



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
FLOOR 5 ZONE B MAIN BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone: 020 7218 9000 (Switchboard)

THE EARL OF MINTO
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

4.5.2.8

13 March 2024


Dear Alan,

During the debate on 29 February, you asked about the ability of the future Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships to replenish Vertical Loading Silos at sea.

The current design specification for the future FSS ships does not include the ability to replenish Vertical Launch Silos (VLS) at sea. However, it is recognised that at-sea replenishment of VLS could offer an operational advantage in the sustainment of deployed maritime forces. The Ministry of Defence has been closely following the work of the United States Navy in its investigation of reloading VLS at sea (also known as underway replenishment). Considering the operational context and the available technology, the Ministry of Defence is also actively investigating options for alternative means of replenishing VLS, including underway replenishment.

The Royal Navy continually assesses and reviews its technology and the possibility of integrating different weapons systems into our ships.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely


THE EARL OF MINTO

Admiral The Rt Hon The Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC PC
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW