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Canadian public policy

# INTERIM SUPER HORNET SURVEY PROJECT

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## Should We Purchase Interim Super Hornets? A Survey of the Experts

Canadian defence experts overwhelmingly reject interim Super Hornet fighter jet proposal

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In November 2016, the Canadian government announced plans to acquire an interim fleet of 18 Super Hornet fighter jets as a stopgap measure to supplement the existing fleet of 77 CF-18s. In addition, it announced an “open and transparent” competition for a permanent fighter aircraft replacement for its CF-18s, which would take up to five years to complete.

The interim Super Hornet plan was initially leaked by “multiple sources” earlier in the year as an apparent trial balloon, in the midst of a public consultation process for the now just released Defence Policy Review statement, titled *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. Still, this announcement took many observers by surprise, even leading to a former chief of the defence staff and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) commanders writing an open letter criticizing the decision as being overtly political, expensive, and strategically unwise (Iverson 2017).

Indeed, some of the actions the government has taken since then, such as an unprecedented life time gag order to prevent 235 military personnel and bureaucrats from ever discussing the fighter aircraft replacement program, have proven especially controversial (Pugliese 2016a). Their action here is not without irony, since when in opposition they were quick to criticize the then-government’s “muzzling” of scientists working on the climate file.

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Today, the government is in a very public spat with Boeing, the Super Hornet manufacturer, owing to its decision to ask the US Commerce Department and International Trade Commission to investigate subsidies for Bombardier's CSeries aircraft. As a result, Ottawa suspended talks with Boeing on the interim Super Hornet purchase. Indeed, the government's defence policy statement now only refers to "the potential acquisition of an interim aircraft," omitting even a reference to the Super Hornet. It is also remarkably ambiguous on what is now only a "potential" acquisition, at least compared to earlier pronouncements.

Both of these developments provide a welcome opportunity for the government to reconsider this hasty procurement decision. As a government publicly committed to "evidence-based decision-making," it should consider the opinions of the vast majority of experts in the field.

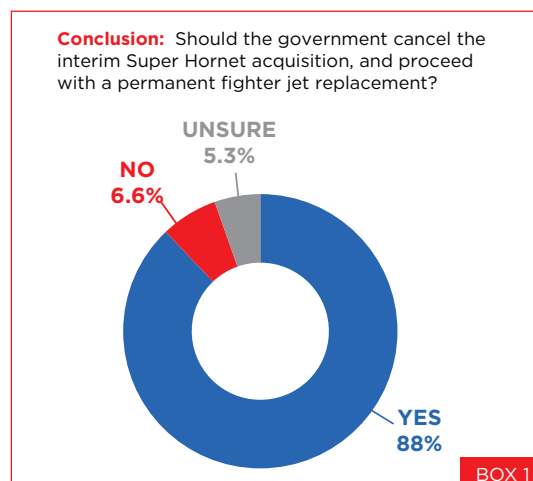
The Macdonald-Laurier Institute surveyed the country's foremost security and defence policy thinkers and practitioners to get an independent, dispassionate and expert assessment of the merits of the interim Super Hornet plan and its underlying rationale. Potential respondents were selected for their expertise in Canadian security and defence issues generally, although procurement and airpower experts and practitioners were well represented among them.

Importantly, we made a point to reach out to a wide range of experts. In total, more than 100 people were contacted to undertake the survey, and we received survey responses from 75 individuals (see Appendix A). Participants included noted scholars on Canadian defence and security, representatives of Canadian foreign policy think tanks, former senior military officers from all three services, including former RCAF and Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) commanders and a chief of the defence staff, and former government officials, including two former assistant deputy ministers of materiel from National Defence. Participants not only came from across the political spectrum, but many also had widely differing opinions on such issues as the need for a permanent fighter aircraft competition or what particular aircraft (Boeing's Super Hornet, Lockheed Martin's F-35, or others) was most suitable for Canadian defence requirements. In other words, the diverse range of participants encompassed a large part of the security and defence community in Canada.

The survey itself consisted of eight questions to be answered yes, no, or unsure, which allowed us to aggregate the responses. In so doing, we were able to assess their collective views on this matter and gauge, in an "evidence-based" manner, whether there is any broad consensus on the wisdom of the government's initial plan – from its key justifications to its costs to whether the decision should be reversed.

The results of this survey could not be clearer. On all these points, there is a clear consensus that the plan for an interim Super Hornet fleet lacks merit, is strategically unsound, and ultimately should be cancelled. According to one respondent, "The damage to the RCAF and Canada's defence posture would [otherwise] be devastating and permanent." Indeed, 88 percent of the experts surveyed said the government should cancel the Super Hornet purchase and proceed with a permanent fighter jet replacement (see box 1). In the words of another respondent, "it would show the Government has the courage to correct a significant error." Only 6.6 percent were in favour of the purchase, with the rest unsure on this fundamental question.

We will now turn to the results of each of the eight questions posed to our expert respondents.

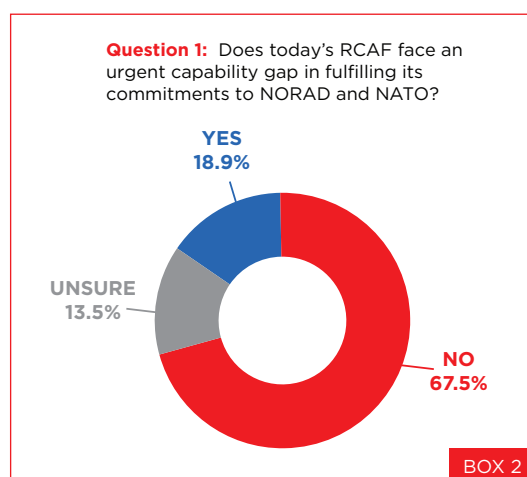


## Question 1: Does today's RCAF face an urgent capability gap in fulfilling its commitments to NORAD and NATO?

The government's interim Super Hornet purchase was meant to fill what Ottawa calls a pressing "capability gap" facing the RCAF. The RCAF Commander Lieutenant-General Michael Hood refuted the idea that there was an urgent capability gap at a Parliamentary committee earlier in 2016. Yet, as it was later revealed, the government had since recently changed policy to now require the RCAF to simultaneously meet both its NORAD and its NATO commitments, rather than the commitment to NATO being on stand-by.

It is the government's prerogative to set policy here. Yet, notably, little strategic rationale was given to explain the change to Canada's extant commitments – and the defence policy statement has provided little clarity in that regard. It is also difficult to ignore the timing of it, right before the government was trying to justify a plan for interim Super Hornets. Perhaps most damning, it was apparently done without input from the RCAF commander, who revealed that he was "not privy to the decisions behind the change" (Pugliese 2016b).

On this question, a large majority of respondents (67.5 percent) thought that there was no capability gap facing the RCAF, with only a minority (18.9 percent) agreeing that there was indeed a gap (see box 2). Meanwhile 13.5 percent remained unsure. Many of those who saw no capability gap referred to the fact that "The widely-accepted number of aircraft to fulfill operational requirements in a 'non-emergency' situation has long been held to be 65." Or, as another respondent put it, the RCAF seemed fully capable of "sending a six pack to Iraq, phasing six packs to the Baltic Air Patrol and to Iceland while maintaining NORAD commitments."



Many respondents emphasized the politicized nature of the alleged gap, which was "politically created for political purposes." Or as one respondent wryly noted, "If there were a true 'capability gap,' the government would not now be threatening to cancel [the deal] over Boeing's trade dispute with Bombardier." Yet others, while rejecting the notion of an urgent gap, did acknowledge a "lower-order" capability gap that required "risk-managing" of capabilities and resources." In that sense, the capability gap was not a "novel assessment" from 2016 but rather something that has lasted decades, which only made it more difficult to fulfill common defence commitments. One only needs to look at the decline over the years in the number of CF-18s in Canada's fleet from 138 to only 77, "a loss of 61 with no replacements."

Yet, even here, this speaks more to the general dilapidated state of the Canadian Armed Forces, especially its capital-intensive services like the RCAF and RCN, than the government's specific argument of an *urgent* gap to justify its interim acquisition. Indeed, others have pointed out how "NATO or coalition deployments have been fairly limited and have not exceeded 18-20 aircraft at any one time in recent decades." Even earlier, Canada had "made it through the Cold War without calling for a simultaneous meeting of [its NATO and NORAD] commitments."

The government also seems to have "boxed itself into a much larger fighter purchase when it does finally buy a permanent replacement for the CF-18s." After all, it has effectively rejected the previous government's requirement for only 65 fighters to fulfill Canadian commitments. Given its claim of a capability gap and

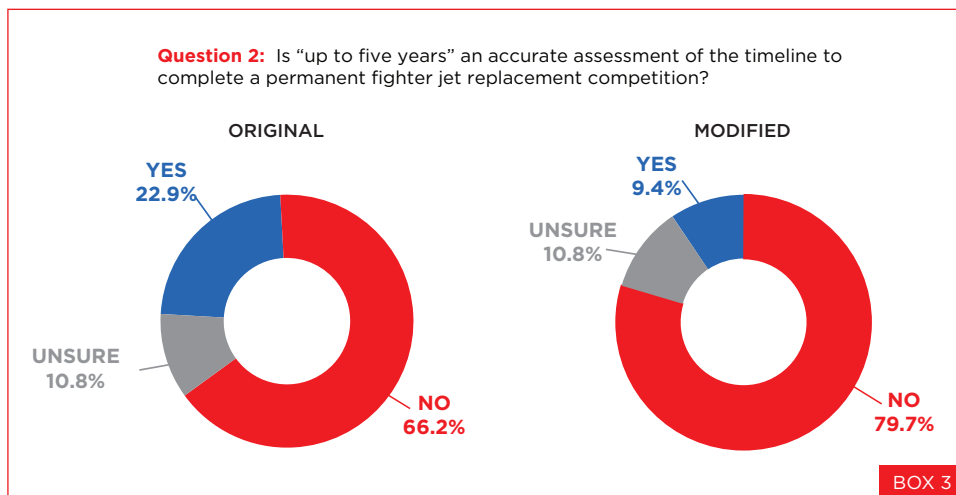
plans for an interim fleet, even the current fleet of 77 CF-18s is now clearly viewed as insufficient in number. It is therefore not surprising that the government’s defence policy statement now calls for an expanded fleet of 88 fighter aircraft, compared to its predecessor’s plan for only 65. Of course, with this fleet expansion and other defence spending promises, the government proposes a significant 70 percent increase in the defence budget over the next decade. More uncertain is whether this funding actually materializes.

To be sure, respondents who thought there was a gap often only did so with the disclaimer that such “commitments must be executed concurrently” for a gap to in fact exist. In the absence of a need to honour these commitments at the same time, the number of respondents who thought the urgent capability gap is over-stated would be larger. As such, there is some ambiguity in the answers to this question – something that we think responses to Question 3 help to clarify.

## Question 2: Is “up to five years” an accurate assessment of the timeline to complete a permanent fighter jet replacement competition?

The second key rationale for the government’s decision to purchase an interim fleet is its claim that a fighter aircraft competition could take upwards of five years to complete. Even if one accepts its claim of an urgent capability gap, this does not automatically mean that an interim “bridging” solution is required. After all, assuming a competition could be completed sooner, the government would have the option of pursuing a permanent fighter aircraft instead of an interim solution – thereby fulfilling its election promise of holding an open and transparent fighter aircraft competition even with a purported capability gap. As one respondent points out, this claim “make[s] the ‘interim’ purchase seem more necessary/valuable.” And the five-year time would also conveniently place the competition after the next federal election.

A majority of respondents (66.2 percent) disagreed with the government’s argument that it could take up to five years to hold a fighter aircraft competition, with a minority (22.9 percent) agreeing and an even smaller percentage (10.8 percent) unsure (see box 3: original). Yet the actual number who thinks the competition would be significantly less than five years was much larger than this break-down would indicate. Based on their comments, many of those who agreed with the “up to five years” argument did so in the conviction that far fewer than five years would in fact be required. If one takes this into consideration, the ratio is actually 79.7 percent who think the competition could take place sooner than five years versus 9.4 percent who don’t (see box 3: modified) – and this ratio likely understates the actual balance, much like the answers to Question 1. Further clarity can be found in the responses to Question 3.



Of those who argued that a competition would take much less time, many cited the procurement processes of Israel, Norway, Belgium, and Denmark as examples – the last doing a competition in just over three years “with an election intervening.” Others pointed out that previous governments have already done “intense evaluation of the options (operational capability, cost, and industrial benefit)” and incorporated “multiple inputs from various foreign government agencies and from their manufacturers,” which would speed up the process significantly. According to one respondent: “Between studies done by the previous and current Governments there is more known about potential aircraft candidates than on virtually any previous acquisition.” “Most of the proposals will be around ITBs [industrial and technological benefits] and not the actual airplane and costs,” noted another, which are “likely already well established for all of the existing alternatives.” The respondent concluded: “the government could go out for a competition now” and have “replies from industry fairly quickly.”

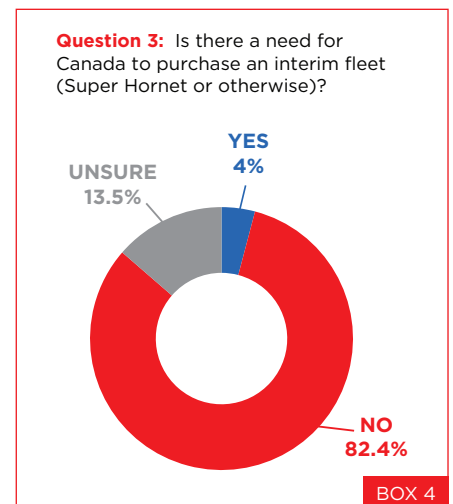
Many respondents placed the likely timeline for a competition to be between one to two years, rather than the five-years the government has put forward – a number that some think “seems only designed to allow this government to avoid making this decision during its term in office.” And, if the government really sees a pressing requirement, it can also do things much quicker by sole-sourcing. “Nothing takes ‘up to five years,’” one respondent noted. “Through an Advance Contract Award Notice (ACAN), the government can identify an intended contract winner who meets mandatory requirements and give industry 30 days to respond.”

### Question 3: Is there a need for Canada to purchase an interim fleet (Super Hornet or otherwise)?

The previous two questions were largely focused on the rationale for the government’s decision for an interim fleet. Yet, there is some ambiguity in the responses – such as whether the capability gap is urgent or merely impending, or if “up to five years” for a competition meant a full five years or something much less. But the results clearly rejected the government’s arguments that justified the interim purchase in the first place. Indeed, this likely underplays the true extent of this rejection.

For a more accurate assessment, Question 3 goes right to the heart of the matter – whether there is any need for an interim fleet at all. Of note, it does not specify whether the government should acquire Super Hornets, F-35s, or another aircraft on an interim basis, or make a judgment on the Super Hornet as an aircraft. Rather, it deals with the need for an interim fleet more broadly, in so far as the main arguments the government used to justify this procurement, assessed in the previous two questions, were largely agnostic on the aircraft required.

The results here were unambiguous. A strong majority (82.4 percent) did not think an interim fleet was required, compared to 4 percent who said it was required and 13.5 percent who were unsure (see box 4). This majority was stronger than the 67.5 percent who questioned the capability gap or even the 79.7 percent who challenged the government’s claim of a five-year timeline for a competition. The response to this question therefore shows an even stronger rejection of the government’s arguments for an interim fleet than the responses to the previous two questions. As one respondent concludes “the RCAF has been successfully risk-managing the fighter commitments for decades and can continue to do so for some additional time.” Or, in the words of another, “The only ‘need’ here is a way for the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau to dig themselves out of the stupid hole that the prime-minister-to-be created for his new government with his 20 September promise re the F-35.”





Importantly, respondents also highlighted other concerns surrounding the notion of an interim fleet. As one respondent notes, Canada has already drawn down “to the bare minimum to support one fleet of fighters, and it has difficulty getting enough trained people to operate one single fleet.” An interim fleet will bring that number to two fleets, and if a permanent fighter aircraft is different from the interim fleet, then Canada will for a time be operating three aircraft – given that it can take five years to make an orderly transition from a legacy aircraft platform (Schaub and Shimooka 2017). This will undoubtedly create strain on the personnel needed to operate these aircraft, with the required “people having at some point to support three different fleets of fighters” and each aircraft requiring “its own set of distinct personnel skill sets.” This issue is explored more fully in the answers to Questions 4 and 5, which are discussed together below.

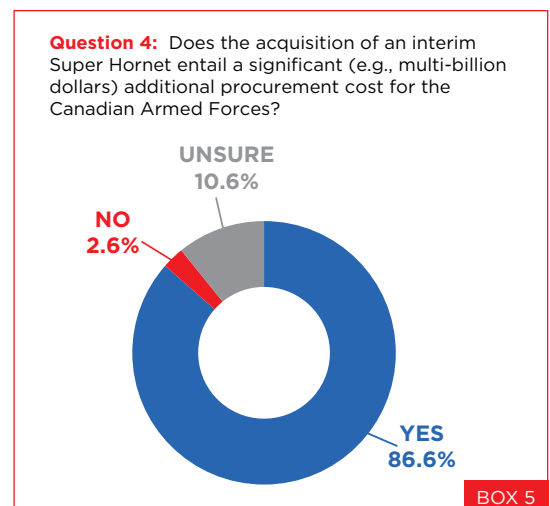
### Question 4: Does the acquisition of an interim Super Hornet entail a significant (e.g., multi-billion dollars) additional procurement cost for the Canadian Armed Forces?

### Question 5: Will there be an increase in operational costs with a mixed fleet of CF-18s and Super Hornets?

With regard to the interim Super Hornet purchase, a critical question is the actual cost of this procurement – an important consideration given that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is currently in the midst of significant recapitalization and money spent on an interim fleet could represent an “unnecessary” opportunity cost. Of course, the government plans on significantly increasing the defence budget to a projected \$32.7 billion by 2026-27. A significant portion of this funding will only arrive after 2020, when large capital projects are expected to take place. But, whether intentional or not, it also back-ends much of the spending increases after the next election. Notably, governments have reversed such long-term spending plans in the past. But, even if funding does materialize, money for an interim Super Hornet fleet could be “a lost investment.”

To better disentangle this issue, the survey divided it into two separate questions. Question 4 is whether the interim fleet would entail a significant multi-billion dollar procurement cost. Question 5 looks more directly at operational costs, given that any *interim* aircraft would then be operating alongside CF-18s for up to 15 years, as the government has itself acknowledged (Pugliese 2017). The cost of operating a mixed fleet, which was touched upon briefly earlier, also connects with the question of whether the Super Hornets will be a temporary bridging solution that will be retired when the permanent fighter aircraft is delivered – unless the Super Hornet is the eventual replacement aircraft – or whether the RCAF will operate a permanent mixed fleet similar to Australia’s fleet of Super Hornets and F-35s.

For the survey, a large majority of respondents (86.6 percent) believed that the interim Super Hornets represent a significant additional procurement cost, compared to 2.6 percent who disagreed and 10.6 percent who were unsure (see box 5). As one respondent notes, “The cost of an interim purchase and operation of Super Hornets has been estimated at \$5 to \$7 billion,” which refers to a figure circulated within the Department of National Defence and leaked to the media (Brewster 2017). Importantly, the government had promised to cancel the

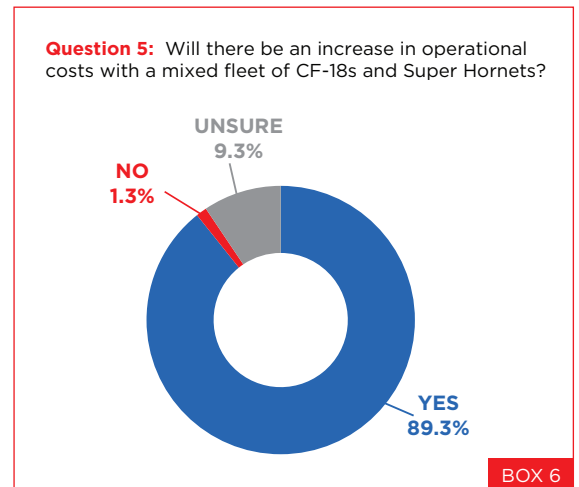


F-35 aircraft in order to increase required funding for naval fleet-replacement. But its interim Super Hornet plan “will consume billions of dollars currently allocated elsewhere, including to ships.”

Moreover, Super Hornets represent 20 year-old technology, for which their most significant buyer – the US Navy – is already planning mid-life upgrades for its existing fleet. Equally important is the fact that the Super Hornet production line may close in the next few years. The reason is the general lack of international interest and few buyers, except for the United States Navy (USN) that will be transitioning soon to the F-35. To be fair, the USN will procure additional Super Hornets, given delays in the naval variant of the F-35, and Kuwait recently purchased 40 aircraft. But this won’t fundamentally alter the fact that the Super Hornet production line will likely close in coming years, which will only add to the long-term operating cost of these aircraft and raises questions of whether these planes will even be available as a feasible permanent option in five years’ time.

To be sure, a critical issue is whether the Super Hornet is selected as the permanent fighter aircraft or not – an issue that has at least raised questions on its selection as an interim fighter, given the Liberals’ apparent favouring of the plane. According to one respondent, it would provide an incentive to “sole source additional” Super Hornets, using the “It would be easier and less expensive since we already have some’ argument.” This idea is examined in more detail under Question 6. If selected, “then the interim purchase [of 18 Super] Hornets simply represents the early stages of an extended replacement program.” However, if not, “All of this infrastructure will [be] created only to be plausibly shunted aside” once this interim fleet is retired. Also important is the fact that “overhead costs are disproportionate” when dealing with a small fleet.

This goes to Question 5, which is about the cost of operating a mixed fleet of CF-18s and another aircraft, such as the Super Hornet. Here, an even stronger majority (89.3 percent) agreed that a mixed fleet arrangement will increase the operational costs of both planes, compared to a tiny minority (1.3 percent) who disagreed and 9.3 percent who were uncertain (see box 6). This majority view is largely in accordance with a Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) study that concluded that a mixed fleet would be more costly than a single fleet. Notably, this document was freely accessible online until it was “retroactively classified and pulled from the Internet,” in what can only be seen as a further self-inflicted blow to the government’s own emphasis on openness, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. Other countries may operate mixed fleets, such as the US, United Kingdom, and Israel, but they also have “large defence budgets and military establishments.”



Mixed fleets are costly largely due to the need to maintain a support system for two different aircraft simultaneously. Interim Super Hornets will require duplication in terms of “training systems for pilots and technicians, flight simulators, a full support system including spare parts, specialized equipment, massive technical documentation and much more.” And, as one respondent noted, if another aircraft is chosen as a permanent fighter replacement, duplication could quickly become “triplication,” which would only increase the operating costs for a mixed fleet. “It is hard to see how the requirement for two logistical ‘tails’ will not cause greater costs not to mention the costs of new pilot training capacity.” This point is reiterated by another

expert, who notes that these aircraft “will require separate and distinct support systems for the majority of the required sustainment.”

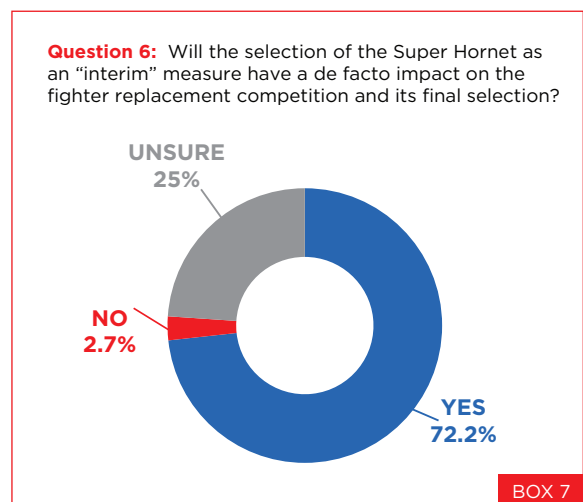
Despite sharing “outward similarities,” Super Hornets are around “20 [percent] larger than the” CF-18 and will also have “expensive armaments, presumably, and will have advanced radar equipment ... that will be unique to that aircraft and will require more specialized and expensive technical support.” One respondent even noted that “Allegedly, only 3 [percent] of the parts are common,” while another said “the Super Hornet is almost entirely a new plane.” Given no planned increase in personnel, one can imagine “a natural decrease in operational readiness.” Canada had even “looked at the mixed fleet option in depth” decades ago when buying the CF-18, and it was rejected for its high operational costs. The Royal Canadian Navy’s experience in operating a mixed fleet of frigates and destroyers is also suggestive in that regard. As one respondent noted, “Naval operational costs of running a mixed fleet (Tribal and CPF [Canadian Patrol Frigate]) were significant. One of the class always ended up suffering from reduced maintenance and training support as the Navy attempted to contain costs.”

If the RCAF decides to keep the Super Hornet, if only to fully utilize this investment over its lifespan, it will need to deal with the long-term cost of operating a mixed fleet. On the other hand, even if it is retained only as a bridging fleet, and retired once a different type of permanent aircraft is delivered and the transition to the new aircraft complete, the RCAF would still need to operate a mixed fleet for a number of years – until both the CF-18s and Super Hornets are finally retired. And, in such a scenario, there will be significant “sunk cost” to procure the Super Hornet and its attendant support system.

## Question 6: Will the selection of the Super Hornet as an “interim” measure have a de facto impact on the fighter replacement competition and its final selection?

An interim Super Hornet fleet could have an impact on the eventual selection of a permanent fighter aircraft – given that Boeing’s aircraft would also be competing to serve as the permanent replacement. Indeed, one can imagine that the higher the cost of the interim fleet and the more investment is required in terms of logistics, maintenance support, and infrastructure, the greater chance that the Super Hornet would be selected – if only to prevent a “lost investment.” This point was reiterated by some respondents: “a future government would be more inclined to purchase the same model in order to reduce through-life costs” and take “advantage of the training and infrastructure already in place in support of the interim Hornets.”

In answering this question, a majority of respondents (72.2 percent) did foresee an interim Super Hornet fleet having a de facto impact on the final fighter replacement selection, with only 2.7 percent seeing no impact and 25 percent being unsure (see box 7). “The Super Hornet, would represent approximately 20-25 [percent] of the new aircraft fleet,” noted one respondent, “It is likely that an accounting model would ascertain that with a base interim fleet a wholesale change would not be economically feasible.” This means that there would be a strong incentive for the government to select the Super





Hornet as a permanent replacement for economic rather than strategic or operational reasons. Of course, much depends on whether the current government is still in power after the next election. This introduces an element of political risk in how the permanent fighter replacement will ultimately proceed. A different government could opt to “reboot the acquisition process” and end up procuring a different plane than the Super Hornet, with all the attendant costs of operating a mixed fleet.

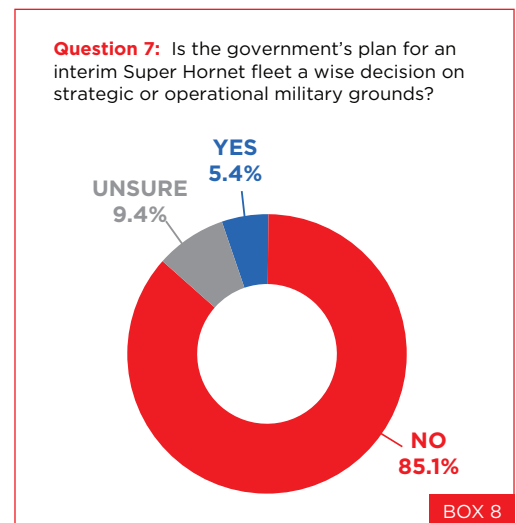
A critical question is how selecting interim Super Hornets could have an impact on the permanent fighter aircraft selection. Some think it will be implicit: “It will bias the selection process, as the government would face synergies” by selecting the F/A-18 Super Hornets again. Others note that it will likely “colour the selection,” lead to “political pressure,” or result in “a natural bureaucratic preference to purchase additional aircraft of the same type.” Another raised the “strong likelihood” that the government would fall back on a sole-sourced purchase to “buy more of the same once they make an interim purchase,” despite its promise for an open and transparent competition.

### Question 7: Is the government’s plan for an interim Super Hornet fleet a wise decision on strategic or operational military grounds?

A very strong majority (85.1 percent) of respondents did not think the decision to acquire interim Super Hornets is wise on either strategic or operational military grounds, compared to 5.4 percent who agreed and 9.4 percent who were unsure (see box 8). “We will be out of step with future technology,” noted one respondent, “and this will be an industry-killing Avro Arrow redux and/or a costly Sea King redux.” Or in the words of another: “The only strategic ‘wisdom’ here is domestic political/electoral strategy for the Liberal Party of Canada.” One was even blunter: “Dumb as dirt from every perspective except political, and still not bright from even that viewpoint.”

Others were quick to point to the issues surrounding acquiring a fourth or 4.5-generation aircraft like the Super Hornet when our allies are “unanimously opting” for fifth generation aircraft like the F-35 – a “warfare platform” to use one respondent’s words – even as Russia is already “discussing a [sixth] generation aircraft.” As one respondent put it, “It is a fourth generation fighter in a fifth generation world.” Others noted the impact this could have on future RCAF missions, given the prevalence of “networked operations” and the prospect that the “Super Hornet will not operate effectively with F-35 and F-22 aircraft in NORAD and we will be left out of any serious operations with NATO.”

Still, some did point to the immediate value that a Super Hornet could bring given that the aircraft is significantly more advanced than Canada’s current fleet of CF-18s. Clearly, these aircraft would offer the government “more foreign policy flexibility in the types of missions they can ask the CAF to do.” But this fact must be balanced by other considerations – from the limited number of “front line aircraft” that could be generated by a small fleet given that “some will be needed for training and relegated to routine maintenance” to the possibility of acquiring a permanent aircraft in a similar time frame (see response to Question 2) to the procurement delays generated by even choosing an interim fleet.



Even those who see value in the interim Super Hornet fleet acknowledge that the F-35 “is the only aircraft able to meet Canadian requirements” and worry this interim fleet could lead to either the Super Hornet’s acquisition as a permanent aircraft that “lack[s] the capabilities Canada needs” or a reduced number of F-35s in an expensive mixed fleet. Procuring Super Hornets may only have a modest impact on Canada’s operations in NORAD, due to the less severe threat environment in North America. But we still might need to rely on the US in a time of crisis. And, even here, questions remain about the connectivity of the CF-18s and Super Hornets when the US Air Force (USAF) starts relying on the F-35. In such circumstances, “the USAF would inherit most of Canada’s airspace because of their unique situational awareness alone thereby leaving Canada with provisional sovereignty.”

The prospect of our involvement in expeditionary operations abroad, where we may face next-generation fighters and advanced air defence systems, is even bleaker. As one respondent notes, “We run the very clear risk of having a second-rate fighter force, unable to interoperate and fully contribute to NATO or coalition operations.”

## Conclusion: Should the government cancel the interim Super Hornet acquisition, and proceed with a permanent fighter jet replacement?

As noted in the beginning, a large majority of respondents (88 percent) think the government should reverse its plan to acquire the interim Super Hornet, and instead pursue a permanent fighter aircraft replacement. By contrast, only 6.6 percent thought the plan should proceed, with 5.3 percent being unsure. In the words of one respondent, “Playing politics with defending Canadians is not very responsible, but the voting public remains unaware of the degree to which governments place political positioning of the party ahead of defending [their] citizens.” Some respondents placed hope that the Boeing-Bombardier row might provide a way out for the Liberals to reverse this decision, even if others were more skeptical.

The broad and consistent consensus displayed on this and other questions in the survey shows that expert opinion in the country believes Canada would be well served if the government cancelled the interim Super Hornets altogether, and immediately pursued a permanent fighter aircraft replacement. Respondents included some of the most notable and respected scholars, former senior military officers, and defence professionals, all of whom are widely recognized experts in their fields. Given that such a diverse group of experts has such a consensus view on the interim Super Hornet plan, the government would be wise to reverse its decision – especially if it really does believe in the value of evidence-based decision-making.

Although we did not ask this question directly, one might make the case that the Boeing-Bombardier spat offers the government a ready-made pretext for just such a cancellation. So too does the Defence Policy Review, given what seems to be cooling of the government’s strong enthusiasm for an interim Super Hornet fleet.

Importantly, we also make the point not to answer what particular fighter – the Super Hornet or the F-35 – would actually be the better selection for the permanent fighter aircraft. Certainly, many respondents have strong views on this matter, and we made a point to note some of their comments in this paper. But the views on this particular issue are quite diverse among those who responded to the survey. The same can also be said as to whether the permanent fighter would best be determined by an open competition or a sole-sourced contract. Rather than taking one side or another, we only think the government needs to

pursue a clean, solid and fair process to find the best answer for Canada – and that a fleet of interim Super Hornets clearly fails the test in that regard.

Whatever the rationale chosen, a policy reversal on interim Super Hornets would do much to repair the damage of the original decision, since it would only end up having delayed somewhat the acquisition of a much-needed permanent fighter aircraft for the RCAF. Moreover, it would show that the government has the pragmatism and flexibility to change course from poorly thought-out decisions. As one respondent phrased it: “Do the right thing for once.”

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# Appendix A: List of Respondents

1. Adam Macdonald, PhD Student in Political Science, Dalhousie University
2. Alain Pellerin, Colonel (Ret'd), Former Executive Director, Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) and CDA Institute
3. Alan Stephenson, Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute
4. Alan Williams, President, The Williams Group, and Former Assistant Deputy Minister of Materiel, Department of National Defence
5. Alex Wilner, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, and Munk Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute
6. Allen Sens, Professor of Teaching, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia
7. André Deschamps, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Former Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force (2009-2012)
8. Andrea Lane, PhD Candidate in Political Science, and Deputy Director, Centre for the Study of Security and Development, Dalhousie University
9. Andrew Richter, Professor of Political Science, University of Windsor
10. Anessa Kimball, Associate Professor of Political Science, Université Laval
11. Angus Watt, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Former Chief of the Air Staff (2007-2009)
12. Ann Griffiths, Editor, Canadian Naval Review, and Research Fellow, Centre for the Study of Security and Development, Dalhousie University
13. Anonymous
14. Barry Cooper, Professor of Political Science, and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Military, Strategic and Security Studies, University of Calgary
15. Brian Macdonald, Colonel (Ret'd), Past President, Atlantic Council of Canada
16. Chris Kilford, Fellow, Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University
17. Christian Leuprecht, Professor of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada, and Munk Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute
18. Christopher Sands, Senior Research Professor and Director, Center for Canadian Studies, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, and Member, Research Advisory Board, Macdonald-Laurier Institute
19. Chuck Davies, Colonel (Ret'd), Research Fellow, Conference of Defence Associations Institute
20. Colin Robertson, Vice President and Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute
21. Craig Stone, Associate Professor of Defence Studies, Royal Military College of Canada and Canadian Forces College
22. Dan Middlemiss, Adjunct Fellow, Faculty of Arts, and Senior Fellow, Centre for the Study of Security and Development, Dalhousie University
23. Dan Ross, Former Assistant Deputy Minister of Materiel, Department of National Defence
24. David Beitelman, PhD Candidate in Political Science, and Doctoral Fellow, Centre for the Study of Security and Development, Dalhousie University
25. David Huddleston, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Former Commander Air Command (1991-1993) and Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (1989-1991)
26. David Jurkowski, Brigadier-General (Ret'd), Former Commander Fighter Group and Canadian NORAD Region
27. Denis Rouleau, Vice-Admiral (Ret'd), Former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (2008-2010), and Chair, Conference of Defence Associations
28. Don Macnamara, Brigadier-General (Ret'd), Former President, Conference of Defence Associations Institute



29. Douglas Bland, Professor Emeritus and Former Chair, Defence Management Studies, Queen's University
30. Douglas Ross, Professor of Political Science, Simon Fraser University
31. Drew Robertson, Vice-Admiral (Ret'd), Former Chief of the Maritime Staff (2006-2009)
32. Elinor Sloan, Professor of International Relations, Carleton University
33. Eric Morse, Deputy Director, Defence and Security Studies Programme, Royal Canadian Military Institute
34. Eric Lerhe, Commodore (Ret'd), Former Commander Canadian Fleet Pacific, and Research Fellow, Centre for the Study of Security and Development, Dalhousie University
35. Ernie Regehr, Senior Fellow, The Simons Foundation, and Research Fellow, Centre for Peace Advancement, Conrad Grebel University College
36. Ferry de Kerckhove, Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, and Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
37. George Macdonald, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Former Air Force Officer, Deputy Commander NORAD and Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (2001-2004)
38. George Petrolekas, Colonel (Ret'd), Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute
39. Greg Matte, Brigadier-General (Ret'd), and Executive Director, Helmets to Hardhats Canada
40. Hans Christian Breede, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada, and Deputy Director, Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University
41. J.L. Granatstein, Independent Scholar Emeritus, History, York University, and Member, Research Advisory Board, Macdonald-Laurier Institute
42. James Cox, Brigadier General (Retired), Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute and Research Fellow, CDA Institute
43. James Fergusson, Professor of Political Studies, and Director, Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba
44. James Steven Lucas, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Former Chief of the Air Staff (2005-2007)
45. Jeffrey Collins, PhD Candidate in Political Science, Carleton University, and Research Associate, Macdonald-Laurier Institute and Atlantic Institute for Market Studies
46. Joe Varner, Former Director of Policy to the Minister of National Defence, and Fellow, Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society.
47. Joel J. Sokolsky, Professor of Political Science, Royal Military College of Canada
48. John Scott Cowan, Principal Emeritus, Royal Military College of Canada, Past President Conference of Defence Associations Institute, and Past Chair, Defence Advisory Board of Canada
49. John Ferris, Professor of History, and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Military, Strategic and Security Studies, University of Calgary
50. Joseph T. Jockel, Piskor Professor of Canadian Studies, St. Lawrence University
51. Justin Massie, Professor of Political Science, Université du Québec à Montréal
52. Ken Pennie, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Former Chief of the Air Staff (2003-2005)
53. Kim Richard Nossal, Professor of Political Studies, Queen's University
54. Larry Milberry, Publisher, CAVAB Books, Member, Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, and Honorary Member, Canadian Aviation Historical Society
55. Laurie Hawn, Former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence (2007-2011)
56. Lewis MacKenzie, Major-General (Ret'd)
57. Lloyd Campbell, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd), Chief of the Air Staff (2000-2003)
58. Mark Collins, Distinguished Alumnus, Canadian Global Affairs Institute
59. Martin Shadwick, Contract Faculty, York University
60. Matthew Overton, Brigadier-General (Ret'd), and Research Manager pro Tem., Conference of Defence Associations Institute
61. Michael Dawson, Former Canadian Foreign Service Officer
62. Paul Chapin, Executive Editor, TheVimyReport.com, and Former Director General, International Security at Foreign Affairs

63. Paul Manson, General (Ret'd), Former Chief of the Defence Staff (1986-1989)
64. Paul T. Mitchell, Director of Academics and Associate Dean of Arts, Canadian Forces College
65. Peter Kasurak, Instructor, Royal Military College of Canada
66. Richard Cohen, Senior Defence Advisor to the Minister of National Defence (2007-2011)
67. Richard Shimooka, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute
68. Rob Huebert, Associate Professor of Political Science, and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Military, Strategic and Security Studies, University of Calgary
69. Robert W. Murray, Managing Director - Government Affairs and Public Policy Practice Group, Dentons Canada LLP, and Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute
70. R. D. Buck, Vice-Admiral (Ret'd), Former Chief of the Maritime Staff (2001-2004) and Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (2004-2006)
71. Srdjan Vucetic, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
72. Stéphanie von Hlatky, Assistant Professor of Political Studies and Director, Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University
73. Stephen Saideman, Paterson Chair in International Affairs, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University
74. Thomas Juneau, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
75. Timothy Choi, PhD Candidate, Centre for Military, Security, and Strategic Studies, University of Calgary, and Research Fellow, Centre for the Study of Security and Development, Dalhousie University

# About the Authors



**D**avid McDonough is Deputy Editor at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, and a research fellow at Dalhousie University's Centre for the Study of Security and Development. He previously was Research Manager and Senior Editor at the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. He received a PhD in Political Science from Dalhousie University in 2011. He has published and edited widely on Canadian strategic policy and international security, including as editor of *Canada's National Security in the Post-9/11 World: Strategy, Interests, and Threats* (University of Toronto Press, 2012).



**B**rian Lee Crowley has headed up the Macdonald-Laurier Institute (MLI) in Ottawa since its inception in March of 2010, coming to the role after a long and distinguished record in the think tank world. He was the founder of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) in Halifax, one of the country's leading regional think tanks. He is a former Salvatori Fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC and is a Senior Fellow at the Galen Institute in Washington. In addition, he advises several think tanks in Canada, France, and Nigeria.

Crowley has published numerous books, most recently *Northern Light: Lessons for America from Canada's Fiscal Fix*, which he co-authored with Robert P. Murphy and Niels Veldhuis and two bestsellers: *Fearful Symmetry: the fall and rise of Canada's founding values* (2009) and MLI's first book, *The Canadian Century; Moving*

*Out of America's Shadow*, which he co-authored with Jason Clemens and Niels Veldhuis.

Crowley twice won the Sir Antony Fisher Award for excellence in think tank publications for his health care work and in 2011 accepted the award for a third time for MLI's book, *The Canadian Century*.

From 2006–08 Crowley was the Clifford Clark Visiting Economist with the federal Department of Finance. He has also headed the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), and has taught politics, economics, and philosophy at various universities in Canada and Europe.

Crowley is a frequent commentator on political and economic issues across all media. He holds degrees from McGill and the London School of Economics, including a doctorate in political economy from the latter.



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- Ottawa’s regulation of foreign investment; and
- How to fix Canadian health care.





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