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## **BAKU, KABUL TO STRENGTHEN DEFENSE COOPERATION**

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By Nigar Abbasova

Azerbaijan and Pakistan, two brother nations and strategic partners are eager to bolster relations in the defense industry.

Pakistani Defense Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain told Report that his country is ready to supply the Joint Fighter 17 (JF-17) Thunder and Super Mushak trainer aircrafts to Azerbaijan.

The JF-17 Thunder is a multi-role fighter aircraft, which was jointly developed by China and Pakistan. This aircraft is intended for air defense and ground attack missions.

Being produced at the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC), the Super Mushak has a service ceiling of 22,000 feet, and a maximum speed of 268 kilometers per hour, while the range is estimated at 814 kilometres.

Hussain went on to say that the countries already enjoy good relations, particularly in the defense sector, adding that Kabul is interested in implementation of joint projects.

We can cooperate in a wide spectrum of spheres, ranging from submunition to the manufacture of aircrafts, he said, adding that Pakistan has a good experience in the sphere.

The call for stronger military cooperation between the two countries saw a surge in 2016. In early 2016, Azerbaijan invited Pakistan to exhibit its JF-17 at its International Defense Industry Exhibition (ADEX) in Baku.

In late 2016, Azerbaijan and Pakistan signed a plan of bilateral military cooperation and agreed to continue cooperation in carrying out joint military exercises. The Azerbaijani side voiced interest in purchase of the most modern and high-tech weapons from Pakistan.

Pakistan became the second country after Turkey which recognized the independence of Azerbaijan in 1991. The diplomatic relations between two countries were established on June 9, 1992.