Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 4, 2026

The Honorable Troy E. Meink
Secretary
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Meink:

We write to request additional information concerning the Department of the Air Force's changes to the China Aerospace Studies Institute (CASI) at Air University. Since its founding, CASI has served as an important resource not only for the Air Force and Space Force but also for other military services, Congress, and the expert community for understanding "everything that flies" in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Under-resourcing CASI's mission could risk undermining the ability of military leaders and civilian policymakers to understand the PRC's aerospace strategy and capabilities and, by extension, deter Beijing from using them in a military conflict. Any potential loss of such expertise is particularly worrisome given the PRC's continued efforts to rapidly modernize its aerospace forces while expanding its aggressive activities in the Indo-Pacific region.

For years, CASI has provided unique publications and other expert resources to the U.S. government and public alike. In its role as the Department of the Air Force's "premier center for the study of China and its aerospace capabilities," CASI has published publicly available translations of critical People's Liberation Army (PLA) documents, insights into Chinese strategic thought, and expert research and analysis on the PLA's modernization.[1] CASI also provides education and training for U.S. and allied military and civilian personnel, including a "PLA Fundamentals" training course, the latest iteration of which ran in August. Without CASI's in-house expertise, the Air Force and other government agencies would presumably need to expend considerable resources to purchase contracted expertise from external vendors.

A reduction in the federal enterprise's ability to assess PRC aerospace capabilities would be particularly concerning in light of the PRC's rapidly improving air, missile, and space capabilities. Understanding the PLA's capabilities in these domains is critical for deterring conflict and, as stated in CASI's charter, for "improving [the U.S.] ability to be successful in strategic competition." As the PLA continues to expand its aerospace capabilities, our need to understand these advancements will continue to grow.

Accordingly, we respectfully request a briefing from the Department of the Air Force on its resourcing and personnel decisions with respect to CASI no later than November 20, 2026.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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[1] https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CASI/

Sincerely,

John Moolenaar
Chairman
Select Committee on the CCP

Ro Khanna
Ranking Member
Select Committee on the CCP