

News story: Defence Secretary in Doha as multi-billion pound jet contract with Qatar is signed

The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and his Qatari counterpart, Khalid bin Mohammed al Attiyah, oversaw the signing of the deal for 24 Typhoons, building on the Statement of Intent signed in September.

In addition, the agreement signed today by the Qatar and British Governments also includes a clear intention to proceed with the purchase of Hawk aircraft.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It is a great pleasure to sign our biggest export deal for the Typhoon in a decade. These formidable jets will boost the Qatari military's mission to tackle the challenges we both share in the Middle East, supporting stability in the region and delivering security at home.

As we proudly fly the flag for our world-leading aerospace sector all over the globe this news is a massive vote of confidence, supporting thousands of British jobs and injecting billions into our economy.

The aircraft will be assembled in the UK by BAE Systems, supporting thousands of jobs, especially at the company's Warton site in Lancashire where it will secure work on the production line into the next decade. The biggest export deal for the Typhoon project in a decade, the purchase is valued at around £6 billion.

The deal also includes an agreement with MBDA for Brimstone and Meteor missiles and the highly-accurate Raytheon's Paveway IV UK-manufactured weapon for the jets. The Defence Secretary also agreed a package of training and co-operation between the Air Forces which will see them working together more regularly, including Qatari pilots and ground-crew training in the UK.

The UK and Qatar share a close and longstanding defence relationship, with a joint-exercise between the Royal Air Force and the Emir of Qatar's Air Force just last week seeing Typhoon jets fly over the Arabian Peninsula. The two countries share mutual interests of countering violent extremism, and ensuring stability in the region, and this purchase will deepen those ties by helping to prevent terrorism from spreading and protecting our prosperity and security at home.

Qatar is the ninth country to purchase the Typhoon, with this year seeing the first delivered to Oman. The Ministry of Defence is also leading the offer to

replace Belgium's F-16s with the jets and continues to discuss the prospect of a second batch of sales to Saudi Arabia, as it continues to bang the drum for Britain's world-leading aerospace industry around the world.