

Prime Minister

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DINNER WITH DR KEYWIRTH

As Charles Powell may have told you, a week or so ago Alun Chalfont gave a dinner for Dr Keywirth, the President's Scientific Adviser. Present were the Secretary of State for Defence, Field Marshal Bramall, Colonel Alford (of the Institute for Strategic Studies), Anthony Buck, Lord Beloff, Lord Gladwyn and the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence. Dr Keywirth was accompanied by Mr Herbert Meyer of the CIA.

The purpose of Dr Keywirth's visit was to talk about the Strategic Defence Initiative and that he did very convincingly and interestingly. The main points that he made were:

- (1) Even were the research to go ahead now at full steam, there would be no chance that the system envisaged could be effective and in place before the year 2000 (if then);
- (2) Support in the U.S. scientific community for anything which would bring an end to the present system of deterents, based on the idea that in certain circumstances the nuclear button would be pressed, would in his opinion grow for moral reasons. The moral case for the Strategic Defence Initiative was the one he was stressing in his conversations throughout Western Europe;
- (3) It was Soviet anxiety about the Strategic Defence Initiative which had taken them to the conference table at Geneva.

Most of those round the table seemed to be sceptical, particularly Lord Gladwyn and Colonel Alford, though, of course, our officials sustained your position of support for the research programme.

Hugh Thomas

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U.S. For. Pol.