

PERSONAL

PRIME MINISTER

SDI

Peter Carrington had a word with me at dinner last night. The main point of interest was that Mr. McFarlane had said to him privately that any countries interested in getting some benefits from SDI research should sign on quickly because SDI was not going to last. First he did not think that a fully effective and therefore worthwhile system was achievable. Secondly, he thought that a combination of pressures from the three Services over the allocation of funds to other military programmes and from Congress to hold down overall military spending would steadily squeeze out significant spending on SDI. Lord Carrington had asked whether the President shared this appreciation. Mr. McFarlane said that he did not.

This is of course a very different view from that which Mr. McFarlane has put to you, though he has sometimes hinted at private scepticism about the SDI. I think that Lord Carrington's version may have improved a bit in the telling. But it is something to watch.

CDD

Thank you - in case
Signed up soon
no

(Charles Powell)

29 November 1985

(DSG.43)