

Arctic Surveillance Aircraft 7/10

SOVEREIGNTY SCORE

The Government of Canada announced plans to purchase six Saab GlobalEye airborne early warning aircraft for the Canadian Armed Forces.

Based on the deal's diversification of partnerships and supply chains, enhanced opportunity for Canadian governance, and the inclusion of Canadian firms and labour, the deal receives a 7/10 on the Sovereignty Score.

May 27 2026



SOVEREIGNTY BY DESIGN

Canada's Arctic surveillance aircraft procurement gets a 7/10 on the Canadian Shield Institute's Sovereignty Score.

On May 27, at the CANSEC security conference, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced the decision to enter into negotiations with the Swedish firm Saab to procure up to six of its GlobalEye airborne early warning aircraft for the CAF.

The GlobalEye platform consists of a suite of sensors and radar built by Saab, installed in a Bombardier 6500 jet, and is set to fill a critical strategic need for Arctic detection and deterrence. Saab also previously made a [deal](#) with Canadian AI firm Cohere to integrate AI systems into the GlobalEye platform. The announcement was made after consideration of other options: the Boeing E-7 Wedgetail and the L3Harris Aeris X, both from U.S. companies. The deal would ensure 15 of the planned 40 jet fleet (deployed across multiple countries) would be built in Canada, potentially supporting up to 3,000 skilled Canadian jobs.

Some have responded positively to the decision for embracing the “middle powers” approach to economic security Carney has touted since Davos, by procuring from a European NATO ally and for building interoperability with other Nordic countries on a platform that is focused on Arctic security. However, there has been some concern from within defence and security circles because the Swedish option will decrease interoperability with key allies: USA, UK, and Australia.

Based on the deal's diversification of partnerships and supply chains, enhanced opportunity for Canadian governance, and the inclusion of Canadian firms and labour, the deal receives a 7/10 on the Sovereignty Score.

Sovereignty Score

Sovereignty: This section measures if and how the policy choice increases Canada's sovereignty and strategic autonomy.

Does the policy reduce dependence on foreign firms or diversify supply and value chains?

Yes – By using Bombardier's aircraft for the GlobalEye system and requiring that at least a third of the fleet is manufactured in Canada, the decision reduces dependence on foreign firms and manufacturing. Partnering with Saab for this capability further diversifies our supply chains, especially given the other options under consideration for the AEW&C capacity were American.

Does the policy put Canada in a stronger position to govern technology systems?

Yes – By diversifying defence technology partnerships with an Arctic NATO ally like Sweden, as well as ensuring one third of the entire Saab GlobalEye fleet will be built in Canada, the decision increases Canadian influence and control over key elements of this platform.

Does the policy enhance Canadian national security and industrial capacity?

Yes – The requirement for Canadian manufacturing enhances our industrial capacity and increased airborne surveillance capacity is likely to enhance our national security by making it easier to detect and respond to threats in the Arctic. Criticism that this decision moves away from closer allies like the US, UK, and Australia is balanced by the fact that this forges deeper ties with Sweden which is a NATO ally and a fellow member of the NATO Arctic Sentry activity and other Arctic-focused [frameworks](#).

Does the policy lead to greater competition and broader market participation, and avoid further entrenching monopoly power or market concentration?

Yes – While Bombardier is a [dominant](#) player in the Canadian aerospace market, diversifying defence procurement away from dominant American players promotes broader participation and will have a de-concentrating effect.

Does the policy support the development and growth of Canadian innovation?

No – The Bombardier 6500 jets are already in production and will likely not generate significant new innovation in the manufacturing process while all of the IP and innovation around the GlobalEye platform will primarily be retained by Saab. In the process of installing the platform into the jets, there may be opportunities for some downstream innovation but nothing about the decision inherently ensures Canadian innovation.

Economic Prosperity: This section measures how the policy delivers economic growth, and how it shapes the Canadian economy.

Does the policy lead to the generation of intangible assets or economic value that is primarily retained by Canadian firms or public entities?

Yes – The choice to use the Bombardier 6500 executive jet — a Canadian owned and controlled company — will introduce more revenue and boost the company's overall value. It is also [expected](#) that at least 15 of the 40 jets will be manufactured in Canada. The data collected by Canada's 6 jets will be owned and controlled by the CAF through live data streaming systems. However, any new intellectual property generated will be retained by Saab.

Does the policy create, sustain or improve quality jobs in Canada?

Yes – The procurement decision is expected to [support](#) around 3,000 jobs in Canada. The language in the government announcement suggests that the government purchase is primarily sustaining jobs that already exist.

Does the policy increase skill utilization or broaden the skill base of Canadian workers?

No – This policy decision does not explicitly increase the skill utilization or broaden the skill base of Canadians. There is no guarantee of net-new jobs from this decision only, and the skills of existing employees are already being utilized.

Is the policy designed to ensure that economic benefits create shared prosperity?

Yes – This decision creates new business for Bombardier, which will also have positive benefits for the Canadian-based firms that are supporting the project, including Cohere.

Does the policy increase affordability and deliver pro-social benefits to Canadians?

No – This procurement decision does not increase affordability, as the nature of the decision does not involve everyday consumers.

About The Canadian Shield Institute for Public Policy

The Canadian Shield Institute is a next-generation policy studio focused on developing Canada's sovereignty and driving economic transformation. We work across infrastructure, industry, and innovation to confront systemic risks, retain economic value, and build the domestic capacity Canada needs to thrive. Our goal is a more prosperous, resilient, and independent future for all Canadians.

Suggested Citation: The Canadian Shield Institute for Public Policy, *Sovereignty Score: Arctic Surveillance Aircraft*, May 27 2026

Copyright © 2026 by the Canadian Shield Institute for Public Policy.

For general inquiries, please contact hello@canadianshieldinstitute.ca



The text of this work is licensed under CC BY 4.0. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

For reuse or distribution, please include this copyright notice. This work may contain content (including but not limited to graphics, charts and photographs) used or reproduced under licence or with permission from third parties. Permission to reproduce this content must be obtained from third parties directly.

The Canadian Shield Institute is a registered trademark.