

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am a RAAF Wing Commander serving on the Reserve Staff Group with a Top Secret security clearance. This is my 43<sup>rd</sup> year of service. I have about 2,800 flying hours, over 1,000 of which were flown in fighter aircraft (Mirage). I have flown the Block 2 F/A-18F 'Super Hornet'. My MSc in Systems was awarded by the United States Air Force Institute of Technology and my BSc in Physics by Melbourne University. I have worked in DSTO as an operational analyst, and my work restructuring the RAAF resulted in my appointment to be a Member of the Order of Australia. A Defence Cooperation assignment designing the Indonesian Air Force's (TNI-AU) Engineering and Supply system was highly commended.

For the past five years, I have been representing the 'Red Forces' during capability development war-games based on the Australian Illustrative Planning Scenarios, work which has drawn accolades from all the senior Defence committees. I also participated in the 2003 Defence Capability Review and the recent development of the Defence Planning Guide. This work has been wrongfully terminated by the Chief of the Air Force, after I formally advised the Chief of the Defence Force, the Chief of the Capability Development Executive and the Secretary, Prime Minister and Cabinet (in lieu of the Minister for Defence) that such work indicated that neither the F/A-18F nor the F-35 JSF is likely to meet the Government's imperative to maintain air dominance in our Region.

I have performed a detailed review of 'The F-22A and Evolved F-111 Force Mix Option' discussion paper, Release V. This work parallels much of my work in the Capability Development Executive, and noting its foundation in earlier submissions to Parliament by Air Power Australia, precedes work done by the Department of Defence. Given the same information sources, both studies arrive at the same conclusion: that in the near future Australia will lose air dominance in the Region because of the rapid rise of air power in countries within our arcs of interest.

The Department of Defence's studies are a paradox. On one hand, some segments of the Department conclude that air dominance will be lost to superior Regional combat aircraft, armaments and systems. Other segments claim that inferior aircraft such as the F/A-18F and the unproven F-35 JSF will be able to dominate Regional airspace.

The Air Power Australia air dominance strategy is logically, operationally and financially sound: Australia should purchase the world's acknowledged superior air dominance aircraft, the F-22A Raptor. Using this aircraft to defeat an adversary's air combat aircraft and surface-to-air missiles, confer the required air dominance of the Region.

Once achieved, this dominance of the air allows 'striker' aircraft to operate safely. The paper proposes the F-111 in this role, as it has the combination of range, payload, speed, altitude and endurance that excel at this role. Australia has already upgraded the F-111 to bring it into the 'digital age'. The aircraft's recognised superior performance could be substantially enhanced with relatively low-cost improvements such as a new engine and avionics fit.

The paper notes that if Australia continues to operate the F-111, it could provide invaluable support for cooperation with our allies by bringing the EF-111 Raven back into service. Such an initiative is likely to receive enthusiastic support from the USAF, which has been struggling for several years to meet this requirement.

Self reliance has been a cornerstone of Australia's defence policy to decades. Current maintenance plans for the F/A-18F and the F-35 JSF propose exporting key maintenance activities to the USA – effectively exporting capabilities and work critical to Australia's sovereignty. Should the F-111 continue to be maintained in Australia as at present, these highly skilled maintenance tasks, and the associated work and employment, would be retained by Australia's industry.

The financial cost-estimate is impressive – more air combat capability for far lower cost. Using reasonable cost-estimates, the projected savings compared with the current ADF air combat capability plan is more than \$AUD16 Billion. This factor alone is a reason to accept the discussion paper for detailed, formal examination.

### **Conclusion**

My assessment as a current and qualified capability development officer and analyst indicates that the proposal presented by this paper should be used as 'Benchmark' for the future development of Australia's air combat capabilities.

The proposal meet all of the Government's (past and current) air combat capability imperatives, and does so with low risk and at a much lower cost than the current plans.

I am prepared to provide additional material from my own experience to support and corroborate the arguments of this proposal.

**I commend this paper without reservation.**

Yours faithfully,



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Wing Commander, RSG**

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