

**February 9th, 2016**

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**Supplementary Submission to:** The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee  
Australian Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Transmitted by email to: fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

**Subject:** The Planned Acquisition of the F-35 Lightning II (Joint Strike Fighter).

**Submission by:** Mr Marcus Kollakides

*If the Senate Committee pleases, the requirement to cancel the F35 Joint Strike Fighter is not limited to analysis of that aircraft. The F35 is just one symptom of decline in Defence management and in national security policy. To reinforce why the F35 should be cancelled, an understanding is necessary of how Defence culture could put it forward and secondly how a decade ago, Intelligence and Foreign Affairs could scarcely have been able to foresee how unsuitable the F35 would be in our rapidly changing region.*

**S.1. Canberra Syndrome:**

**The F35 is symptomatic of a syndrome debilitating the ADF. A culture of cronyism which manifests a deliberate shift of focus, away from weapons and capability towards careers and ladder climbing whilst critical management principles are jettisoned.**

**S.2. Our False Sense of Security: A societal problem which pervading most Western countries since the "end" of the Cold War.**

**To Elaborate:-**

**S.1. Canberra Syndrome:**

**1.1 Lockheed Martin:**

Lockheed Martin is nobody's fool. They just take Australia, the US Congress, the United Kingdom and many others, for the fools we have been played for.

Lockheed Martin is unlike its predecessor, Lockheed. That was an old fashioned company which assessed needs, built first class aircraft to satisfy that need, then enjoyed a profit from the sales which followed.

Lockheed Martin trashes that principle. It simply embarks on a profit strategy, locks in its customers, then it produces an aircraft, the F35 which the customers are committed to taking whether it lives to its performance claims or not.

A patently sub-standard aircraft, the F35 would never have gained traction or purchase orders without a concerted marketing and backroom plan.

**S.1.2 When the F35 was first conceived the Western alliance was:-**

- Congratulating itself for the demise of the Soviet Union.
- Relaxing into complacency.
- Preparing to unleash the products of advanced Cold War research upon relatively soft targets in the Middle East. The star performer would be the original, pre Lockheed Martin, stealth aircraft, the F117 Nighthawk.

- Moving into the era of "Globalisation"
- The PC (computer) and the worldwide internet web were getting underway.
- Presiding over and trusting the corporations, banks and other 'fortune 500' companies whose malfeasance would eventually lead to the global financial crisis.
- The age of consumerism, social media, were in the pipeline.
- Old fashioned (read competent) management was out and slick salespeople promoting tech's "too difficult for us to understand" were in. Tech was god.
- Taking our eye off the ball and allowing geo politics to lapse from consciousness.
- Whilst in Russia and China a quiet culture of not throwing the baby out with the bathwater took hold. Evolution of Cold War Weaponry like Flanker fighters and long wave radars went on steadily. Money was tight so their weapons development programmes became leaner and meaner.
- Western governments came under pressure to increase middle class welfare and Defence was reduced to televised demonstrations of Foreign policy gone wrong in wars against people who had no shoes. Which we now see, we lost.
- Since the ABC Four Corners show, there seems to be a perception in Canberra that the F35 Joint Strike Fighter is not much in the public consciousness. For the time being that may be true. When the author raises it with friends, they may not know how many engines an F35 has, but they do remark words to the effect of, *oh that's the rubbish plane the Yanks are trying to sell us isn't it?* Proceeding with the acquisition however would likely herald a new higher level of angst.

### **S.1.3 A Bit of Aircraft History:**

In January 1991 we marveled at the televised combat debut of the Stealth F117, the last creation of the West's only real aeronautical genius, Kelly Johnson, the person with more design and importantly management honours than can be listed. Whose designs included the Lockheed Constellation and probably the pinnacle aircraft of all time, the SR71 Blackbird.

Johnson ran the legendary "Skunkworks" for advanced secret US aircraft. He worked for Lockheed before it became Lockheed Martin. He passed away in 1990 leaving his legacy, the F117. That aircraft was not only the touchstone for all future Stealth designs it was critically the ultimate proof of Johnsons *Rules of Management*. Consider: -

**Rule 6:** *There must be a monthly cost review covering not only what has been spent and committed but also projected costs to the conclusion of the program....*

**Rule 10:** *The specifications applying to the hardware must be agreed to well in advance of contracting.....*

**Rule 12:** *There must be mutual trust between the military project organization and the contractor with very close cooperation and liaison on a day-to-day basis.....*

**It is now self evident by their absence in the F35 programme, that as soon as Lockheed became Lockheed Martin, these rules were scrapped. The result is this F35 fiasco.**

#### **S.1.4 Inter Service Rivalry**

This Senate Inquiry will hear claims our F111 was a great plane once the bugs were ironed out. Which was true. It was a brilliant design into which were installed brilliant gadgetry. Whereas the F35 is DOG of a design which no amount of high tech gadgets can save.

The F111 remains in the minds of many citizens, an aircraft which helped keep the peace because of its deterrent capabilities. The F35 contrast is stark. We will have lost our deterrent capability and replaced it with temptation to attack us.

The F111 was negligently retired and there is a belief the reason was not strategic, or economic, but because the Commander of one branch of the ADF agreed to scrap the plane in return for gaining the support of another ADF Commander in a (subsequently successful) bid to become CDF.

To nail the F35, lets paraphrase that noted gardening philosopher, Mr Don Burke, *"sometimes you plant something and no matter how hard you try to help it, the darn'd thing just won't come good. The only thing you can do then is rip it out and plant something new"*. He could well have been talking about the F35.

The wider Defence support community is a self-fulfilling mediocrity. Most of the ADF is infected and debilitated by the cliquey self-serving element. Like in the Public Service, those true believers interested in the actual task are invited to speak up and if they do they are warmly welcomed for doing so and then later, quietly gotten rid of. Or if Government says "efficiency dividend", then

when redundancies are offered, the good people leave because they can't stand the clique, and they know they can find jobs in the private sector. Which means the mediocrities stay, knowing they would not prosper in the private sector.

To fail to understand this is to remain bewildered as to how such a bad plane and a bad deal as the F35 could come through such a system, without competitive evaluation and incredibly, with positive recommendation.

It is one thing to forgive common folks for being in awe of the cargo cult, high tech mumbo jumbo which Lockheed Martin purveys, but it is quite unforgiveable when the professionals succumb to nonsense. It calls into question their self serving motives.

### **S.1.5 Complacency:**

The complacency deriving from assuming Western dominance of the skies after WWII would be forever, and the arrogance of thinking those "other people" are inferior aircraft designers is a dangerous delusion.

Aviation experts look at China now and see the advent of the fearsome Chengdu J-20 stealth fighter. They see in its Chief Designer, Mr Yang Wei, a brilliance to rival the genius of the late Kelly Johnson.

Why does the F35 program fail fundamental principles? Is the real stealth in the F35 or in the way Lockheed Martin has exploited our complacency society to pass off the fraud that is the F35.

How is it that as time has marches on and one would expect F35 performance standards to be rising in keeping with ongoing research and development, that actual F35 performance standards are going backwards ? If someone buys a four-legged dog today, they don't expect when they collect it tomorrow that its going to be reduced to having only three legs ! The F35 is a three legged dog.

### **S.1.6 What has happened to us ?**

- Canberra has developed a culture of cronyism where national security comes second to job security.
- Tasks and challenges are managed according to inputs and dollars poured in and volumes of paper shuffling. Activity is passed of as productivity. Outputs and benefits are avoided, not measured and obfuscated by technical jargon.
- Comparative analytics are limited to those circular arguments where anyone opposed to the pre-determined outcome is denied necessary information about alternatives.

- The lack of output metrics is the paramount problem. One sided "cost effective analysis" is the *modus operandi* of the wider Defence and Public Service establishments and any move to cost benefit analysis is thwarted.

Competent managers use cost benefit ratios to verify outcomes.

- An Australian Farmer feeds an average of 160+ people.
- What is the ratio for Defence desk jockeys to combatants ?
- What % of F35 supporters would be prepared to fly it into combat ?
- What is the ratio of non-combatants including the brass, to combat ready personnel ?
- What are these ratios in other countries and why do we avoid comparisons ?

ADF capability has become inversely proportional to funding. The more dollars we apply the more they are diverted to back rooms.

- Total Government revenue during WWI was 14% of GDP.
- During WWII it rose to nearly 23%
- According to Treasury we now hover around 25%.
- Any pie fancier knows that as the % slice of GDP rose we should have gained efficiencies by economy of scale.
- Defence patronises Government by saying the world is more complicated.
- Einstein said that any scientist who cannot explain their theory in uncomplicated clear terms does not know their subject well enough. No doubt Defence knows better.
- It would not suit Defence to come before this Inquiry and discuss the F35 in clear terms.
- The F35B order is thankfully already cancelled. Both because the aircraft was substandard and more tellingly because of RAAF RAN rivalry.
- Why do we have that rivalry ? Because we continue the WWI model of three small separate arms of Defence, Army, Navy, Airforce.
- The F35 would never have been mooted if we had our act together. The problem is endemic to Canberra. Tasking another Department to audit Defence would be akin to asking one person taking a sickie on Bondi beach to critically

appraise the person on the sand next to them who is also taking a sickie.

- Efficiency ? Consider the plight of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We all want desperately to help them. Mr Noel Pearson got up recently and noted we spend \$36B pa on Indigenous assistance. A student calculator reveals that figure equates to over \$100,000 every year, for each and every indigenous man, woman and child in the country. But like Defence, the money does not get to where it's needed.
- Indigenous people might be a heck of a lot better off if Government stopped funding the professional "helpers" and simply put the cash directly into the hands of the people we are trying to help. Defence needs the same sort of rethink.
- The Public Service and the "helpers" would not like that because they make careers out of "managing" things and ensconcing themselves on the moral high ground to monopolize this "complex" subject.
- Defence is the same. If the F35 was any good it would speak for itself. But no, we're told "trust us" with this "complex" matter.
  
- So the brass come in year after year before the Committee. They ramble on in obfuscating military speak about mindless faux evaluations. They omit to mention the Air Chief Marshal who flew helicopters not fighters, could not be bothered arriving on time for a once only ever briefing on classified US fighter jet technology and how he missed most of it.
- The brass trot out their reassurances, with more adjectives than facts, with spurious performance claims purposely framed to prevent comparison and we dutifully defer ?
- We treat the poor little darlings with kid gloves. Kid gloves for warriors? Our sacred cows. Untouchable. Wrapped in the flag.
  
- Australia's nationalistic jingoism and Defence incompetence coexist for a reason. It isn't just third rate historians who make money out of revising, glorifying and militarising Australian history. It engenders the warm *she will be right mate* feeling which takes the spotlight off Defence failings.
- Lockheed Martin through its appearances before Congress reveals a similar situation exists in the US and it has brilliantly exploited this time and again with the F35, to secure a two way street. Congress agrees to keep accepting decreases in F35 performance standards and Lockheed Martin gets increases in taxpayer funding. Its a lose lose situation.

## **Do we ever Learn ?**

- WWII US Airforce commanders focused on aircrew stress and post traumatic stress. Bomber crews had a limit of 25 missions to offer some chance of survival.
- 90% of the ADF is not combat ready. Yet the courageous 10% who are sent into combat, are denied the right to perhaps, complete two combat tours, then have the option of no more, lest their luck runs out. Given the low probability of survival for an F35 one wonders how many missions those pilots might be tasked with.
- As if to amplify the point, why does a current member of the RAAF still have to be afraid and remain anonymous when making a submission to this Inquiry opposing the F35 ?

### **S.1.7 The ADF**

- Poor absolute bang for the Defence buck.
- Poor relative bang in GDP terms.
- Retirement home mentalities where ex ADF personnel become "Reservists" or go over to Acquisitions or "consulting" on higher remunerations than when they were in uniform and where they can make a meal out of fostering the F35.
- Politically pliable top brass.
- Three decades of a shrinking sharp end and a growing backside.
- Emphasis on social inclusion and style over substance where activists lobby for civilian standards in the military.

### **1.7 The Public Service and broader Defence community.**

The Public Service (PS) Act 1999 (Comm) unwittingly opened the door to our decline in defence capability. Ever increasing layers of unnecessary middle managers feed up to Executive Heads of Agency, Dep Secs and Secretaries to fulfill their new allegiance to the Minister and provide plausible "solutions" which will fly. Even if the F35 does not.

The PS Act accelerated only two things, growth in the Public Service ranks and their shift to "cost effective" nonsense metrics. Which is how the F35 snuck in, without comparative evaluation.

One example of perverse advice to Government was a few years ago when budget cuts were on. Army found itself having to cancel the order for self propelled artillery to save a few bucks. Instead we



bought much more vulnerable towed artillery which requires so many more personnel to operate it, that we lose out militarily and financially anyway. Brilliant. And these are the people recommending the F35.

If the Committee is finding this hard reading then the author must apologise for being a mere member of the public. Our national security is at stake though and the F35 must be canceled.

### **S.1.8. Pick the Odd one out.**

#### **Chief supporters of the F35**

- Beijing
- Moscow
- Jakarta
- Lockheed Martin
- The ADF

### **S.2. Australia's False Sense of Security:**

#### **S.2.1 The F35 subordinates Australia to the US.**

Geo Politics occurs at the strategic scale of oceans, continents and contested spheres of dominance.

The rise of China and its projection of power into the South China Sea, the proxy intervention for it, by Russia in Syria, much is already in train for interdictions or breaks in the chain of US hegemony.

The F35 through its shortcomings, factors in as an essential element of US Geo Political strategy. Just as China and Russia seek to enlarge their spheres, so too is the US making its counter "pivot" to lock in its key geographically located allies.

The F35 requires protection from US F22 fighters. Its no surprise then we have been persuaded to make ourselves a target and risk being drawn into a North Asian conflict because we have acquiesced to allow US jets access to our Northern air bases.

Australia buying the F35 would suit the US because the F35 has so many serious failings it would militate against any move we might make towards greater independence, such as scrapping ANZUS and adopting a position of armed neutrality. For that to happen we

would need a true air superiority fighter and the F35 is anything but that. Much of the US Defence co-operation with Australian ADF and all the camaraderie and hospitality, has to be seen in terms of these motives.

Since WWII Australia has fought everywhere the US requested. Not that the much-vaunted US military has actually won a war since WWII if we exclude the sideshow in Grenada. Nor did the West win the Cold War. It simply receded and we relaxed while the other side got their act together to the point their missile technology, aircraft and radars, have caught up to and are now overtaking us.

For most of the post WWII period we enjoyed regional air superiority and did not need to test whether the US would come to our aid. Our air superiority used to be our effective deterrent. Even as in the 90's when the US withdrew from guaranteeing us protection under their nuclear umbrella. With the rise of conventional weapons power, amongst our potential adversaries, the nuclear scenario has become increasingly unlikely.

Former US National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski was probably the leading 20th Century exponent of the realist school of international relations. He understood most clearly, the strategic centrality of the Europe-Asia landmass. So it was that Brzezinski was responsible for the interdiction, which checkmated the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by arming the Mujahedeen. Brzezinski's understanding of the Geo Political significance of the major land mass was in stark contrast to the consecutive failures of most others like Dr Henry Kissinger who saw the world not in strategic geographical terms but only in personality politics. For instance former strong man and one time US client, Saddam Hussein.

What is occurring in our region now is a hasty shift back from faulty Kissinger type strategy to a more relevant and direct extension of what Brzezinski forecast. The growing regional dominance ambitions of China versus the declining ability of the US to maintain global hegemony. What Brzezinski understood was the power vacuum created by the 'end' of the Cold War would be filled by China and that would entail transformation of China's economic power into projection of Chinese military power into its own backyard and further afield at key intersections of the world's strategic resource pathways, be they Indian Ocean shipping lanes or elsewhere.

China's mission is two pronged. To interdict or break up any continuous sphere of US influence that have been extant from Japan and the Straits of Taiwan all the way across to the Europe-

Asia landmass to the English Channel. Accomplishing this is well underway. Chinese military bases in the Middle east, Chinese Troops in the Sudan and elsewhere in Africa, rare earth minerals and other resource ventures in Africa and Central Asia. Infrastructure projects like the now operational rail link from China to Spain, all go to support economic, military and diplomatic leverage, interdicting Western dominance of the sphere. Even further afield the finance and construction of a second Panama style canal, in Nicaragua. The aim, to break the continuous chain of US hegemony.

China's stated intention is to dominate the greater South China Sea sphere which it sees as its own backyard. China is not unmindful of the position the US adopted in its own Caribbean backyard during the Cuban missile crisis and it sees itself as having the same rights in the South China Sea, wherein to Chinese eyes, the US is just as un-entitled to be, as was the Soviet Union in Cuba.

To fail to understand why China is constructing runways on atolls and challenging freedom of navigation in the sphere to the North of Indonesia would be negligent. Which explains how Australia has made a strategic mistake allowing US forces into Northern Australia from where they can reach the South China Sea. Had we not done that, we would have been safely out of where the conflict will be.

Unless the US changes tack from the same mistakes of attempted containment which it made against Japan in the 1930's, then the US appears right on track to again cause another shooting war to our North. Is it coincidence the F35 is war gamed by the US, in publicly available material, to be part of an integrated series of electronic air warfare suppression measures against Chinese radars and SAM's, followed by US AWACS overseeing strikes by F35's with their required protective umbrella of F22's ?

The fact that the US can no longer bring its aircraft carriers into range of the Chinese mainland or Taiwan because of the world's first anti ship ballistic missile, the Chinese DF21 seems to have escaped our attention. The DF21 is about area denial to keep the US out. Deliberately not ranged enough to threaten California but deployed to send a message, this will be China's sphere.

If a shooting war does break out in the South China Sea then we must plan to counter the peripheral opportunism it will provoke. In plain language we must be prepared for say resource hungry Indonesia to make a power play for our Northern resources. If it does, its SU35's and PAK FA airforce would shoot an F35 equipped RAAF out of the sky in just a few days. Our Army or RAN ships could not survive for long under an Indonesian controlled sky.

## **S.2.2 ANZUS**

A treaty like ANZUS should have a balance of mutual benefit. It did once. In 2016 however ANZUS can be seen to have become so one sided, notwithstanding Intelligence and other sharing, that it makes us far more of a target without any commensurate level of reciprocal security benefit. It is urgent we first reassess ANZUS, translate the US presence here into non offensive forms only, then secondly, pick up the slack and move to a position of armed neutrality. Which will mean cancelling the F35, which is never going to be up to the job and we must buy a different aircraft which is.

To leave ANZUS as is and to proceed with the F35 would be to invite a repeat of WWII where we relied on Britain to hold Singapore and defend Australia, which they did not. We can not delude ourselves the US would be any different. Nor can we send up F35's to defend Darwin and expect them to survive any more than the Wirraways which we sent to the slaughter by Zero fighters in 1942.

## **S.2.3 Conclusion:**

We don't like war yet thanks to the US we go to war often. We prefer to hope and we don't actually expect war until it breaks out. History shows us that the best way to avoid war is to maintain a credible deterrent. The F35 is not a deterrent, it is an invitation.

The F35 is an aircraft of submission, not air dominance. Canada having dumped the F35, will likely mean increased levels of US persuasion for us to proceed with the order. We must not.

The greatest support for the F35 comes from our potential adversaries. Those adversaries know their foremost military asset is not their incoming new airborne weaponry. Our potential adversaries greatest asset is on the ground in Canberra, where people believe that because they have their careers invested in the F35 so they should continue to support it.

Australia needs to cancel the F35 and acquire one of the several available alternatives so we can rule the Australian sky.

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