

Letter from Pierre Maillet, 29 March 2022.

to justin.trudeau, Chrystia.Freeland, Melanie.Joly, Nadia.Hadjmohamed, anita.anand,  
Anita.Anand, Michael.power

Dear Minister Anand;

### **F-35 Selection Announcement Disappointment**

As a former air force colonel and former CF18 engineering fleet manager, I am writing to express my deep disappointment for the recent F35 announcement to select the F35 as the next fighter for the Air Force.

Not only was this an election promise broken, but a fundamental departure from Canadian government direction for contributing to international peace and stability. The peace statement by the PM that “we are back” rings very hollow today.

I am sure you understand that this aircraft has only one purpose and that is to kill or destroy infrastructure. It is, or will be, a nuclear weapon capable, air-to-air and air- to-ground attack aircraft optimized to war fighting. This contributes solely to war. It is a horrific weapon, the type of which has been used in the past decades in bombing missions in cities, and the cause of terrible suffering and civilian deaths. Just look at the suffering and death occurring in Ukraine today from bombing.

NATO spends more than 10 times annually in military capabilities than does Russia. How much is enough? What is this outcry for more defence expenditures in the face of this? Where are our military brigades dedicated, trained and resourced to creating safe havens, humanitarian aid delivery and protection, ceasefire monitoring? I was so hopeful for your tenure as defence minister as an independent voice and willing to stand up to the military establishment and their endless push for more money, and the lobbying of special interests. The wish list is bottomless. I do not see this in you today. Just say no. Find another way. Canadian defence requirements for an aircraft capable of policing Canadian airspace and national sovereignty can be easily met by a far less expensive and less complex aircraft.

It is very clear that we cannot afford the F35. This is the most expensive US weapons project in their military history, and will consume our defence budget in its mid life years.

The F35 requires a very complex and unaffordable military battle management infrastructure reaching into space, to realize its capabilities, and we will be wholly dependent on US military infrastructure for this. We will be just another squadron or two of the US Air Force and as such dependent on its foreign policy and military predispositions to conflict responses. The life cycle costs will be astronomical, easily exceeding \$40 billion; and outstanding technical deficiencies will plague the aircraft, and defence budget, for decades.

I have been involved in aircraft procurement during my career and know how selection is dependent on the statement of requirement (SOR). The SOR, which can be skewed in any direction needs civilian oversight; for example, the weight given to stealth, which is a very very perishable quality in todays climate of accelerating technical advancement and can give advantage to the F35. Not to mention the competing and emerging capacities of drones.

I do not see how this aircraft can, in any way, win on cost, and certainly not on independent Canadian performance and operational needs. The F35 has massively excessive capabilities to our needs. It is like buying a high end Ferrari just to go for groceries.

If we believe in contributing to international peace and stability, the money is far better spent elsewhere. I implore you to rethink what you are doing, and please listen to a wider group of experts in the field. There is no future in war.

Good luck Minister. This is your legacy. Please make Canada proud of you. Today we feel diminished.

Yours sincerely;

Paul Maillet

Colonel retired.