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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 24, 1985

Dear Margaret:

Thank you for your messages on SALT interim restraints and your gracious remarks about, what I must say, was a difficult decision. Your comments, as always, were constructive and very much to the point. George Shultz also reported to me on his useful meeting with you in London, as well as his extensive discussions with Geoffrey Howe and other Foreign Ministers in Lisbon. Allied views played a key role in my decision.

I especially appreciate your personal support for my efforts to achieve meaningful and significant arms reductions in the ongoing Geneva negotiations. Alliance solidarity, as you recognize, is key if we are to convince the Soviets to negotiate seriously. Thank you as well for your kind remarks about my willingness to go the extra mile in pursuit of real arms reductions. It is clearly time for the Soviets to reciprocate.

My Strategic Defense Initiative continues to attract great attention. I firmly believe, as you know from our discussions, that exploratory research into the future potential of strategic defense is critical to ensuring Western security over the long term. In addition to holding open the possibility of a more stable and reliable strategic balance, simple prudence dictates that we pursue such research in light of the vigorous activities of the Soviet Union in strategic defense -- including advanced research.

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In the long term, the strategic challenges that we will collectively face over the coming years are such that we cannot allow ourselves as an Alliance to delay the exploration of possible new alternatives. Allow me to underline that we have made no decision to go beyond research. I assure you that the United States will not seek to pursue solutions to strategic problems without reference to the special concerns of each of our Allies. We also pledge to take into account Great Britain's special concerns as a nuclear power.

We fully recognize that, given the unprecedented scope and complexity of our research into new defensive technologies, building and sustaining an Alliance consensus will require both great care and patience. With this in mind, I recently issued a new National Security Decision Directive that sets forth a more detailed and definitive presentation of our rationale and strategy in pursuing our SDI research program. In doing so, I have drawn directly upon your comments and advice about what to underscore in our discussions of SDI within the Alliance, and publicly.

As part of our efforts to make clear to U.S. and Allied publics our SDI policy and the strategic context in which that policy has been developed, we have released a very detailed public summary of my policy directive. This "Fact Sheet" has been made available to your government, and I am asking Ambassador Price to ensure that you personally receive a copy. I would, of course, welcome your views on it.

Quiet and candid dialogue represents the best means of consensus-building. To that end, I have asked George Bush to visit London and a number of other European capitals to continue

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our close consultations. I am writing you separately about my request that George discuss in detail practical steps we might take to combat international terrorism. Again, thank you for your thoughtful counsel, which I highly value. Warmest regards,

Sincerely,

Ron

The Right Honorable
Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister
London

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