

been placed in East Germany and Czechoslovakia — two of them could wipe out the American cruise bases in Britain at Molesworth and Greenham Common within three minutes of the first, perhaps ambiguous, knowledge that they had been launched. That would not give time for anyone to consult President Reagan, never mind for him to consult Mrs. Thatcher. In fact, I doubt very much whether even the base commander would have time to be consulted if he happened to be suffering from a call of nature at the time when the first information was received.

The third worrying area is the deployment on a very large scale, currently planned and already begun by both sides, of cruise missiles which are dual-capable. You will not know, if you detect 100 cruise missiles coming towards you, whether they are carrying nuclear weapons or conventional weapons, and some of these cruise missiles, especially those which are carried on ships or, even more, in submarines, are very easily hidden and present problems for the arms controllers of an order of magnitude greater than any which arms controllers have had to face in the past.

The fourth worrying area is the attempt by the United States, and some would say the attempt already begun by the Soviet Union, to develop strategic defence against nuclear missile attack. That leads me to the question of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

In 1983, President Reagan made a very sensible statement. He said that it is very important for the world to get away from mutual-assured destruction as a basis of its security. In other words, he wanted to replace nuclear deterrence as the basis of western security. He offered the hope, at that time in that speech, in March 1983 I think it was, two and a half years ago, that it might become possible to protect not only military targets but civilian populations against strategic nuclear attack, although he didn't point out, of course, that the sort of system he was thinking of would give no protection in itself against attack by cruise missiles or against aircraft. Given the inability of the American Air Force to prevent aircraft from Central America crossing the American frontier carrying drugs, one has some grounds for being worried about this particular loophole in the theory of total defence.

What I think has become evident, since he made that speech and since the American administration committed itself to the Strategic Defense Initiative, is that it is certainly impossible, at least in the medium term — by which I am talking about the next quarter of a century — to provide defence for civilian populations against nu-