

4571

Secretary of State

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CNS
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DUP(P)

We must certainly run on the Vulcans until the end of Operation Corporate. But to take any other longer term

OPERATION CORPORATE - VULCANS

The remaining Vulcan Squadrons are due to be phased out by 30 Jun 82. We are currently reconnecting and proving the Vulcan's air-to-air refuelling equipment and working up a conventional bombing capability in the context of Operation Corporate. Ten aircraft are ready now and we have sufficient stocks of engines and other essential spares to maintain in service three Squadrons of Vulcans in the Conventional Bombing role until at least 31 Dec 82. We also have ample stocks of 1000lb bombs.

2. I see the Vulcans as having a number of important roles to play in the present crisis. With AAR support from Ascension Island they could be used to attack the airfield or other military targets in the Falklands. We could let it be known that we had a force of Vulcans on Ascension Island with the range to carry out attacks as far as the Argentinian mainland posing a threat to their airfields and Naval units in port. The Vulcans also have a Maritime Radar Reconnaissance capability, and could give useful support to the Task Force Commander. The Argentinians would be aware of all these possibilities from published data on the Vulcan. Positioning some Vulcans at Ascension Island could also force the Argentinians to maintain or deploy some of their fighters to the North of Argentina where they could not pose a threat to our Task Force in the area of the Falkland Islands.

3. At a time of some uncertainty, I also believe that it would be imprudent to reduce the size of our front line further. However, if we are to halt the postings of personnel and other disbandment measures an early decision is required. Accordingly, I seek your agreement to run-on three Vulcan squadrons until 31 Dec 82, or until the end of Operation Corporate should this be later. The squadrons would of course be able to continue their commitment to NATO in the nuclear strike role - which I am sure would be very welcome to SACEUR at the present time.



CAS

19th April 1982

statements that 3 Sqn of Vulcans have been "renewed" - that's not yet the case



I do not want decisions on ~~fact~~ changes to our existing plans, as a series of isolated decisions we must sit down & look at all the options & lessons at the end of Operation Corporate. I certainly do not want