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56.25

SECRETEVENING READING ITEMMY MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER THATCHER

I met with Margaret Thatcher at the British Embassy this evening for more than an hour. As we anticipated, the Prime Minister expressed extreme concern about the potential impact of the proposals made at Reykjavik on European security, the coherence of the NATO Alliance, and--as she stated bluntly--her own political position in the UK as elections draw near. She stressed that there was much about Reykjavik with which she can agree. Specifically, she supports your strong position on SDI, INF, and START (i.e., the fifty percent reduction in strategic systems over five years), based on the assumptions that you will insist on strict verification procedures in all of these areas and will be able to manage the problem of SRINF.

She went on to say, however, that she simply cannot accept "the second five years", that is, the proposal to eliminate offensive ballistic missiles within ten years. She expressed deep concern that this proposal would undermine the security of Western Europe and "cause you to lose me and the British nation". She claimed that the rationale for Trident would be undermined and would result in a victory by Labor, "which has fought me every step of the way. She went on to explain in detail to me, as I am sure she will with you, why she believes

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so strongly that the NATO Alliance must retain ballistic nuclear missiles indefinitely and why she must have her Trident program.

She stated her deep wish that you and she be able to agree on some policy statements which will address her concerns. I told her that you agree that the public handling of these issues is extremely important. We will have some thoughts for the two of you to consider on Saturday.

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