



Submission No 4

Review of the Defence Annual Report 2006/2007

Organisation: Air Power Australia

Address: <http://www.ausairpower.net>

Air Power Australia - Australia's Independent Defence Think Tank



The Hon Arch Bevis, MP
Chair of the Defence Sub-Committee
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT)

20th June, 2008.

Dear Mr Chairman,

We respectfully submit Australia is about to lose its capability to achieve, maintain, and sustain air superiority in the region, if current planning by the Department of Defence is agreed to and implemented by the Government.

When compared with the quite detailed plans provided to Defence by Industry and Academia in response to the Department's request for proposals back in 2001, this current planning is far more expensive, carries far higher risks, and will result in far less capabilities, some of which, such as the F/A-18F Super Hornet, are already overmatched, while others such as the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter, will be overmatched after 2015 by capabilities proliferating into our region.

Further, current planning by the Department of Defence will result in irreparable damage to the Australian Defence Aerospace Industry and the placement of the control of sovereign defence assets into the hands of international corporations and thus foreign nationals.

Failure on the part of the Department of Defence to engage competent domain experts to provide independent verification and validation (IV&V) of their proposals and acquisition activities, as recommended in the 2003 Kinnaird Report, the 2002 Senate Inquiry into the DMO and Defence Procurement of 2002, the 2002 ANAO Report on Test and Evaluation of Major Defence Equipment Acquisitions, *et al*, is at the root of this dysfunctional and broken situation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Carlo Kopp" followed by a flourish.

Dr Carlo Kopp and Peter Goon for
The Principals, Contributors and Supporters of
Air Power Australia

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List of Evidence:

The following documents are provided in evidence to support this submission:

1. Letter to Defence Minister, Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, MP.
2. Letters from independent reviewers of the Discussion Paper on Analysis entitled, "*Strategic Needs and Force Structure Analysis: The Thinking Behind the F-22A and Evolved F-111 Force Mix Option*".
3. Discussion Paper on Analysis entitled, "*Strategic Needs and Force Structure Analysis: The Thinking Behind the F-22A and Evolved F-111 Force Mix Option*".
4. Confidential briefing to head of ACCR Mr Neil Orme entitled: "*F-111 Sustainability Issues - Near Term ACCR Briefing Note*" [Not for public release].
5. Confidential briefing to head of ACCR Mr Neil Orme entitled: "*Addendum ACCR Briefing Note Feb 28th, 2008.*" [Not for public release].
6. Confidential briefing to head of ACCR Mr Neil Orme entitled: "*MINISTERIALLY DIRECTED AIR COMBAT CAPABILITY REVIEW : PART A - TERMS OF REFERENCE RESPONSE PRÉCIS*". [Not for public release].
7. Transcript of ABC 7:30 Report interview with Defence Minister, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, MP.

Background:

The background to this evidence is thus:

- 12th February, 2008, we provided the Minister for Defence with a submission comprising items 1 through 3. This predated the announcement of the Air Combat Capability Review.
- 28th February, 2008, I personally briefed Mr Neil Orme, Head of the Air Combat Capability Review (ACCR), on the sustainability of the F-111, and other matters in our submission to the Minister. The ACCR was provided with items 4 through 6.
- Subsequent to my meeting with Mr Orme, we provided a large number of additional evidentiary submissions to the ACCR to ensure that the Review had full access to necessary data and expert advice.
- APA negotiated access to a number of leading US and other international experts on air combat matters, including a senior Test Pilot working for Sukhoi, so that Mr Orme and the ACCR could interview them to gather evidence. The ACCR contacted only one of these parties.

On the 17th March, 2008, the Defence Minister was interviewed on the ABC 7:30 Report about the findings of the first phase of the ACCR (<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2007/s2191899.htm>).

The Minister made a series of statements during this interview which contradicted factual evidence we and others had provided to the ACCR, especially on matters of F-111 sustainability and costs. During the interview, the Minister attributed these claims to advice provided by Defence, and specifically credited some of this advice to the former Chief Defence Scientist (CDS), who was a member of the ACCR Steering Committee. The former CDS had made false and misleading statements, previously, as proven by evidence to the JSCFADT Inquiry into ADF Regional Air Superiority.

It can thus be proven that upon provision of hard factual and verifiable technical evidence to the Department's Air Combat Capability Review, the exact opposite of what the data and the evidence state and demonstrate was briefed by the Department to the Minister prior to his public statement. This is prima facie evidence of misleading advice being provided to the Minister by the Department.