

WILPF Canada
c/o 511 Chesapeake Crescent
Waterloo, ON N2K 4G1

May 20, 2022

The Honourable John McKay, P.C., M.P.
Chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Re: Request that the Standing Committee conduct a comprehensive study with expert witnesses on the harms and risks of the F-35 fighter jet procurement

Dear MP McKay,

We, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Canada, are writing to you about the federal government's plan to buy 88 new F-35 stealth fighter jets for a price tag of \$19 billion and increase military spending.

The fighter jet acquisition is the second most expensive procurement in Canadian history. The federal government has not yet signed a contract with Lockheed Martin but is expected to ink a deal this year.

We are asking the Standing Committee on National Defence to do its due diligence and thoroughly study this procurement. We are calling on the committee to study and publicly report on the following:

- The **climate** impacts, carbon emissions and offset plan of Canada's planned fleet of F-35s
- An **environmental** assessment of the F-35s (including critical mineral requirements)
- The impacts on **Indigenous communities**. Has there been a public consultation to ensure free, prior and informed consent with Indigenous communities around Cold Lake, Alberta where the fighter jets will be stationed that will affect Treaty 6 land and in Goose Bay, Labrador where the fighter jets may train that will affect unceded Innu land?
- A **public health study** to determine the risks from noise and air pollution from the F-35s, which are much louder than the CF-18s
- A **gender-based analysis** of the F-35s to understand the full impacts on women and girls
- **Full life-cycle costs** of the F-35s including fuel costs, operating costs and weapons costs to understand all the financial risks over the next five decades
- An assessment of the **Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITB)** and **jobs** for Canadians (the F-35 cannot be built in Canada)

To protect the public interest, the F-35 procurement requires greater transparency and oversight from Parliament. The Standing Committee must carefully and thoroughly investigate this consequential federal procurement.

Last May, the U.S. Senate held a hearing on the F-35 program, which revealed serious technical flaws and costs overruns. The Senate heard that there are over 800 unresolved open deficiencies and escalating sustainment costs of the program that will make it unaffordable for the American government. This hearing can be watched in full on CSPAN: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?511146-1/35-joint-strike-fighter-program>

We are calling on you to conduct a comprehensive study of all the harms and risks including all those identified above on these stealth fighters and publicize it. Canadians deserve a similar public hearing on the F-35 program before any contract is signed.

We are asking you to hold a hearing and to invite expert witnesses to speak about the serious risks and harms of the F-35 program. We would like you to invite:

1. **Dan Grazier**, retired Colonel with the U.S. military and the Senior Defense Policy Fellow at the Project on Government Oversight. He is a leading expert on the F-35. He has researched and written extensively about this warplane and has appeared at hearings on the F-35 before Congress. Email: Dan.Grazier@pogo.org Phone: (202) 347-1122 Web site: <https://www.pogo.org/about/people/dan-grazier/>
2. **Paul Maillet**, retired former CF 18 fleet manager and Colonel with the Canadian Armed Forces. Paul is currently head of the Paul Maillet Center for Ethics and Peace Services. Email: pmaillet@magma.ca and Phone: (613) 866-2503
3. **Tamara Lorincz**, PhD candidate, Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University. She is doing her doctoral research on the climate impacts of the military. She has studied the F-35 program for over a decade and has recently written the new report that is enclosed, *Soaring: The Harms and Risks of Fighter Jets and Why Canada Must Not Buy a New Fleet*. Email: tlorincz@balsillieschool.ca Phone: 226-505-9469 Web site: <https://www.balsillieschool.ca/tamara-lorincz/>

We would like the committee to know that WILPF Canada joins over 100 high-profile Canadians including David Suzuki, Naomi Klein, Stephen Lewis, Michael Ondaatje, Yann Martel, Tegan & Sara and Dr. Ingrid Waldron, Professor & HOPE Chair in Peace & Health, McMaster University, who are opposed to the Trudeau government buying a new fleet of costly, carbon-intensive fighter jets.

Canada does not need a new fleet of fighter jets to counter threats from Russia and China. Canada needs to rebuild friendly relations with these countries and work diplomatically with them on dealing with global challenges such as the pandemic, climate change and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

As well, as the federal debt mounts and climate change worsens, the government should not waste any tax dollars on new weapons systems when the country is facing more extreme weather events, housing insecurity, the opioid crisis and poverty. Canada needs to demilitarize to decarbonize and prioritize peace, environmental protection and social welfare.

Finally, we are opposed to Canada increasing military spending. Currently, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's *Trends in World Military Expenditures 2021*, Canada spends \$30 billion on the military, which is 13th highest in the world. According to the latest NATO Defence Expenditures Report, Canada is ranked 6th highest among NATO allies. In this year's federal budget, Minister of Finance announced an additional \$8 billion for the military. This military spending diverts precious public funds away urgent environmental and social needs. **We would like to bring to your attention that Canada has not filed its military expenditures report to the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs for at least five years**, please see: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/milex/> The federal government needs to reduce military spending and re-allocate it for the genuine security of Canadians.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Tamara Lorincz

On behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Canada

Encl. report *Soaring: The Harms and Risks of Fighter Jets and Why Canada Must Not Buy a New Fleet*
Encl. report *From Acquisition to Disposal: Uncovering the true cost of 88 new fighter jets*

About: WILPF Canada is a membership-led organization committed to a feminist peace, social justice, and gender equality. It the national section of WILPF international, which is the world's longest standing women peace organization founded in 1915. **Web site:** wilpfcanda.ca