

PERSONAL



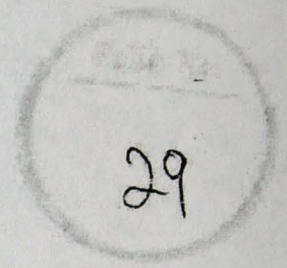
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FC 313

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PS/CAS

OPERATION CORPORATE - VULCANS

*Handwritten:* FC 273

The Secretary of State was grateful for CAS's minute of 19th April. The Secretary of State agrees with CAS that as at present perceived there is a requirement to have Vulcan support for Operation Corporate. The Secretary of State agrees that steps should be taken to identify those postings and other disbandment measures which would otherwise put this support at risk. He would be grateful for a further note on what changes would have to be made to present plans, and an indication of their cost on the assumption that the Vulcans would run on until the end of Operation Corporate.

2. The Secretary of State has commented that in general he does not want to take long-term decisions on changes to existing force level plans as a series of isolated decisions. Whether there are areas where these plans have to be adjusted is something he will consider at the end of the Operation. In the meantime the Secretary of State believes that we must be careful not to give the impression through any MOD statements that the Vulcan Squadrons have been "reprieved".

20th April 1982

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PERSONAL



Secretary of State

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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.

CHIEF OF DEFENSE STAFF

DATE 20-4-82 COMES

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CAS

19th April 1982