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FM FCO 032145Z JUNE 1982

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1116 OF 3 JUNE

AND TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, MODUK (DS11, DS5)

YOUR TELNO 1962: FALKLANDS: US ASSISTANCE

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1. MOD ARE CONTENT WITH THE PRESS LINE PROPOSED BY STATE DEPARTMENT (PARAGRAPH 3 OF TUR).

2. WE ARE NOW FACING A FURTHER PUBLIC PRESENTATION DILEMMA, THIS TIME ON THE POINT DEFENCE SYSTEM FOR SHIPS, VULCAN PHALANX. TWO OF THESE ARE CURRENTLY BEING FITTED TO ILLUSTRIOUS AT THE SWAN HUNTER SHIPYARD. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PARLIAMENTARY INTEREST IN WHETHER POINT DEFENCE SYSTEMS ARE TO BE FITTED TO NEW RN SHIPS AND, IF SO, WHAT THOSE SYSTEMS WILL BE. NOW THAT ILLUSTRIOUS IS BEING FITTED WITH VULCAN PHALANX MOD CAN NO LONGER REFUSE TO ANSWER DIRECT QUESTIONS.

3. MOD PROPOSE TO TAKE THE LINE, THEREFORE, THAT THE ACQUISITION OF VULCAN PHALANX IS A NORMAL DEFENCE PROCUREMENT. IT IS NOT (NOT) DIRECT US ASSISTANCE IN THE FALKLANDS CONTEXT. ALTHOUGH ACQUISITION OF THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN SPEEDED UP FOLLOWING THE DECISION TO ACCELERATE THE INTRODUCTION INTO SERVICE OF ILLUSTRIOUS (IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC), CONSIDERATION HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN TO THE INSTALLATION OF A POINT DEFENCE SYSTEM TO UK ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE CARRIERS. THE SYSTEM IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE PROPER PROTECTION FOR THE SHIP WHEREVER SHE MAY BE DEPLOYED.

4. GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD INFORM STATE DEPARTMENT THAT, IN ANSWER TO PARLIAMENTARY AND OTHER QUESTIONS, MOD PROPOSE TO TAKE THE LINE IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE. PLEASE REPORT THEIR REACTION.

Pym

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