

# The Chart Page

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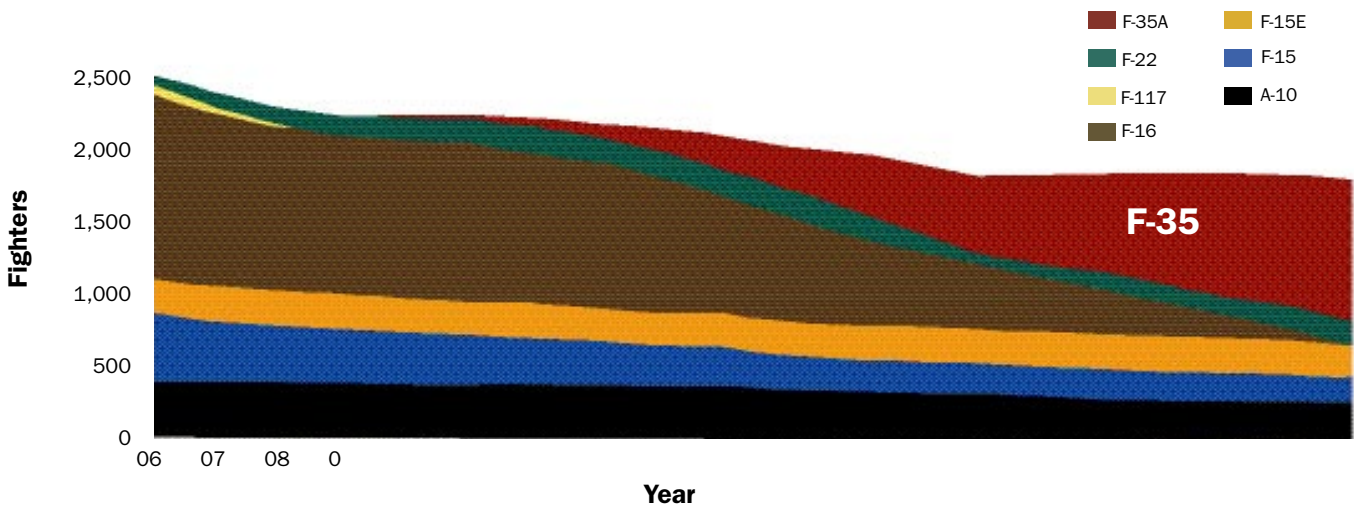
## How Critical Is the F-35?

Fighters are key elements in three of the nation's four armed services—the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. In a sense, each has bet the farm on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a fact dramatized in these charts of future force structure. The F-35 is intended to equip the services with similar but distinct variants. USAF's F-35A would replace the F-16. The figure below depicts today's funded USAF fighter program,

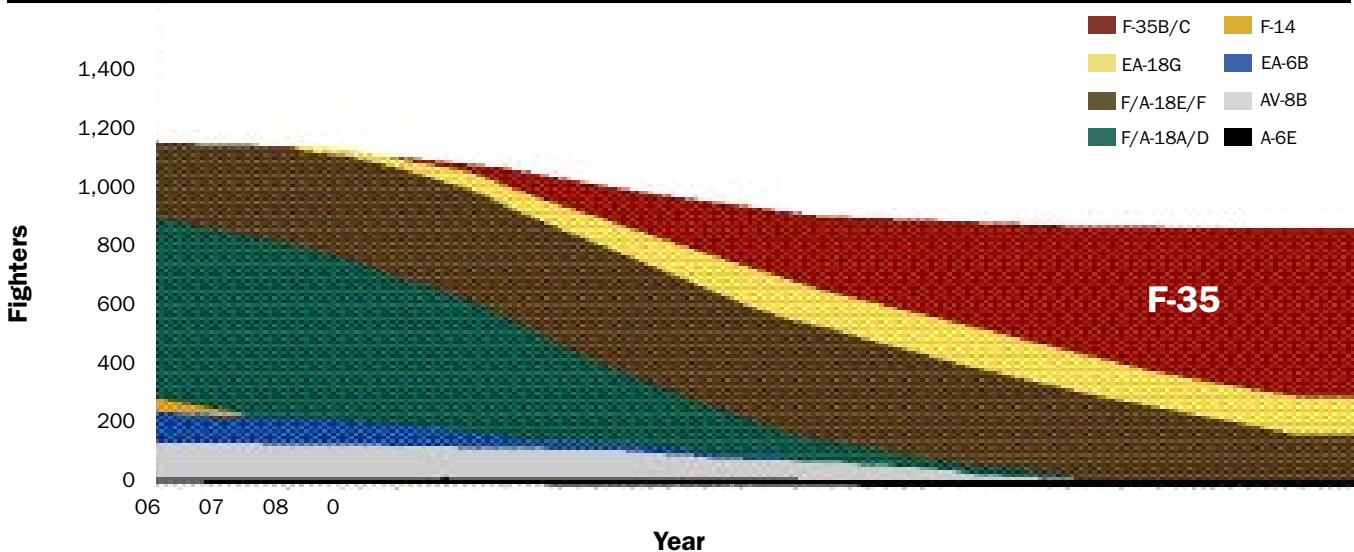
which assumes a full purchase of 1,763 F-35As. The total inventory will decrease from 2,500 to 1,800 fighters, and the F-35A would account for about half the fleet. In the maritime forces, the story is much the same. The Navy's carrier-capable F-35C will replace old F/A-18C/Ds, and USMC's F-35B, a short takeoff and vertical landing model, would supplant USMC AV-8Bs and F/A-18s. The two services combined would

buy 695 fighters, which will comprise nearly two-thirds of the naval fighter inventory. With the F-35 providing such a huge part of the forces, any major reduction or delay could cause serious disruption.

### USAF Fighter Forces, 2006-25



### Navy-USMC Fighters, 2006-25



Source: Government Accountability Office.