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PERCY CRADOCK

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JMHAAP