

306. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (Iklé) to Secretary of Defense Weinberger¹

Washington, May 27, 1982

SUBJECT

UK Request for 50 Maritime Limpet Mines (U)—ACTION MEMORANDUM

(TS) On May 15 the UK requested a transfer of 50 maritime limpet mines (hand transported underwater anti-ship demolition weapons for use against moored targets). At that time, in my conversation with Larry Eagleburger, State had concerns about the timing. UK has now formally requested these mines again and State is now willing to grant them.²

(TS) According to the Navy's analysis, given the developments on the Falkland Islands, the opportunity for possible use on moored targets on the Falklands seems past. This suggests that the intended use for these mines would be Argentine ships moored in mainland ports. In accordance with your instructions, however, we have not pressed the British on their intended use.³

(TS) It seems likely that the President will again be confronted with the future of the South Atlantic war and the Falkland Islands crisis in a major way. Hence, it might be desirable for the President to have his options kept open for either supporting or discouraging follow-up British attacks on the Argentine mainland. It is my recommendation to you that we should inform the British that at this time we are not prepared to transfer the mines.

Fred C. Ikle⁴

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-86-0042, UK 1982. Top Secret; Eyes Only. A copy was sent to Carlucci.

² See Document 290.

³ See footnote 1, Document 284.

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typewritten signature.