

Official: Navy Opposed to More Super Hornets Because Aircraft May Not Be Viable in 2050s



Rear Adm. Andrew Loiselle, third from left, spoke on an aviation panel on Aug. 3. *NAVY LEAGUE / Lisa Nipp*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – A top Navy air warfare official said Aug. 3 the service opposes the addition of F/A-18E/F Super Hornets to the budget – which Congress wants to do this year as it done in many previous budgets – because the new buys would take the aircraft deep into the 2050s, when it would be no longer viable.

As they have done for years, lawmakers are once again seeking to add more F/A-18E/F Super Hornets to the Department of Defense's budget to help close a gap in strike fighter capability. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday said Aug. 2 at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space 2021 the Navy is opposed to this move, and the next day Rear Adm. Andrew Loiselle, director of the air warfare division (N98), said Gilday opposes it because the Navy doesn't want fourth-generation fighters that many years into the future.

He pointed out that the last Super Hornet to be bought under this proposal would last 30 years, which "takes us out to 2055. There isn't a lot of analysis out there that supports fourth-generation viability" that far into the future, Loiselle said.

Instead, the Navy is focused on continuing F-35 buys and managing the service lives for current Super Hornets, he said.

Additionally, Loiselle addressed what he described as

incorrect interpretations that the Navy is reducing its F-35 program of record by decreasing the number of F-35s in an air wing to 14.

“Some interpreted that as a reduction in the program of record,” he said. “That is not the case. There has been no change to the program of record for the F-35.”