

**371. Information Memorandum From the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (Howe) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Eagleburger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, July 1, 1982

SUBJECT

Materiel Support for the UK

This memorandum reports on the status of several British requests for assistance.

*Mine Clearing.* During her meeting with the President, Mrs. Thatcher raised the possibility of US assistance in clearing plastic anti-personnel mines emplaced by the Argentines on East Falkland.<sup>2</sup> As you know, Secretary Haig raised this during the June 25 breakfast with Secretary Weinberger.<sup>3</sup> The British military attache has followed up with DOD personnel on this issue.

For the present, the British primarily are interested in discussing techniques and procedures for clearing the mines. They have not yet requested any equipment to assist them in this task. Bulldozers apparently are too heavy for the soft bogs. I have confirmed that the UK Embassy is satisfied that the Pentagon is being responsive on this issue.

*Harpoon.* As you know, we have agreed to provide eight Harpoon anti-ship missiles which the British plan to install on their Nimrod aircraft. These eight were part of a British request for twenty Harpoon.<sup>4</sup> The UK now wants the twelve additional missiles.

We understand that OSD staff will recommend to Secretary Weinberger that he *not* approve immediate delivery of twelve more Harpoon. OSD staff believes that the British do not have an urgent requirement for the additional missiles. They also are concerned that the Navy—whose objections were overruled when sale of the first eight missiles was approved—will use the requirement for Congressional notification of the proposed Harpoon sale to air their reservations more publicly. (Our soundings do not indicate that this is a big issue with the Navy.)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat, S/S Special Handling Restrictions Memos 1979–1983, Lot 96D262, 1982 ES Sensitive July 1–10. Top Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Kanter.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 361.

<sup>3</sup> Likely a mistaken reference to the June 24 Haig-Weinberger breakfast meeting. See footnote 2, Document 362.

<sup>4</sup> See Document 362.

I will keep you informed about the status of the Harpoon issue and will ensure that DOD seeks your concurrence before approving transfer of any additional missiles.

*AIM-9M*. You will recall that the British have asked for twenty AIM-9M air-to-air missiles, a model which is so new that there are only three such missiles in the US inventory. We have responded with a proposal to exchange test data on the performance of AIM-9L and AIM-9M missiles.<sup>5</sup> We also understand that OSD—which is very skeptical about the UK's asserted need for the AIM-9M—is actively discouraging the British from pursuing their request for the missiles themselves.

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<sup>5</sup> See Document 365.