

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

I write today as a senior member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party to express my deep concern over recent public reports that a UPS shipment of F-35 parts from Australia to the United States was diverted to Hong Kong and is now reportedly in the possession of the Chinese government.^{1 2} We cannot allow advanced military technologies to fall into the hands of U.S. adversaries. Therefore, I urge you to conduct an immediate review of the reported diversion of sensitive U.S. technology and brief Congress on the incident and additional actions taken to prevent foreign adversaries from acquiring U.S. military technology.

The F-35 Program is critical to U.S. national security and deterring conflict in the Indo-Pacific. F-35 fighter jets are known for their stealth and contain highly classified technologies, including an advanced radar-absorbing coating, that give the United States and our allies a competitive edge. However, this month, *Politico* and *Bloomberg* reported that a UPS shipment of Australian F-35 parts—including a weapons-bay door and a jet canopy that typically contain stealth technology—was rerouted to Hong Kong after it stopped in South Korea during its transit from Australia to the United States for repairs. According to *Bloomberg*, the Chinese government took possession of the parts and has not returned them.³ Possession of F-35 parts could allow the CCP to reverse engineer U.S. stealth technology, threatening our service members and national security. Incidents like this simply should not happen, and they raise serious questions over Department of Defense (DOD) and commercial shipping companies' policies for tracking sensitive U.S. military hardware.⁴

The F-35 Program supply chain clearly needs more oversight. According to a 2023 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, more than a million F-35 spare parts that were collectively worth \$85 million went missing over a five-year period.⁵ DOD only investigated 2% of those lost parts. The GAO report notes that “rather than owning the spare parts for their aircraft, [F-35] program participants share a common, global pool of spare parts that DOD owns and the prime contractors manage.” This creates a gap in accountability that may explain the reported incident of parts being diverted to Hong Kong. Though DOD concurred with all four GAO recommendations to increase F-35 supply chain accountability and estimated they would be completed by mid-late 2024, the status of these recommendations continues to be “open.” DOD must close these security loopholes immediately and assess how these vulnerabilities may have contributed to the reported incident.

¹ Decker, Audrey, and Mark Satter. “Hill Investigates after F-35 Parts Diverted to Hong Kong.” *Politico*, September 18, 2026.

² Capaccio, Anthony. “China Is Holding Sensitive F-35 Parts Diverted to Hong Kong.” *Bloomberg*, September 23, 2026.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ U.S. Government Accountability Office, F-35 Program: DOD Needs Better Accountability for Global Spare Parts and Reporting of Losses Worth Millions, GAO-23-106098 (Washington, DC: GAO, May 23, 2023)

Going forward, I urge DOD to ensure the F-35 and other similar programs' parts pools are tracked via a government system of record to avoid losses and security risks. In addition, I urge you to ensure there is an extensive vetting process for commercial shipping companies entrusted with cutting-edge U.S. technology. DOD should also take a greater role in supervising shipments, including company policy toward stopping in adversary-controlled territories and the tracking of shipments carrying high-value technologies. Finally, I urge you to assess the risk of the CCP gaining our sensitive technologies through other countries. I strongly oppose the sale of F-35s to countries including Saudi Arabia, which could put the crown jewels of American military technology within reach of the CCP.

Until DOD secures its own supply chains and holds those responsible for the Hong Kong diversion accountable, it cannot guarantee the security of F-35 technology anywhere. To that end, please provide responses to the following questions by October 12, 2026:

- 1) Please provide a detailed account of the shipment's chain of custody from the time it left Australia until its reported diversion to Hong Kong.
- 2) Why did the shipment stop in South Korea, who authorized the stop, and how did the shipment ultimately arrive in Hong Kong?
- 3) What entity was responsible for maintaining the parts' chain of custody throughout the shipment?
- 4) Does the Department assess that the diversion resulted from an intentional act, negligence, inadequate safeguards, or subversion? Please describe the basis for this assessment and whether DOD has identified any individuals or entities responsible for the diversion.
- 5) What actions, if any, has DOD taken to recover the F-35 parts?
- 6) Why were these F-35 components transported through a commercial shipping network rather than by military transportation? What criteria does DOD use to determine when sensitive F-35 components may be transported commercially, and will those criteria be reassessed following this incident?
- 7) What is DOD's assessment of the national security implications of the reported Chinese possession of these F-35 components? To what extent could examination or reverse engineering of the components provide the CCP with information about F-35 capabilities, materials, or other sensitive technologies?
- 8) Has DOD identified any other instances in which F-35 parts or other sensitive military components have been lost, diverted, or routed through China, Hong Kong, or other territories controlled by U.S. adversaries?
- 9) What additional steps has DOD taken, or does DOD plan to take, to prevent U.S. military technology from being routed through China, Hong Kong, or other territories controlled by U.S. adversaries?
- 10) Why has DOD not yet fully implemented the four GAO recommendations made in 2023 regarding accountability for the F-35 global spare parts pool? What is DOD's timeline for fully implementing each recommendation?

Thank you—I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress