

The.Firm
From: The.Firm [the.firm@internode.on.net]
Sent: Monday, 18 July 2005 1:28 PM
To: 'Hurley, David LTGEN'
Cc: 'The Firm Distribution List'
Subject: RE: unclassified: NEW AIR COMBAT CAPABILITY



Dear LtGen David Hurley,

We apologise if our comments, as you state, offend both your personal and professional integrity. This was certainly not our intent. Rather, your inclusion on the Distribution List was to keep your office informed on what many in the community are saying about what are considered issues of vital national interest.

As per your request, your E-mail address has been deleted from The Firm Distribution List.

However, I must say I am surprised by your reaction and that you would take so personally and adversely comments which, I put to you, are supported by the empirical evidence. If you disagree with this proposition, then maybe you would be kind enough to comment on and respond to the following.

The advice on which the comments in our previous E-mail are based include the following –

1. In Defence Annual Report 2003-04, the Australian people were told that-
“To ensure the maintenance of strike capability, the Government announced that retirement of the F111 was dependent on the successful introduction into service of airborne early warning and control and A330 tanker aircraft, completion of the F/A18 upgrade, and the introduction of improved weapons and long-range stand-off weapons for P3 Orion and F/A18 Hornet aircraft.”
2. In the submission to the JSCFADT entitled “RAAF Air Combat Capability” on 04 June 2004, the then Chief of Air Force stated that -

F-111 Retirement Requirements

36. The Government has announced that the F-111 will not be retired unless a number of prerequisites are met. These include:

- a. Introduction into service of AEW&C;
- b. Introduction into service of the new Air to Air Refuelling aircraft;
- c. Completion of the Hornet Upgrade Program systems component, particularly the electronic warfare self protection and Link 16 datalink component;
- d. Integration of an all weather day and night GPS guided bombing capability onto the F/A-18;
- e. Integration of follow on standoff weapon onto F/A- 18; and
- f. Integration of follow on standoff weapon onto AP-3C.

3. During the Senate Estimates Hearings earlier this year, the then Chief of the Defence Force re-iterated the above advice, stating that the Government would have options in relation to the retention of the F-111 capability.
4. That at the RAAF Conference in March this year, the then Chief of Air Force, now Chief of the Defence Force, re-iterated the above advice.

However, the advice received from concerned professional colleagues in Defence and Industry is that-

1. A directive has been issued that will see the F-111Gs withdrawn and retired from service by December 2006.
2. One of the six operational F-111Gs has already been retired from service with another to be retired in the next month or so.
3. The now eight (8) F-111Gs that have been grounded are stored on the tarmac ramp outside Building 410 at RAAF Base Amberley, out in the weather, without published storage and inhibiting servicing for long term external storage carried out on them.
4. This has been the case for seven (7) of these airframes since circa 2002 even though the original logistics plan for these aircraft had them stored in hangars with inhibiting storage servicing applied.
5. The F-111G software support facility acquired from SM-ALC to support the F-111G digital avionics when the F-111G's were purchased and integrated into the F-111 WSSSF was literally 'thrown into the dumpster' earlier this year.
6. The holdings of the whole of life spares and tooling that were purchased to enable the F-111 capability to be operated through to 2020 are now the subject of review and disposal action based upon a planned withdrawal date of 2010.

How does one reconcile this latter advice with the former other than to conclude what was stated in our previous E-mail?

I genuinely hope you will take the time to both consider and respond to this communication, particularly since all previous attempts to discuss with the Department what are vital issues of national importance have gone unanswered.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Goon
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-----Original Message-----

From: Hurley, David LTGEN [SMTP:David.Hurley@defence.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2005 11:01 AM
To: the.firm@internode.on.net; David Johnston, Senator;
david.fawcett.mp@aph.gov.au; Dennis.Jensen.MP@aph.gov.au
Subject: sec: unclassified: NEW AIR COMBAT CAPABILITY

To the operators of "The Firm":

Please delete me from your distribution list. Your comments offend both my personal and professional integrity.

-----Original Message-----

From: The.Firm [<mailto:the.firm@internode.on.net>]
Sent: Monday, 18 July 2005 11:04
To: 'David Johnston, Senator'; 'David Fawcett, MP <david.fawcett.mp@aph.gov.au>'; 'Dr Dennis Jensen, MP [Dennis.Jensen.MP@aph.gov.au]'
Cc: 'The Firm Distribution List'
Subject: NEW AIR COMBAT CAPABILITY

Dear David, David and Dennis,

We have it on very good authority from a multiplicity of sources that despite what the Government, the Parliament and the Australian people have been told by senior departmental officials, the aim of these officials is to ensure that the plans they have recommended to Government are the only option. To support this approach, we are advised from within Defence and Industry that the Department is diligently working to kill off the F-111 capability and ensuring that the Government has no other options available to it other than what ACM Houston has recommended to the NSC and Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,

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