

BARONESS GOLDIE DL  
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

4/8/1/1/ap

29 September 2023

Dear Karan,

During the Lord Soames debate on the role of the Armed Forces and the UK's Defence Policy on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023, you asked if the UK should join the Quad grouping of the United States, Australia, India, and Japan in the Indo-Pacific. You also asked about the number of F-35 fighter jets in the RAF.

The Prime Minister made clear through this year's Integrated Review Refresh that a continued commitment to the Indo-Pacific is a key priority for this government. As the UK continues to deliver our tilt to the Indo-Pacific, we are building and strengthening partnerships bilaterally, multilaterally and in mini-lateral groupings across the region. The Quad grouping is increasingly important to four of the UK's closest partners in the region (Australia, India, Japan and the US).

The UK welcomes the outcomes of the fifth Quad Leaders' Summit held in Hiroshima in May 2023, which echo many of our priorities, including climate change, critical and emerging technology, space, infrastructure and cyber. We are looking at options for closer practical cooperation with Quad members in these areas, supplementing our important bilateral engagement with each of these key partners. However, the UK Government has no immediate intention of seeking membership of the grouping.

In response to your further question, we have received 33 F-35s so far of the 48 on order for Tranche 1. We will take delivery of all 48 by 2025. Our Tranche 2 order will take us to 74 aircraft, which is yet to go to contract. As we have said before, a decision about further purchases will be made in the middle of the decade.

I hope this explains the position.

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

*Yours sincerely,  
Annabel Su. Goldie*

**BARONESS GOLDIE DL**

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