

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

Washington, April 11, 1982

SUBJECT

UK Request for Additional Fuel

AmEmbassy London alerted us to the UK need for additional fuel at Ascension Island.<sup>2</sup> We have told London in the attached message that we are investigating the feasibility of providing additional fuel.<sup>3</sup> The British have indicated a need for two and one-half million gallons of JP-5 not later than April 24.

Our investigation with DOD (MRA&L) late Friday, April 9 indicated that we may be able to get a tanker load of fuel to Ascension by April 25. DOD will provide refined information on Monday morning, April 12.

The tanker that just left Ascension pumped off all of the JP-5 cargo fuel that he carried (1.3 million gallons).

From the London message it appears that 100,000 gallons of JP-5 have already been provided to the RAF. Most of the 1.3 million gallons just delivered should be available for RAF use without seriously impairing US flight operations at Wideawake.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat, S/S Special Handling Restrictions Memos 1979-1983, Lot 96D262, ES Sensitive April 10-19 1982. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Austin and cleared by Miles and Pendleton. Miles initialed for Burt. A stamped notation at the top the memorandum indicates that Eagleburger saw it on April 12. In the upper right-hand corner of the first page, Eagleburger wrote: "(1) Bremer should see; 2) RB [Richard Burt]-go ahead and tell Brits. LSE."

<sup>2</sup> Attached but not printed is a copy of telegram 7891 from London, April 9, which reported a request from the Royal Air Force to the Assistant Air Attaché for the United States to authorize a USAF tanker, then offloading 1.3 million gallons of JP-5 fuel at Ascension, to "fill the storage tanks at Ascension to full capacity (two and one-half million gallons) for RAF use." "Additionally," the Embassy reported, "the British have an urgent need for another tanker with a similar quantity of JP 5 to arrive at Ascension no later than 24 April 82." (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> Attached but not printed is a draft of telegram Tosec 50118/97144 to London, April 10, which instructed the Embassy to inform HMG "that the tanker presently offloading at Ascension has no additional cargo fuel available for delivery." "We will investigate and advise," the telegram continued, "of the feasibility of providing an additional load of fuel within the time period desired. Should we not be able to meet this requirement, we have no objection to HMG delivering additional fuel by means of its own tankers." The telegram, as sent on April 10 at 2036Z, is in the Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 04/10/1982 (3).

*Recommendation:*

Subject to any caution that Mr. Robinson (L) may have provided to you on Saturday, April 10 concerning further assistance to the UK,<sup>4</sup> I recommend telling the British that we have no objection to their drawing upon the JP-5 in storage at Wideawake. This would be subject to any limitation the base commander might have regarding protection of his own operational requirements. You could also advise the British that we are investigating our capability for immediate resupply and will advise them as quickly as possible. As stated in our earlier message to London, we have no objection to the British resupplying the JP-5 fuel supply from their own sources.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In the right-hand margin next to this portion of the sentence, Eagleburger drew a vertical line and wrote "rethink." In an April 10 briefing memorandum to Eagleburger, which analyzed U.S. obligations to provide services and facilities to the British on Ascension Island, Robinson indicated that L had concluded "that the United States is obliged upon specified advance notice to permit and facilitate the landing of British military aircraft within the existing capacity of U.S. resources on the island. We conclude that the United States is not obliged to augment its own personnel or other resources in order to meet British needs. If the British needs exceed the existing U.S. capacity, the United States is obliged to permit the United Kingdom to introduce its own personnel, facilities, supplies, and equipment for that purpose, in accordance with appropriate arrangements to be agreed by military authorities of the two governments. However, such administrative arrangements, which could not be unreasonably resisted by the USG, could provide alternatively for the provision of services by the USG on a reimbursable basis." (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P830074-0771)

<sup>5</sup> In the left-hand margin next to this entire paragraph, Eagleburger drew a vertical line and wrote: "RB—You do with D. Thomas."