

Bernie Sanders and the Nuclear-capable F35s. “The Most Expensive Weapon in US History”

By [Renee Parsons](#)

Global Research, April 19, 2019

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [Politics](#)

Fresh off what the MSM is celebrating as a surprise victory for a Bernie Town Hall on Fox News, lurking in the background is his inexplicable support over the years for basing the highly controversial F35 at the Burlington International Airport. We now know, thanks to a conscientious citizen who bothered to read the fine print, that those F35's will be nuclear-capable and of immense explosive power.

In September, as the fall colors begin to change in Vermont, City of Burlington residents may not be in the streets waving American flags as eighteen F35 Lightning II radar-evading stealth fighter jets land at the Burlington Airport. As part of a Pentagon plan to deploy 2,500 jets nationwide, the F35's will join the 158th Fighter Wing, a unit of the Vermont Air National Guard, affectionately known as the Green Mountain Boys as its aging F-16 jets are replaced.

Not just known for its foliage, cheese and maple syrup, Vermont is also host to an active aerospace industry which already supplies 2,000 jobs. The jet's bay door and GAU-22 gun system will both be produced in Vermont. With the Air Force spending \$84 million per jet from Lockheed Martin, the DOD will spend \$100 Million for infrastructure improvement and a new training center at Burlington where they will share one runway with commercial air traffic.

Basing more than a dozen F35's in Burlington will bring a totally new generation of aircraft to Vermont as new high tech jets, not yet fully mature with all of its kinks and safety issues worked out, normally experience more accidents and 'incidents' in a shake down – and the F35 has had more than its share.

The F35 was commissioned by the Pentagon in 1995 at a cost of \$1.5 Trillion, becoming the most expensive weapon system in US history as well as providing significant technical challenges including a “[catastrophic engine failure](#)” with total damage estimated at \$50 million, a “life threatening [ejection seat](#) malfunction” and a crash in South Carolina due to a [faulty fuel tube](#). The new controversial bomber jet fighter planes will be located in a dense area surrounded by public schools, a college and residential neighborhoods.

While the seven year debate over the F35 has been an intense round of public hearings and debates and public meetings, at least one lawsuit, and three of the most affected communities all formally opposing the F35 and even a successful anti F35 voter referendum which was adopted by the public, the state's elected political leadership chose to ignore the outcome.

But it wasn't until [retired Air Force Col. Rosanne Greco](#) was reading through a 68,000

heavily redacted Air Force document related to the lawsuit that she discovered vague references about the F35 carrying nuclear bombs.

Researching further, Greco who has thirty years of intelligence experience with the highest security clearances, is a specialized expert in nuclear weapons and arms control and a member of the US START delegation, confirmed the stunning news that the F35 was designed from the outset and had always been intended to carry a nuclear payload as it was to become an integral part of the US nuclear strategy.

Throughout all the furor, the Air Force never informed Vermont residents that the F35 was designed as a dual-capable plane; that is, able to deliver either a conventional weapon or a nuclear weapon or that its new guided nuclear bomb, the B61-12 was being specially designed to fit into the F35's bay.

As if that belated information were not reason enough for the entire State of Vermont to be explosively irate at being lied to by the Pentagon, the state's elected political leadership has yet to feel the full wrath of a citizenry that has only just begun to realize the consequences of being consistently lied to by its favorite sons. During the entire seven year campaign, both Senators Bernie Sanders and Patrick Leahy refused to meet with citizens who opposed the F35. In a short, pithy [joint statement](#) in 2016, the state's entire Congressional delegation echoed their support for the F35 being based in Vermont.

And the B61 is one hell of a bomb – its range can be adjusted from .03 kilotons up to 50 kilotons. The bomb that killed 150,000 people in Hiroshima was a 15 kiloton bomb. Greco makes the point that the Green Mountain Boys could now directly initiate on their own ala Dr. Strangelove or participate in a nuclear war as ordered by the President. In addition, Vermont now becomes a central target in any potential conflagration since it is the delivery system that is the target. With no aircraft to carry them, bombs per se are not the target. The Burlington International Airport will now become Ground Zero.

When Greco's revelations regarding the jets nuclear capability became public, Sanders and Leahy were unwavering in their denials and refutations which have been in direct contradiction with Air Force and DOD statements in the public record.

“Consequently the United States will maintain and enhance as necessary, the capability to forward-deploy nuclear bombers...around the world. We are committed to upgrading the DCA with the nuclear-capable F35 aircraft.”

Department of Defense, 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, Chapter VII, “Current and Future US Nuclear Capabilities, page 54

Further, the MIC boasts of a nuclear loaded F35 for its “...combination of accuracy and low-yield make the B61-12 the most usable nuclear bomb in America's arsenal. This makes using nuclear weapons thinkable for the first time since the 1940s” as if that is a good thing! Further military assessments suggest “Yet the most dangerous nuclear bomb in American's arsenal may be the new B61-12.” And that “What makes the B61-12 bomb the most dangerous nuclear weapon in American's arsenal is its usability. “

State [political leaders](#) have been so supportive that former Governor Peter Shumlin traveled to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida came away declaring that “*Listening has been a real eye*

opener. *It is surprising how quiet the F35 is.*" Noise abatement is a major issue since the F35 is four times louder than the F16's being replaced and required the destruction of 200 homes identified

as being within the zone that exceeded acceptable decibel level. How nearby public school students or at the nearby college will be expected to learn and concentrate in an environment unfit for residential habitation remains to be seen.

During a 2016 campaign debate in which F35 supporters cited the local Air Guard's efforts after the 911 attack, Burlington Mayor Milo Weinberger, another politically elite F35 supporter responded that "They flew over an area already devastated by a terrorist action. I don't believe they stopped a single thing from happening." Without meaning to, his comments raise a valid question about why the Pentagon funds local Air National Guard unit other than as a glorified jobs program.

In [justifying](#) his support in 2016, Sanders said it was not the plane but the jobs and economic advantage of the F35 that he supports. "In the real world, if the plane is built ... and if the choice is if that goes to Vermont ... South Carolina or Florida. What is your choice as a United States Senator?" [he asked](#). "And that's what the Vermont National Guard wants, and that means hundreds of jobs in my city. That's it."

Sanders claim that the project will add 1,100 new jobs to the Airport is fraudulent, according to Greco who says that with departure of the F16s', there will be a one for one swap with the previous F16 employees being trained on the F35s.

The question is when did Bernie and the doddering Sen. Leahy, who apparently was the prime mover and shaker to bring the F35 to Vermont, discover that the F35 would be nuclear capable? Greco says that public records shows that after Vermont was initially explored and dismissed by the Air Force as being an unsuitable location with South Carolina being the preferred location, Leahy personally intervened to bring the F35 to Vermont.

It is inconceivable that the Air Force would keep that level of pertinent information secret from two US Senators who had become its reliably pro- F35 allies while they opposed and deceived the best interests of their own constituents .

Renee Parsons has been a member of the ACLU's Florida State Board of Directors and president of the ACLU Treasure Coast Chapter. She has been an elected public official in Colorado, an environmental lobbyist for Friends of the Earth and staff member of the US House of Representatives in Washington DC. She can be found on Twitter @reneedove31

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Renee Parsons](#), Global Research, 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Renee Parsons](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca