



Secretary of State for Defence

S/S

Further to my note on
operational case for
working up ILLUSTRONS
as quickly as possible
is now being prepared.
Could we speak psc?

3.
S/S



MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE
PROCUREMENT

~~SSX~~
You are going to talk to HOT about this. As I said he insists he must say x1 as he told the controller he would have a word with you before replying. Might it not be better to miss this stage and have a meeting with CDS/CMS/HOT to go over the op. rationale for going forward ILLUSTRIOUS?

D/MIN/TT/12/3/2

C of N

OPERATION CORPORATE - HMS ILLUSTRIOUS

Thank you for your minute of 27th April about the possibility of fitting Vulcan Phalanx to HMS ILLUSTRIOUS.

so far as I am aware none has formally authorized this.

2. I have had a hurried word with the Secretary of State about the question of the rushed plan to prepare HMS ILLUSTRIOUS for the South Atlantic in July or August, and while I understand that he has endorsed a Chiefs of Staff planning assumption of a six-month duration of operations, I cannot feel that this period was meant to cover such a major enhancement of our forces as the introduction of this new ship would be.

x |

3. I note in your submission that HMS ILLUSTRIOUS might have to sail without her Sea Dart system properly proven. This does seem a questionable proposition for a carrier in service for any purpose. I also note that the purchase of Vulcan Phalanx would be a temporary expedient, and that this system is not as effective as Sea Wolf for point defence; at a cost of over £8 million it would certainly not be too expensive to consider for emergency use, but the two aspects taken together lead me to question the value of rushing through her preparation in this way.

4. I would also like to know what other problems and deficiencies in equipment could result from this ship

/ being ...

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being sent on operational service over a year before her planned ISD.

5. I would also be grateful if you could let me know by what date she could be deployed

- a. with a properly proven Sea Dart system; and
- b. with, additionally, Sea Wolf as an alternative to Vulcan Phalanx for point defence.

29 April 1982

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