



## DEBATE PACK

CBP-0154 (2019) | 25 June 2019

# Combat Air Strategy progress and next steps

Westminster Hall

Thursday 27 June 2019

1:30-4:30pm

Backbench Business debate led by  
Robert Courts MP

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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### Contents

1.	Background	2
2.	Press articles	4
3.	Press releases	6
4.	PQs	13
5.	Other Parliamentary material	17
5.1	Debates	17
5.2	Statements	17
6.	Further reading	20

# 1. Background

The Government unveiled the [Combat Air Strategy](#) in July 2018. The strategy sets out the Government's ambition to develop a new combat air system for the mid-2030s. The RAF have two fast-jet combat aircrafts in service, the new Lightning (F-35 Joint Strike Fighter) and Typhoon, which will leave service by 2040. Government figures released at the time of strategy estimated the aerospace sector accounted for 87% of defence exports over the last ten years and the UK combat air sector has an annual turnover of over £6bn. Gavin Williamson, the then Secretary of State for Defence, said the strategy makes clear the UK intends to remain a 'world leader' in the combat air sector. The Government and industry have pledged £2bn over the next decade in the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative.

The Strategy announced the creation of Team Tempest, an "innovative Government-industry partnership" to deliver the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative. This includes BAE Systems, MBDA, Leonardo and Rolls-Royce, plus MOD personnel. Stuart Andrew, the Minister for Defence Procurement, launched an open day in March 2019 for industry.

Members discussed the Strategy in a debate on [military aircraft manufacturing](#) in May 2019. The Minister said the UK is a global leader in military aerospace for [three reasons](#): innovation, a history of successful international collaboration producing military aircraft, and lastly the strength of the domestic combat air sector. He also pledged to provide more detailed updates on the Team Tempest programme in the summer.

The UK is not the only country looking ahead to its future combat aircraft needs. France and Germany have partnered to develop their own Future Combat Air System (FCAS)/ Système de Combat Aérien Futur (SCAF) programme. French President Emmanuel Macron unveiled a full-scale mock-up of the Dassault/Airbus proposal, alongside a proposed unmanned combat aerial vehicle, at the recent Paris Air Show. This is to replace their Rafale and Typhoon fleets from 2040 onwards. Spain has joined the [Franco-German project](#) and the UK said when it launched the Strategy it will be talking to potential international partners.

The UK will be hoping to export any future combat air system. The aerospace sector accounted for 91% of UK defence exports in 2017 and 87% of defence exports over the [last ten years](#) (2008-17). The Strategy observes "there will be a significant market for a successor to these capabilities over the period 2040-2060".

Saudi Arabia is a major purchaser of UK combat aircraft - Typhoon combat aircraft and associated systems dominate [UK exports to the Kingdom](#). On 20 June the Government [announced](#) it will not grant any new export licenses for exports to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners that might be used in the conflict in Yemen. This is in response to a Court of Appeal judgement that found the Government had not attempted to make conclusions as to whether Saudi Arabia had breached International Humanitarian law in its action in Yemen, as required by the decision-making process in granting export licenses (specifically, Criteria 2c of the [Consolidated Criteria](#) which requires the Government to “not grant a licence if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law”. Liam Fox, the Secretary of State for International Trade, said the Government will grant any new licenses while it considers the implications of the judgment for decision making. The Government also intends to seek permission to appeal.

## 2. Press articles

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

### [UK to pursue new partnership model for Tempest collaboration](#)

Flight Global  
Craig Hoyle  
12 June 2019

### [Sweden confirms UK Tempest talks, ambivalent on Franco-German FCAS](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly  
Gareth Jennings  
21 May 2019

### [Think tank to Italy: Join UK Tempest program, then try to merge it with Franco-German effort](#)

Defense News  
Tom Kington  
22 March 2018

### [UK holds Team Tempest industry day](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly  
Gareth Jennings  
19 March 2019

### [Will India and the UK Co-Develop a Sixth-Generation Fighter Aircraft?](#)

The Diplomat  
Franz-Stefan Gady  
13 February 2019

### [RAF looks to Typhoon-Lightning-Tempest Force in 2030s](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly  
Tim Ripley  
25 October 2018

### [Will Japan and the UK Collaborate on Sixth-Generation Tempest Future Fighter Aircraft?](#)

The Diplomat  
Franz-Stefan Gady  
2 August 2018

**[With the Tempest, Britain bids to lead the world in fighter jets](#)**

The Economist  
19 July 2018

**[Battling for Britain: the UK's Combat Air Strategy](#)**

IISS  
Douglas Barrie  
17 July 2018

**[Tempest, Britain's laser-firing unmanned fighter jet of the future, unveiled by Government](#)**

Daily Telegraph  
Alan Tovey  
16 July 2018

**[The Future of Combat Air: Our role developing technologies for the future](#)**

BAE Systems  
16 July 2018

**[UK announces new 'Combat Air Strategy'](#)**

UK Defence Journal  
George Allison  
22 February 2018

**[Combat air strategy to review future UK defence capability](#)**

The Guardian  
Ewen MacAskill  
21 February 2018

## 3. Press releases

### Launch of the Combat Air Strategy at the Farnborough Air Show

Ministry of Defence

8 August 2018

*Speech by the Secretary of State for Defence, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP at the Farnborough Air Show:*

#### **Introduction: history**

May I start by saying what a huge pleasure it is to be here. This is a year of many milestones for aviation 110 years since the first powered flight here in Farnborough, 100 years since the first mission of the newly formed Royal Air Force, 75 years since the legendary Dambusters dropped their bouncing bombs on Nazi oppressors and 70 years since the fanfare of the very first Farnborough Air Show. Today we celebrate those past achievements.

#### **Present**

But we also have to marvel at the high tech achievements of the present. The UK remains a world leader in combat air, combining skills and technology from right across Europe. It directly supports over 18,000 highly skilled jobs, with a further 100,000 in the supply chain.

It has a turnover in excess of £6 billion a year. And it accounted for over 85% of UK defence exports in the last year alone, and over 80% in the past 10 years.

Alongside our partners we're also delivering Typhoon, with more than 20,000 flying hours on operations. As well as the F35 Lightning II as the United States' only Tier 1 partner, delivering 15% by value of every F-35 built.

#### **The Future: Tempest**

But let's be clear, we're entering a dangerous new era of warfare. So our main focus has to be the future, and how we deal with the developing dangers. Today we offer you a glimpse of tomorrow, starting with the unveiling of the concept model beside me.

Tempest is a potential future fighter with advanced flexible power and propulsion systems, a virtual cockpit, swarming weapons and laser directed energy weapons. Operated either manned or unmanned, it will be rapidly upgradeable and cyber resilient. A concept, yes, but built on three credible principles, the pillars of our future approach.

#### **Vision**

First, we have a vision for developing next generation systems and weapons. That's why today we're publishing our first ever Combat Air Strategy, alongside a plan to make lofty aspirations a reality.

This is a strategy to keep control of the air both at home and abroad, to remain a global leader in the sector and support the UK's wider prosperity agenda, and to protect and build on key skills across the UK's industrial base.

### **Commitment**

Next, we have an iron clad commitment to deliver. In the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review we promised to invest in new complex weapons. And we've done what we said we'd do, working with our industry partners, investing £2 billion until 2025 to make our Future Combat Air System Technology actively take off. To make it real. To make it happen.

Make no mistake, we'll be showing the same energy, speed and commitment to bring our Combat Air Strategy to life. A new team is already on the runway, and their timetable clear. I want to see a business case for the acquisition programme by the end of the year. Early decisions around acquiring next generation capability will be made by the end of 2020, final investment decisions by 2025 and by 2035 I want to see Tempests flying alongside our world beating Typhoons and F-35s.

### **Collaboration**

Finally, our approach hinges on international collaboration. Tempest is envisaged as an innovative partnership between the Ministry of Defence and the industry partners of BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce, Leonardo and MBDA.

But we want new partners as well. Together we want to design and build ultra advanced equipment, far faster and keeping ahead of the breath-taking pace of technological change.

And we want to put our world class skills at the disposal of our friends, while embracing the high end skills that they also offer and can bring to the table, building on the best of what every nation can bring.

My questions to potential partners in the room today are simple: How can you work with us? How can we work with you? Let us discuss our requirements, what we want to see from the future and we can get started.

### **Conclusion**

So Farnborough is once more writing a new chapter in the history of our aviation nation. As we enter the next century of airpower, we're not just unveiling a concept. We're setting out a plan. Rolling up our sleeves to make sure our Royal Air Force, our Combat Air sector and our global Britain fly higher, faster and further than ever before.

**Britain to take leading role in next-generation air power, as Defence Secretary launches Combat Air Strategy**

**Ministry of Defence**

**16 July 2018**

Setting out Britain's determination to remain a world-leader in the combat air sector, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has today unveiled a concept model of a brand-new, next-generation fighter jet as he launched a comprehensive strategy with a bold statement of intent for future British air power.

Announcing the publication of the new [Combat Air Strategy](#) at the Farnborough International Airshow, the Defence Secretary said he had taken action to strengthen the UK's role as a global leader in the sector and to protect key skills across the UK industrial base.

He outlined the Strategy in front of the combat aircraft concept model which has been developed by UK industry in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence – being publicly unveiled for the first time, it acts as a powerful demonstration of the UK's world leading technical capability and industrial expertise.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We have been a world leader in the combat air sector for a century, with an enviable array of skills and technology, and this Strategy makes clear that we are determined to make sure it stays that way. It shows our allies that we are open to working together to protect the skies in an increasingly threatening future - and this concept model is just a glimpse into what the future could look like.

British defence industry is a huge contributor to UK prosperity, creating thousands of jobs in a thriving advanced manufacturing sector, and generating a UK sovereign capability that is the best in the world.

Today's news leaves industry, our military, the country, and our allies in no doubt that the UK will be flying high in the combat air sector as we move into the next generation.

For the last 100 years the UK combat air industrial sector has ensured the UK has been at the forefront of technological and engineering developments, delivering world leading capability to the RAF and our allies. This Strategy will ensure the UK continues to maintain this leading position.

The Strategy outlines the way in which the UK will acquire future Combat Air capabilities to maximise the overall value the UK derives from the sector. The framework will balance military capability, international influence, and economic and prosperity benefit along with the overall cost.

It reinforces the commitment in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review to deliver the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative (FCAS TI). The Government, in partnership with industry, is taking steps to grow existing world-leading design engineering capacity and skills, ensuring that the UK continues to be at the cutting edge of combat air technology.

The concept aircraft has been put together by British firms including BAE Systems, Leonardo, MBDA and Rolls-Royce, which have joined together with the RAF Rapid Capabilities Office to form 'Team Tempest' to pursue the opportunity.

Team Tempest brings together the UK's world leading industry and sovereign capabilities across future combat air's four key technology areas: advanced combat air systems and integration (BAE Systems); advanced power and propulsion systems (Rolls-Royce); advanced sensors, electronics and avionics (Leonardo) and advanced weapon systems (MBDA).

The MOD will now set up a dedicated team to deliver the combat air acquisition programme. They will deliver a business case by the end of the year, and have initial conclusions on international partners by next summer – with engagement with potential partners beginning immediately.

Early decisions around how to acquire the capability will be confirmed by the end of 2020, before final investment decisions are made by 2025. The aim is then for a next generation platform to have operational capability by 2035.

The UK is already a world-leader in the combat air sector, with a mix of skills and technologies unique in Europe, supporting over 18,000 highly skilled jobs. The sector delivers a turnover in excess of £6bn a year and has made up over 80% of defence exports from the UK over the last ten years.

Investment in combat air technology, combined with the strengths of UK industry, has resulted in the UK being the only Tier 1 partner with the US on the F-35 Lightning II programme, with British industry delivering 15% by value of every F-35 built. The UK has been able to help define the operational capabilities of the aircraft, while reinforcing UK industrial capability, critical skills and supporting wider economic prosperity.

The UK also continues to lead the way in combat air power as one of the four partner nations in the Eurofighter Typhoon programme. With more than 20,000 flying hours on deployed operations to date, the Typhoon delivers world leading capability, unparalleled reliability and proven interoperability with our allies. The MOD will continue to invest in the Typhoon for decades to come, with the best technologies being carried forward on to next-generation systems.

The F-35 Lightning II and the Typhoon are two complementary multi-role combat aircraft that will make up the RAF's combat air fleet,

placing the UK at the forefront of combat air technology - with the Typhoon expected to remain in UK service until at least 2040.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, said:

The Combat Air Strategy will bring together the best of our people, industry and international partners to support the RAF lift-off into the next century of air power. Team Tempest demonstrates our commitment in ensuring that we continue to build our capabilities, draw upon our experience and history to bring forward a compelling vision for the next generation fighter jet. In last 100 years, the RAF has led the way and today's announcement is a clear demonstration of what lies ahead.

Charles Woodburn, Chief Executive of BAE Systems, said:

The UK's combat air capability, built by generations of committed and highly skilled people through a century long partnership between the RAF and industry, is admired the world over. The UK Government's Combat Air Strategy is a powerful statement of intent to invest in next generation combat air systems. We're proud to play a key role in this important programme, with our world leading technology, capability and skills, which will contribute to the UK's defence and prosperity for decades to come.

Warren East, Chief Executive Officer of Rolls-Royce, said:

As the UK's long-term power and propulsion partner, we warmly welcome the Government's announcement of a Combat Air Strategy. The UK's capability in combat air power and propulsion is at a critical point and this long-term commitment from Government will allow us to protect the expertise and key skills that are vital to retaining sovereign capability. It ensures that we are able to develop and deliver the advanced technologies that will be required in future combat air systems to help ensure our national security.

Norman Bone, Chairman and Managing Director of Leonardo in the UK, said:

As Britain's national champion for advanced defence electronics, we are proud to be a part of Team Tempest. Work we have conducted under research and development programmes such as FOAS and FCAS has significantly advanced our thinking with regards to the complex electronics required for future air combat scenarios and we stand ready to support the future needs of the Royal Air Force. We are excited about the work that's already been done, and the work still to do, on the FCAS TI programme and are all set for these

activities to feed into the Typhoon successor programme.

Chris Allam, Managing Director of MBDA UK, said:

MBDA is proud to be providing its complex weapons expertise to the Team Tempest partnership. Delivering effects is central to next generation combat air systems, and we will continue to invest in developing our world leading complex weapons and novel technologies to ensure the UK retains sovereign operational advantage and freedom of action in Combat Air. The strong partnership (through the Portfolio Management Agreement) between MBDA and the MoD has already changed the paradigm for complex weapons developments in the UK, delivered world leading capabilities to the UK Armed Forces and provided savings in terms of both time and money. The Team Tempest partnership has the potential to do the same for Combat Air.

**[Britain set to launch Combat Air Strategy, Defence Secretary announces](#)**

**Ministry of Defence  
21 February 2018**

A Combat Air Strategy will be launched to ensure Britain maintains a world-leading combat air capability, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced in front of the defence select committee today.

The MOD will work across Government and closely with industry and international partners to explore the UK's future Combat Air capabilities, building on the Industrial Strategy and refreshed Defence Industrial Policy launched last year.

The strategy will examine the operational capability needed in the future and the skills and resource required to deliver it. The work will take new and emerging technology into account, as well as export potential, whilst testing British industry's ability to deliver our future requirements. It is expected to be launched in the summer.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Since the birth of airpower, British industry has been crucial to maintaining our military's world-leading position. As we celebrate 100 years of the RAF protecting our skies, it is fitting that we create bold and ambitious plans to help our brave Armed Forces keep us safe in the face of intensifying threats. The Combat Air Strategy will bring together the best of British engineering, skill and design, and deliver a compelling vision for the future of air power.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, said:

It is especially fitting that we launch the Combat Air Strategy as our Royal Air Force marks its 100th anniversary. Combat Air capabilities have been at the heart of the RAF's capabilities throughout its history, and are constantly employed on operations across the world today.

This strategy will ensure that the RAF can continue to remain at the forefront of the high-end airpower technology and innovation we need to deal with future threats, working in close collaboration with UK industry and our international partners.

The UK is already a world-leader in the air sector which accounts for 85% of the Britain's defence export orders. The industry is made up of close to 2,500 companies, generating more than £33.5bn in turnover and employing more than 128,000 people - some 26,000 of them in highly skilled research, design and engineering jobs.

Investment in combat air technology combined with the strengths of UK industry has resulted in the UK being the US' only Tier 1 partner on the F-35 Lightning II programme, with British industry building around 15% of every F-35 which is built. The UK has been able to exploit the operational capabilities of the aircraft, while reinforcing UK industrial capability, skills and wider economic prosperity.

The UK also continues to lead the way in combat air power as one of the four partner nations in the Eurofighter Typhoon programme. With more than 20,000 flying hours on global operations to date, the Typhoon has offered unparalleled reliability and proven interoperability with our allies.

The F-35 Lightning II and the Typhoon are two complimentary multi-role combat aircraft that will make up the RAF's combat air fleet, placing the UK at the forefront of fighter jet technology - with the Typhoon expected to remain in UK service until at least 2040.

Just last week the UK led the bid to replace Belgium's fighter jets with 34 Typhoons with the offer to include a comprehensive defence and industrial partnership between the Governments of Belgium and the UK. The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson was also in Qatar at the end of last year to oversee Qatar's multi-billion pound purchase of 24 Typhoon aircraft, supporting thousands of jobs across the UK.

The announcement of the strategy comes after an initial review of the defence aerospace sector by the MOD, which involved engaging across Government and with industry. The development of a Combat Air Strategy is consistent with the themes of the Modernising Defence Programme. It will set out in practical terms how the MOD can deliver its critical military capability requirements whilst considering wider economic and international factors, and our national security objectives.

## 4. PQs

### [Military Aircraft: Procurement](#)

04 Apr 2019 | 237677

**Asked by: Mark Menzies**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the UK's sovereign ability to manufacture complete military jets in the event that the manufacture of Hawk aircraft in the UK ceases.

**Answering member: Stuart Andrew | Department: Ministry of Defence**

The 2018 UK Combat Air Strategy along with the £1.9 billion Ministry of Defence investment in the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative will help support the skills, capability and capacity that provides combat air freedom of action and operational advantage as well as sustaining choice as to how a next generation combat air system is delivered.

### [Defence](#)

04 Apr 2019 | 237632

**Asked by: Kevan Jones**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure his Department makes an assessment of export potential when designing and developing UK military capabilities.

**Answering member: Stuart Andrew | Department: Ministry of Defence**

The Ministry of Defence considers exportability as part of its investment decisions and capability development process. We have developed an Exportability Policy internally and are working closely with industry to implement our approach. Recent examples of this approach include the Type 31e and the Combat Air Strategy. On 14 March 2019 we announced to Parliament (HCWS1411) a series of measures on Defence Prosperity including on growing exports and inward investment.

### [Military Aircraft: Training](#)

25 Mar 2019 | 234795

**Asked by: Gavin Robinson**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason trainer aircraft were included in the Combat Air Strategy.

**Answered by: Stuart Andrew | Department: Ministry of Defence**

Combat Air is defined in the Strategy as "an aircraft, manned or unmanned, whose prime function is to conduct air-to-air and/or air-to-surface combat operations in a hostile and/or contested environment, whilst having the ability to concurrently conduct surveillance, reconnaissance, electronic warfare and command and control tasks." Training aircraft therefore do not meet this definition.

### [Military Aircraft: Procurement](#)

10 Jan 2019 | 205258

**Asked by: Mark Menzies**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on the future fighter programme.

**Answering member: Stuart Andrew | Department: Ministry of Defence**

Since the announcement of the Combat Air Strategy at the Farnborough Airshow in July, the Ministry of Defence has established a team, based in Head Office to lead the acquisition of next generation Combat Air capability. This team has achieved the first major milestone laid out in Strategy - delivery of the Strategic Outline (Business) Case by the end of 2018. In parallel, the team has established new fora to explore and understand opportunities for collaboration on next generation Combat Air capability with international partners.

**Military Aircraft**

**25 Jul 2018 | 166113**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his oral contribution of 17 July 2018, Official Report, column 241, how many academics were consulted as part of the development of the Combat Air Strategy; and how many of those academics were women.

**Answering member: Stuart Andrew | Department: Ministry of Defence**

A broad range of academic institutions were consulted during the development of the Combat Air Strategy, including Cranfield University, the Strategy and Security Unit at the University of Exeter, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), RAND Europe and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). Ministry of Defence officials had face to face consultations with 11 academics, three of whom were women.

**Military Aircraft**

**23 Jul 2018 | 164371**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 15, paragraph 13 of the Combat Air Strategy, how much investment his Department plans to provide to key UK design engineering skills and a means to generate UK Intellectual Property.

**Answered by: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence**

The Combat Air Strategy makes clear that Government is investing nearly £2 billion over 10 years in the Future Combat Air Systems Technology Initiative. This will mature the technologies of the future, develop UK Intellectual Property and will include those skills necessary to sustain UK operational advantage and freedom of action.

**Military Aircraft**

**23 Jul 2018 | 164370**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 19, paragraph 26 of the Combat Air Strategy, whether there are any SMEs in Team Tempest.

**Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence**

The industrial prime contractors who form Team Tempest, alongside Government, are working closely with the UK's small and medium enterprises (and associated subject matter experts), academia and the supply chain to maximise the values laid out in the Combat Air Strategy. The Strategy makes clear that industry must leverage the best processes and technologies wherever

they are found in the global supply chain and this includes small and medium enterprises.

**[Military Aircraft](#)**

**20 Jul 2018 | 164369**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 19, paragraph 27 of the Combat Air Strategy, whether the name Tempest will be given to the next UK-developed combat aircraft.

**Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence**

Tempest is the name given to the capability concept unveiled on 16 July 2018 at the Farnborough International Air Show. The Combat Air Strategy makes clear that the UK intends to take a measured and collaborative approach to delivery of our future capability. The name of the next UK developed combat aircraft will be decided as part of the acquisition and partnering timeline set out in the Strategy.

**[Military Aircraft](#)**

**20 Jul 2018 | 164368**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 19, paragraph 27 of the Combat Air Strategy what the criteria will be for assessing the performance of Team Tempest.

**Answered by: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence**

Chapters 2 and 5 of the Combat Air Strategy outline the expected behaviours and performance of Team Tempest. These, along with the technical outcomes delivered, will be used to inform the acquisition programme.

**[Military Aircraft](#)**

**20 Jul 2018 | 164365**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 31, paragraph 51 of the Combat Air Strategy, published in July 2018, when his Department plans to launch a Combat Air Skills Index.

**Answered by: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence**

We are consulting with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as well as industry partners and subject matter experts on the development of a Combat Air Skills Index which will form an important element of the acquisition programme. As stated in the strategy, I will provide an annual update to Parliament on progress in implementation.

**[Military Aircraft: Procurement](#)**

**19 Jul 2018 | 163497**

**Asked by: Tom Brake**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to develop a (a) UK-only unmanned combat aerial vehicle programme and (a) sixth generation successor to the Eurofighter.

**Answered by: Stuart Andrew | Department: Ministry of Defence**

The UK's Combat Air Strategy, published on 16 July 2018, outlines the Ministry of Defence's plans for the delivery of Combat Air capability. It has initiated the acquisition programme which will develop the proposals for the delivery of the next generation capability to replace Typhoon, including the nature of that capability.

**Military Aircraft: Procurement**

**17 Jul 2018 | 163531**

**Asked by: Nia Griffith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Defence Procurement of 9 July 2018, on Leaving the EU: Defence and Military Aerospace Industry, Official Report, column 694, which European countries are working with the UK on the Future Combat Air Strategy.

**Answered by: Mark Lancaster | Department: Ministry of Defence**

In developing the Combat Air Strategy, Ministry of Defence officials have held discussions with a range of European nations, as well as a number of allies and partners from across the globe.

## 5. Other Parliamentary material

### 5.1 Debates

#### [Military Aircraft Manufacturing](#)

8 May 2019 | House of Commons | 659 cc315-322WH

Motion that this House has considered the future of military aircraft manufacturing in the UK.

### 5.2 Statements

#### [UK Combat Air Strategy](#)

17 July 2018 | 645 cc240-8

**Gavin Williamson (The Secretary of State for Defence):** On 21 February, I informed the House that the Ministry of Defence would produce a strategy for the combat air sector. Development of the strategy has drawn heavily on expertise from across defence, wider government, academia, think-tanks, industry, and international partners. Defence of the United Kingdom, protection of our people and our contribution to securing the rules-based international order requires us to deter adversaries by having the capability and the will to use decisive force to deliver our defence, foreign policy and economic objectives.

The threats we face are evolving and increasing ever more rapidly. World-class combat air capability allows us to maintain control of the air both at home and around the world. The United Kingdom's combat air sector provides the capability to underpin our ability to keep Britain safe and act around the globe. It also makes a significant contribution to the United Kingdom's economy and to our international influence. The UK is a global leader in combat air, with cutting-edge military capability underpinned by world-class industrial and technical know-how. That is why we are creating Tempest.

The UK combat air sector has an annual turnover of over £6 billion and directly supports over 18,000 highly skilled jobs across the UK. It supports over 100,000 jobs in the supply chain and more than 2,000 companies across the UK. The UK is the world's second-largest exporter of defence equipment, with defence aerospace representing over 80% of the value of these exports. This is a position that I and, I am sure, the whole House wish to protect going forward.

We are at the heart of a number of key international programmes, including F-35—the largest defence programme in the world. Our position was secured through world-leading intellectual property, understanding, innovation and industrial capability. As we leave the European Union, we will continue to seek partnerships across Europe and beyond to deliver UK, European and global security. To do this, we must retain access to our proud industrial base. The UK's combat air sector is therefore critical to the UK's prosperity and to our ability to deliver the best capability to the frontline to deter and act against the threats that we face.

The future of the UK's combat air sector, however, is not assured. There has been a gap between major combat air development programmes, and a clear indication of future UK military requirements is required to stimulate and deliver the research and development investment that is needed. The strategy defines a clear way ahead to preserve our national advantage and maintain choice in how it is delivered.

We will work with wider government, industry and international partners to deliver the strategy by taking the following steps. We will invest in upgrading Typhoon to maintain its world-class capabilities for the coming decades. The MOD will provide investment in key UK design and engineering skills as a means to generate UK intellectual property by the implementation of the future combat air system technology initiative. The initiative was established by the 2015 strategic defence and security review and builds on recent UK technology investment. We will work together to achieve a more open and sustainable industrial base that invests in its own future, partners internationally and breaks the cycle of increasing cost and length of time to introduce new fighter aircraft.

The UK will work quickly and openly with allies to build on or establish new partnerships to define future requirements and how they can be delivered in a mutually beneficial manner. By preserving our ability to maintain operational advantage and freedom of action, the strategy will ensure we have greater choice in how we deliver future capabilities and are able to maximise the economic and strategic benefits of future combat air acquisition programmes.

In the 100th year of the Royal Air Force, this strategy demonstrates that we can achieve anything. Britain is a world leader not only with our armed forces but in the fighting machines we can produce. The strategy demonstrates that Britain will retain its world leadership in this sector, by having the greatest fighter aircraft of any nation in the world. I commend this statement to the House.

### **Combat Air Strategy**

**22 Feb 2018 | HCWS479**

**Gavin Williamson (The Secretary of State for Defence):** The British Aerospace industry has underpinned the Operational Advantage and Freedom of Action of the British military since the birth of airpower. It has long been an engine of national and local prosperity: made up of close to 2,500 companies, it generates more than £33.5 billion in turnover, and employs more than 128,000 people, some 26,000 of them in highly skilled research, design and engineering jobs. The Defence elements of that industry are particularly valuable: of the £73 billion brought into this country through Defence-related exports over ten years, around 85% was generated by aerospace, much of it specifically by the combat air sector[1].

The Government is committed to supporting growth and prosperity across British Industry, and Defence has a critical role to play in that commitment. My colleague the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy recently published an Industrial Strategy which reinforces our comprehensive support to the UK economy and our vision for a modern, internationally competitive UK industrial base. Following on from that my own Department published the Defence Industrial Policy refresh in December 2017 which made it clear that in a very few cases, a deeper analysis may be needed to establish whether our national security objectives would be served by specific sector approaches which help deliver long term value for money, Operational Advantage or Freedom of Action. Combat Air is one of these sectors.

Delivery of battle-winning capability to the UK's Armed Forces is dependent on a number of vital national technologies and skills. This goes to the heart of our Operational Advantage and Freedom of Action and the Strategy will seek to ensure the UK maintains the ability to operate both independently and as part of international coalitions.

Recognising the importance of the Combat Air sector to UK military capability, Freedom of Action, prosperity and our industrial base, the MOD has decided to develop a Combat Air Strategy as part of the Modernising Defence Programme.

Working closely with other Government Departments, industry and international partners, this work will define the UK's future Combat Air aspirations, building on extant Government and Defence policies to identify the industrial capacity and capabilities necessary to deliver that ambition. In doing so, we will consider operational capability, technological advantage, economic benefits, industrial capability, capacity and skills, as well as international partnering, wider prosperity and export potential. The aim is to set the framework and timeline to assess options for the UK's future Combat Air requirements and associated decision making. This should create a strong foundation for industry self-funded Research and Development and investment in skills, capacity and capability, whilst also testing UK industry's ability to deliver our future requirements, remain sustainable and internationally competitive.

It will set out in practical terms how the MOD can deliver this critical military capability in an affordable way by establishing a more strategic relationship with UK industry, working with international partners and securing a competitive and sustainable industrial base to maximise prosperity.

[1] UK Defence and Security export statistics for 2016 released July 2017.

## 6. Further reading

### Ministry of Defence policy paper

#### [Combat air strategy: An ambitious vision for the future](#)

16 July 2018

The combat air strategy sets out an ambitious vision for the future. Building on the government's industrial strategy it outlines how the UK will retain its ability to choose how we meet our future requirements and initiates the programme to deliver the successor capability to Typhoon.

### Commons Library Briefings

#### [The Combat Air Strategy: From Typhoon to 'Tempest'?](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8391

31 August 2018

#### [Prospects for combat air: What follows Typhoon and Lightning?](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8304

15 May 2018

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