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ELZARE

MR. OWEN

cc Sir P Cradock

SDI: ARCHITECTURE STUDY

I disagree fundamentally with your minute of 29 October. Our interest in participation in SDI research has very little to do with the defence of Europe. We are sceptical how far SDI will work and whether it will ever get beyond point defence. We do not want to create a belief that in the foreseeable future there is a reasonable alternative to nuclear weapons for Britain and Europe's last-resort defence. Our interest is in getting business, keeping up with state-of-the-art technology and ensuring that such civil spin-off as there is comes our way. It seems to me that a study of SDI architecture relevant to the defence of Europe will set up a lot of unnecessary hares, encourage those with unrealistic ambitions to see a made-in-Britain strategic defence and create a presumption of a European approach to SDI which we don't want. Let's keep the strategy and the 'brass' separate!



CHARLES POWELL
1 November 1985

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