



# HOUSE OF LORDS

International Agreements Committee

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Rt Hon Grant Shapps  
Secretary of State for Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

29 February 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you in relation to the Global Combat Air Programme fighter jet agreement laid before Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRA) on 26 February. There are a number of questions we have which are set out in Annex A, to which we would like answers in writing by 12 March. We would also like to invite a minister or senior official to provide oral evidence to the Committee on 12 March at 5.00pm. We would be grateful if that could be arranged. This will enable the Committee to scrutinise the treaty before the CRA period expires.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course. The Committee staff are happy to speak to your office to discuss the issue further if needed. Our Committee Clerk Rhiannon Williams may be contacted on 02072 194585 or [williamsrb@parliament.uk](mailto:williamsrb@parliament.uk)

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon. the Lord Goldsmith KC**

Chair of the House of Lords International Agreements Committee

## ANNEX A

1. The GCAP Convention establishes a new international organisation “the GCAP International Government Organisation” to deliver the GCAP programme. Are there any precedents for establishing an international organisation to deliver a commercial project of this nature? Why did you choose to establish an arms-length agency as opposed to working through inter-governmental cooperation?

2. What engagement did you have with industry about the approach of establishing an international organisation? Were any concerns expressed?

3. The Convention leaves many important implementing measures to be decided by further arrangements between the parties (see list below). What legal form will these further arrangements take and what provisions will be made for Parliamentary scrutiny of them?

- Decision-making procedures within the Steering Committee (A7.2)
- Tasks and Structure of the Agency (A12.2 and A14.4)
- Procurement rules (A13.1)
- Requirement for member state approval of any contract (A13.3)
- Appointment of senior personnel to the Agency (A15.1)
- Handling of parties’ financial contributions (A19.1)
- Contributions of non-parties (A19.2)
- Procedures for appointing auditors (A21)
- Development of a mechanism to facilitate exports of GCAP technology (A51)
- Arrangements for security governance (A52.1)
- Arrangements for protection of classified information (A53)

4. The Steering Committee of the GIGO is responsible for adopting the financial rules and the annual budget which will determine the parties’ further financial contributions. Since the GIGO is an independent body, how will the accountability to Parliament for the delivery of the programme including its financial aspects be assured?

5. The Steering Committee of the GIGO will have an equal number of representatives of each of the three parties, but it is not clear whether decisions will require agreement between all parties or whether majority voting will apply (since the decision-making procedures have not been decided). How do you envisage decision-making will work?

6. The GCAP Convention provides for the accession of additional members and cooperation with non-members. Are any other specific countries likely to join or participate as non-members?

7. Are there any particular advantages to the UK in hosting the Agency?