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ACQUISITION OF POINT DEFENCE GUN SYSTEMS FOR RN ASW CARRIERS

BACKGROUND

In a written answer to a Parliamentary Question from Sir Patrick Wall MP, Mr Geoffrey Pattie announced today that HMS ILLUSTRIOUS will be fitted with a point defence gun system pending development of the new lightweight Sea Wolf missile system. The system selected is the American Phalanx close-in weapons system which consists of a 20mm rotary cannon and associated radar systems. The first units are currently being fitted to HMS ILLUSTRIOUS at the Swan Hunter yard. The MOD wishes to purchase more systems but their sale requires congressional approval.

PR LINE (to be used only if asked specifically about Phalanx)

"The acquisition of Vulcan Phalanx is a normal defence procurement. It is 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 HMS ILLUSTRIOUS in the light of experience in the South Atlantic, consideration had already been given to the installation of a point defence system in UK ASW carriers. The system is intended to provide proper protection for the ship wherever she may be deployed."



D J H  
DPO  
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