

PRESS RELEASE

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Canada will buy Boeing F-18E/F Super Hornets

Canada Announces Plan to Replace Fighter Jet Fleet; Strategy Will Address Capability Gap

Canada will buy an interim batch of 18 Boeing F-18E/F Super Hornets but wait five years to conclude the full and open competition to replace its CF-18C/D fleet, and this plan is already being criticized as unnecessary and wasteful. (RCAF photo)

OTTAWA --- A modern fighter jet fleet is essential for defending Canada and Canadian sovereignty – especially in our northern skies. It is a vital contribution to our partnership with our most important ally, the United States (U.S.), and for the protection of the continent that we share.

Today, the Government of Canada has announced that it will launch, within its current mandate, an open and transparent competition to replace the legacy fleet of CF-18 fighter aircraft. This competition will ensure that the Government gets the right aircraft for our women and men in uniform – at the right price – while maximizing economic benefits to Canadians.

In addition, Canada will immediately explore the acquisition of 18 new Super Hornet aircraft to supplement the CF-18s until the permanent replacement arrives. The Government will enter into discussions with the U.S. Government and Boeing regarding use of these jets for an interim period of time.

Before proceeding, the Government reserves the right to decide if they can provide the interim fleet at a cost, time, level of capability, and economic value that is acceptable to Canada.

Canada's current fleet is now more than 30 years old and is down from 138 aircraft to 77. As a result, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) faces a capability gap. We have an obligation to NORAD to have a certain number of fighter jets mission-ready at all times, as well as an obligation to NATO. The number of mission-ready planes we can put in the air today is fewer than our NORAD and NATO obligations combined. The RCAF does a good job risk-managing that gap, and has been doing so for a number of years.

Taken together, these measures will ensure that our women and men in uniform have the equipment and support they need to do the important job we ask of them every day.

Quotes

1. "Every Government has to decide the level of risk they are willing to accept to Canada, and our women and men in uniform. Having to manage our commitments to NORAD, NATO, and our ability to respond to unforeseen events is not a risk this Government is willing to accept. The interim fleet provides the most effective way forward to help ensure Canada remains a credible and dependable ally," said Defence Minister Harjit S. Sajjan.
2. "As we promised, our Government will be conducting an open and transparent competition to replace the long-serving CF-18 jets. We will also begin discussions with Boeing for the purchase of an interim fleet to deal with the capability gap. This is about getting our women and men in uniform the equipment they need to do their

jobs and protect Canadians in the most effective way possible while maximizing economic benefits for the middle class and those working hard to join it,” said Public Services and Procurement Minister Judy Foote.

3. “Today’s announcement demonstrates how our Government is working to generate strong and sustained economic benefits for Canadian companies. The replacement of Canada’s CF-18 fleet will help grow Canada’s aerospace sector, create high-value jobs, and support Canadian innovation,” said Innovation, Science and Economic Development Minister Navdeep Bains.
4. “History and a future fraught with risk demands that the Canadian Armed Forces be ready and capable to respond to threats to Canada and North America, and support our allies and those in need. Our women and men in uniform are the guarantors of Canadian sovereignty, and protectors of Canadian values and interests abroad. I am delighted that our women and men in the RCAF are embarking on a journey that assures our defence for the long-term,” General Jonathan Vance, Chief of the Defence Staff.

Quick Facts

1. Over the summer of 2016, the Government consulted industry and governments in allied and partner countries to obtain up-to-date information on timelines, current capabilities, costing, and economic benefits associated with potential contender aircraft.
2. The competition will cover both the acquisition of and in-service support for the new fleet.
3. Discussions with the U.S. Government and Boeing will determine if Boeing can provide the interim solution at a cost, time, and level of capability that are acceptable to Canada.
4. Canada will continue participation in the Joint Strike Fighter Program until at least a contract award for the permanent fleet. This will allow Canada to maximize benefits of the partnership and gives Canada the option to buy the aircraft through the program, should the F-35 be successful in the competitive process for the permanent fleet.
5. The CF-18 replacement offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Canadian aerospace and defence industry. The Government will maximize economic benefits to create middle-class jobs and support innovation in Canada.