

W. B.
PRIME MINISTER

Relations with the Soviet Union

I attach an internal Foreign and Commonwealth Office paper entitled "Managing Russia". I am not aware that it has been submitted to FCO Ministers. I disagree with a number of points in it eg:-

- (a) it underplays the instability introduced into East-West relations by the fact that the Soviet leadership is bound to regard the existence and vitality of the free democracies as a threat to their regime. This seems to me to be true more or less regardless of actions taken by Western governments, eg on human rights;
- (b) a 'certain cautious activism' is altogether too modest a description of Soviet attempts to extend their influence - whatever the motivation (para. 10);
- (c) the Russians have certainly "failed to get a grip" on the Middle East but it is probably sufficient for their purposes to cause trouble there (para. 17).

Nonetheless, the paper is short, well written and relevant. (It echoes here and there what Mr. Karamanlis was saying.) I am submitting it to you now, not only because of its general interest, but because I am starting to put together some points for your New York speech. It would be very helpful in that connection to have your reaction to the paper's general thesis. This is that the Russian menace is serious and long term, but manageable; and that the West must keep up its guard but has no need to despair. On the contrary.

MA

25 October 1979

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TO BE REPLACED *