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## Canada's Over-the-Horizon Radar Breakthrough with Australia

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Canada's partnership with Australia to deploy the Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar (A-OTHR) marks a pivotal step in bolstering North American security. This article explores the \$6 billion deal to acquire Australia's Jindalee Operational Radar Network (JORN) technology, its strategic importance for Arctic surveillance, and concerns over bypassing Canadian firms.

On March 18, 2025, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced a \$6 billion agreement to purchase Australia's Jindalee Operational

Radar Network (JORN) technology for the Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar (A-OTHR) project, as reported by The Globe and Mail. Unlike conventional radar, A-OTHR bounces high-frequency radio waves off the ionosphere, enabling detection of aircraft and ships up to 3,000 kilometers away. This capability is vital for monitoring Canada's vast Arctic, where Russian and Chinese activities, including hypersonic missile advancements, threaten North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) security. The system, to be operational by 2029, will enhance the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) early warning and tracking capabilities, reinforcing Arctic sovereignty.

The deal, part of Canada's \$38.6 billion NORAD modernization plan announced in 2022, leverages Australia's Defence Science and Technology Group's expertise alongside Canada's high-frequency radar experience. Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles called it "the single biggest defense industry export" in Australia's history, per Breaking Defense. The partnership will see BAE Systems Australia and Canadian firms collaborate, though the decision to favor foreign technology has sparked criticism. Dipak Roy, chairman of Ottawa-based D-TA Systems, told the Ottawa Citizen, "It's a slap in the face," noting his firm's \$30 million investment in similar radar technology, which was overlooked despite proven success.

The Albanese government's choice to prioritize foreign systems over Canadian innovation raises questions about national pride and economic strategy. With the United States eyeing JORN for its own use, Canada's move sidesteps domestic solutions, potentially weakening local industry. As geopolitical tensions rise, the A-OTHR project is a bold step, but the government must balance strategic urgency with support for Canadian expertise to ensure long-term sovereignty and self-reliance.