

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

Washington, June 24, 1982

SUBJECT

UK Request for 6 (Additional) Super Rapid Blooming Overhead Chaff (SRBOC) Launchers Plus 1200 Hycor Rounds (TS)—ACTION MEMORANDUM

On June 10, 1982 the Navy released 6 Super Rapid Blooming Overhead Chaff (SRBOC) launchers and 1200 Rounds. We are now in receipt of a request for an additional 6 launchers and 1200 more rounds. Navy has indicated that this second request for Hycor rounds has a direct impact on Navy readiness. Navy is already understocked with 44 percent shipfill and no reserves. Fulfilling the British request would reduce Navy readiness by a further 10 percent. Apparently the UK plans to use the launchers and rounds to protect the next task force against a possible attack by Exocet missiles. The release of the additional rounds would place the UK at 100 percent shipfill with 115 percent in reserve.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-86-0042, UK 1982. Top Secret; Eyes Only. A stamped notation at the top of the memorandum indicates that Weinberger saw it on June 25.

While British concern about a possible Argentine attack is understandable, the urgency of the situation does not appear to necessitate dipping further into Navy readiness. Additionally, the stock of rounds which has already been provided should be sufficient for UK needs. I recommend that we offer to provide the launchers to the British but deny their request for the additional rounds.<sup>2</sup>

**Fred C. Ikle<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> Weinberger indicated neither approval nor disapproval of the recommendation, although he crossed out the word "only" at the end of the "Approve release of launchers only" option and wrote: "& query UK about their real need for 1200 more rounds, in view of our own shortage." In response, Iklé submitted another memorandum to Weinberger on July 2, which stated that the British rationale for seeking 1,200 rounds was that the United Kingdom required "twice the number of rounds to fire against Exocet missiles as against Soviet missiles, which are the basis for our own threat assessment and requirements," that the U.K. requirement "is also increased because its launchers have been inefficiently placed; they had to be grafted onto ships that had already been outfitted," and that the British "are, in any event, quite nervous about incoming aircraft since the sinking of the Sheffield." In light of this, Iklé recommended offering 900 rounds, a recommendation Weinberger approved. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> Iklé signed "Fred" above his typed signature.