

284. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (Iklé) to Secretary of Defense Weinberger<sup>1</sup>

Washington, May 21, 1982

SUBJECT

UK Request for 50 Maritime Limpet Mines

On May 15 the UK requested that the United States transfer 50 maritime limpet mines to British forces by May 24th.<sup>2</sup> These mines are hand-transported underwater anti-ship demolition weapons for use against moored targets. The UK has not indicated the nature of the targets against which these mines might be used; it is possible, however, that the targets might be ships in Argentine mainland ports.

This request raises a larger policy issue of the nature of US materiel support for the UK during a post-invasion phase of the Falklands conflict, when the mines are likely to be employed. The State Department recognizes that a decision on the mines, because of the possibility that they might be used against mainland ships, begs that larger policy issue.

In my view we must proceed with greater caution when carrying out British requests that clearly are geared to the second phase of the conflict. We have several such requests that have been broached, if not formally tabled, in addition to the request for mines. These include a request for matting that might be sufficiently large to support Nimrod operations from an expanded Port Stanley airfield, and for magnetic

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-86-0042, UK 1982. Top Secret. At the bottom of the memorandum, Weinberger wrote: "*Fred*: We support the UK in this conflict.—As long as we do not get our troops involved—we shouldn't try to guess when and for what reason they might want limpet mines, airport matting, etc." Weinberger's note was also transcribed in an attached May 24 typewritten note from Cormack to Iklé.

<sup>2</sup> The request was enumerated in the Department of Defense's May 14 list of British requests for military assistance. See footnote 2, Document 266.

anomaly detectors, whose requested delivery of late June points to a British desire to husband anti-submarine warfare assets to protect resupply ships to the Falklands over the next few months.

Secretary Haig has already been apprised of the implications of a decision on mines, and I have contacted Larry Eagleburger to establish what State's views are with respect to the particular request and the general policy.<sup>3</sup>

**Fred C. Ikle<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> See Document 290.

<sup>4</sup> Iklé wrote "Fred" above his typed signature.