JetZero CEO, Tom O'Leary, Testimony: Outproducing the CCP (Aerospace Manufacturing)

Oral statement (5.5 minutes)

Chairman Moolenaar, Ranking Member Khanna, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation. I am Tom O'Leary, co-founder and CEO of JetZero, an American aircraft company headquartered in Long Beach, California, and building its factory in Greensboro, North Carolina. We are building the Z4, a dual-use aircraft: a passenger jet for about 250 people that also has military uses, including aerial refueling and airlift. It is a blended wing body: picture a flying wing, with the cabin inside the wing itself. That shape burns up to 50 percent less fuel than a conventional jet of similar size and reshapes the passenger experience.

American researchers conceived it in the 1990s, American laboratories proved it, and an American company is now building it.

My argument is simple. Aerospace is one of the last advanced industries where America still leads China, and that lead will not hold on its own.

Your report, *Rigging the Game*, shows what happens when we treat an industry as permanent. Semiconductors, shipbuilding, and machine tools were American strengths. Aerospace still is: in 2025 we ran a $131 billion trade surplus in aircraft, spacecraft, and parts. And the factories, engineers, and suppliers that build airliners also build military variants. Aerospace is a dual-use industry.

China plays a long game. Your report estimates forty-nine billion dollars in subsidies and financing for COMAC through 2020. Results so far are mixed: COMAC, China's state-owned airliner maker, delivered 15 C919s last year against a target of 75, and still relies on Western engines. But the right conclusion is not that China is failing. It is that China is learning. No one in 2001 Detroit thought China would own the global car market. Yet here we are today.

The question for this Committee is what China does with the experience it is gaining, and what that means one to two decades from now.

China has spent more than fifteen years on this configuration, and has flown subscale blended wing body demonstrators since 2017. We assess a blended wing body tanker is a likely early priority for the PLA Air Force. Whoever industrializes this configuration first sets the standards for a generation.

Here is what we in JetZero are doing to ensure America leads. In June, we broke ground on an eight-million-square-foot assembly campus in Greensboro: $4.7 billion that will create 14,500 jobs. Our full-scale demonstrator, built with Northrop Grumman's Scaled Composites, flies next

year. It exists because the Air Force awarded us $235 million in 2023 as a public private partnership to build and fly it.

Last month, the Hudson Institute found that a blended wing body tanker could carry far more fuel much farther than today's fleet. That matters because China is watching airfields in the Middle East come under attack, and it faces the same tyranny of distance across the Pacific. China can threaten our forward airfields today. The current tanker fleet cannot deliver quantity at range. The blended wing body can. Who will own that advantage first, us or China?

Here is the lesson. JetZero got this far by stitching together a federal contract, private capital, airline commitments, and a supportive state in North Carolina that moved fast. That is the resilience of one startup, not a national strategy, and it has not been easy. You cannot ask American industry for new, better, and faster without backing it with a coordinated federal strategy. Venture capital chases quick wins and software, not brick and mortar. Yet modern factories are what advance American industrialization, and they pay back in spades over decades. We will need federal loans to succeed, and so will every factory like ours that follows. China does not stitch deals together. It plans and sets a whole policy playbook in motion.

One more commitment: JetZero will not sell these airplanes directly to China. Previous decades saw too much technology cross the Pacific in exchange for market access. We all need to bear the responsibility of making decisions that build this country's wealth and keep our industry healthy.

I offer three recommendations. First, name next generation aerospace technology as a strategic aim in the industrial strategy your report calls for and support it as such with federal loan programs. Second, bridge demonstrators to production with protype commitments, so a successful prototype becomes a fleet. Third, resource the FAA and support certification reform to certify new configurations on a predictable timeline, because certification is now a geopolitical tool. My written statement offers further steps on supply chains and research security.

China has spent fifteen years preparing for this next generation aircraft. One of us will fly and scale a blended wing body aircraft first. Will it be us, or will it be them? America should and will be first with your support. Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Written statement

The sections below are the written statement for the hearing record. They keep the China analysis from the earlier draft, rebalanced around JetZero's manufacturing story and the Committee's own November 13 report.

I. Why aerospace is a strategic industry

Aerospace is the rare advanced-manufacturing sector where the United States still leads, and that lead is the product of decisions made over decades that were never guaranteed to continue. Four features make it strategic.

It is an economic anchor. The U.S. trade surplus in aircraft, spacecraft, and parts rose from $98.8 billion in 2024 to $130.9 billion in 2025, according to the White House's American Manufacturing Renaissance report, which draws on UN Comtrade data. Behind that surplus sits a deep supplier base across dozens of states.

It is dual-use by nature. The Select Committee's report, *Rigging the Game*, argues that manufacturing capacity and military capacity are inseparable, and that the side able to replace losses fastest will more often prevail. Aerospace is a clear case. The final assembly lines, composite and metallic structures suppliers, engine makers, and skilled workforce that produce commercial airliners are the same base that produces tankers, transports, and bombers. A commercial program that succeeds strengthens the military industrial base; one that fails weakens both.

It is long-cycle, so the lead is perishable. A new aircraft takes roughly a decade from launch to service, and the factories, certification basis, and supply chains behind it take longer. The defense side shows the consolidation risk: the White House report, citing a 2022 Department of War review, notes that the defense industry has gone from 51 aerospace and defense prime contractors to five since the 1990s. Capacity lost in this industry is not rebuilt in a budget cycle.

China has named it a priority. Beijing's 2026 Report on the Work of the Government lists aerospace among its "new pillar industries," according to the Select Committee's report. The Chinese state intends to compete here for decades, whatever its results to date.

II. China's state-directed model, and where it stands

China's aerospace effort is a state project, and the Select Committee's report documents how it works. JetZero's own analysis of Chinese sources, summarized here, is consistent with that account.

Capital. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) estimates China provided about $49 billion in financing and subsidies for its large-aircraft program through 2020, and projects support as high as $72.1 billion, against roughly $22 billion the WTO found Airbus received. COMAC opened in 2008 with RMB 19 billion ($2.8 billion) in state equity and added a RMB 30 billion ($4.4 billion) bank credit line in 2009, for more than $7 billion in initial resources. State-owned firms and local governments could guarantee its borrowing.

Local mobilization. Shanghai has offered to cover 30 percent of qualifying aerospace R&D costs, up to RMB 500,000 per airworthiness certificate for parts, and 10 percent of manufacturing equipment investment up to RMB 100 million per project. Tianjin pays to relocate aviation firms. Local officials are rewarded for hosting the industry.

Captive demand. Air China, China Eastern, and China Southern each placed 100-aircraft C919 orders. Industry observers have described these purchases as state directed. Every Chinese airline aircraft purchase requires government approval, which Beijing uses to balance foreign purchases and to press Western firms into joint ventures.

Technology transfer. Foreign suppliers that formed joint ventures with Chinese firms received priority from COMAC, producing more than a dozen Chinese and Western aerospace ventures. Airbus built its first final assembly line outside France in Tianjin, and AVIC's Xi'an Aircraft makes wings for both the A320 and the C919. Chinese state carriers have ordered more than $58 billion of Airbus aircraft since 2017, while Boeing has received no major Chinese order since 2017.

Certification as leverage. China grounded the 737 MAX from March 2019 until January 2023. In 2026, according to the Committee's report, it delayed final approvals of Airbus aircraft to pressure the European Union Aviation Safety Agency to approve the C919. Regulatory approval is a tool of industrial policy in Beijing's hands.

Results so far are mixed. The Committee finds that aerospace is a sector where China's policy has produced limited results at significant cost. COMAC planned 75 C919 deliveries in 2025, cut the target to 25, and delivered 15. Its backlog exceeds 1,000 aircraft while annual deliveries remain in the low teens. The aircraft still depends on Western engines and avionics and has neither FAA nor EASA certification. Engines remain China's most acute chokepoint, and the Aero Engine Corporation of China, founded in 2016, is building the CJ-1000A to replace the CFM LEAP-1C.

The right conclusion is not that China will fail. State orders can guarantee demand but cannot by themselves produce airworthy aircraft; the same state can absorb delays that would end a Western program, and it has done so across seven decades. The question for the Committee is what China does with the experience it is gaining.

III. The next phase: the blended wing body

The C919 and C929 are conventional aircraft. China's research portfolio points to the next configuration, the blended wing body (BWB), which merges wing and fuselage into one lifting surface. COMAC, AVIC, and defense-affiliated universities have worked on BWB designs since at least 2008, and demonstrators have flown since 2017.

Program	Lead organizations	Period	Activity and significance
BWB-150	Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU), COMAC	2008–2010	150-seat concept study alongside early C919 design; reported 15 percent aircraft-level benefit
Lingque A / B	COMAC Beijing research center, Beihang, AVIC	2010–2020	Subscale flight demonstrators; Lingque B first flew autonomously on April 21, 2017
Lingque H	COMAC, State Grid hydrogen unit, Beihang	2019	Hydrogen fuel-cell variant; ten test flights
NPU-BWB-300/330	NPU, COMAC, AVIC	c. 2019–2023	300–330 seat concept in the 787 / A350 class; 1:10 scale model flew autonomously January 30, 2023

Program	Lead organizations	Period	Activity and significance
BATRI-450	COMAC Beijing Aircraft Technology Research Institute	Recent	450-seat, Mach 0.85 concept; transonic wind-tunnel campaign at CARDC comparing engine installations
CARDC flying-wing model	China Aerodynamics Research and Development Center	Recent	Large high-aspect-ratio model with a notional 800-seat reference size; aerodynamic validation, not a defined aircraft program

Source: JetZero analysis of Chinese corporate statements, government media, and published technical literature.

Three observations matter for this Committee.

1. **The work is oriented toward a certifiable product.** The NPU design specifies eight exits sized for the 90-second evacuation standard and a 16-abreast cabin, and the Lingque demonstrator was built with retractable landing gear and gate-compatible dimensions. These are the questions a manufacturer asks when it intends to build.
2. **Civil and military work are not separate.** NPU's current program lead has publicly described the BWB technology base as capable of evolving into transport aircraft and very large special-equipment platforms. The NPU-330 flew at a test site shared with military unmanned aircraft operations.
3. **A military tanker is the likely first application.** China's YY-20 tanker, in service since 2022, has shortcomings in range, offload, and fuel efficiency, and it does not meet the needs of a growing fleet that includes the J-20S, JH-36, and H-20. We assess the PLA Air Force will prioritize a BWB tanker for its payload efficiency and reduced signature. This is our assessment, not an established fact. The Hudson Institute's October 2026 analysis of tanker survivability reaches a compatible conclusion from the U.S. side: reach decides a Pacific conflict (see Section V).

On timing, we assess a Chinese commercial BWB is plausible in the late 2030s and more likely in the early 2040s, after the C919 ramp and the C929 widebody. That timeline is a window, not a reassurance: aircraft programs take a decade or more, and decisions made in the next few years determine where the first widely certified BWBs are designed and built.

IV. JetZero: industrializing the next aircraft in America

JetZero is building a new aircraft configuration, and its factory, in the United States, and the way it is doing so shows both what American industry can still do and what it takes. This section is offered as a case study for the Committee.

The aircraft. The Z4 is a blended wing body airliner for about 250 passengers with a range of up to 5,000 nautical miles. JetZero estimates it will burn up to 50 percent less fuel per passenger mile than a conventional airliner of similar size. It is designed to fit existing airport infrastructure, with no new runways, taxiways, or jet bridges, and to run on conventional jet fuel or sustainable aviation fuel. JetZero targets entry into service in the early 2030s and sees global demand for roughly 12,000 airframes in its middle-market segment through 2050.

The footprint.

The factory. Greensboro is a greenfield, digital-first plant designed to ramp faster, cut unit cost, and harden the supply chain. At full rate it is planned to produce up to 20 aircraft a month by the late 2030s. JetZero has committed to create 14,500 jobs over roughly a decade, with hiring ramping in phases as the plant comes online, which North Carolina describes as the largest job commitment in its history, supported by more than $1.1 billion in performance-based state incentives paid over nearly 40 years and contingent on those jobs. The incentives are conditional on results, not paid up front. The jobs, the digital approach, and the training pipeline are described below.

The digital factory. Greensboro is designed digital-first. With Siemens and Deloitte, JetZero built a complete digital twin of the factory before any concrete was poured, and used it to test how machines, people, and materials will move through the building and to make changes on a screen rather than on a job site. JetZero has also cited Nvidia and AWS infrastructure and millions of simulation runs. JetZero believes this makes the plant unusually adaptable, which is rare in aerospace, where factories are usually laid out around a fixed design and are costly to change. Because JetZero has no legacy production line to retrofit, it can develop the aircraft, the process, and the factory together. The same tools change the work itself: employees will need basic programming, circuitry, and digital-tool skills alongside traditional trades, which makes this as much a training challenge as a technology one. The model is one that smaller U.S. suppliers could adopt too, if they have the support to do it.

Jobs and the regional economy. JetZero plans about 14,500 jobs in Greensboro at full build-out, with hiring ramping in phases over a decade. We anticipate the Z4 will support over 53,000 jobs nationwide. North Carolina calls it the largest job commitment in state history, and the White House's manufacturing report lists it among the two largest job announcements of 522 projects. The jobs are not only on the assembly line. They include technicians, manufacturing and industrial engineers, quality and test specialists, programmers, and supply chain staff, and they support further work in suppliers, construction, and local services. The Select Committee's report describes American towns hollowed out by deindustrialization; this is a case of a new industry rebuilding that base. Greensboro was a textile and furniture town gutted in the 1990s by trade agreements. Our average salary will be $89,000 and will help train the next generation of digitally enabled manufacturing technicians.

Workforce development. JetZero and its partners are building the pipeline years before hiring peaks, starting with students and teachers. The table summarizes what is under way.

Partner	Role	Status
Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC)	Aviation programs and customized training for JetZero roles	New 70,000-square-foot aviation training center, about $35 million, adding roughly 40 percent capacity; a second building is planned for spring 2027 [confirm status]
North Carolina Community College System (NCEdge)	Customized training plan for JetZero roles, coordinated with GTCC and regional colleges	Agreed June 2025; the state incentive package includes funding

Partner	Role	Status
		for specialized training [confirm amount]
North Carolina A&T State University	Training in aerospace manufacturing and artificial intelligence through its College of Engineering; the state's first B.S. in artificial intelligence	Partnership announced June 2025
NC State, UNC Charlotte, and the UNC System	Engineering and research partners	[Confirm scope of collaboration]
Deloitte Believers program, UNC Greensboro, Guilford County Schools, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, National Math and Science Initiative	Train-the-teacher program in robotics, artificial intelligence, engineering, and computer science for Guilford County classrooms	First cohort in summer 2026: 20 teachers from 10 schools, reaching an estimated 3,500 to 5,000 students; support continues through the 2026–27 school year
NC Division of Workforce Solutions	State workforce services included in the incentive package	[Confirm value]

Sources: partner announcements and press reporting, listed at the end of this document.

Three points matter for the Committee. First, timing: training has to start years before hiring, which is why JetZero began with middle and high school teachers in 2026 for hiring that ramps in 2028 and 2029. Second, opportunity: the company expects strong careers that do not require a four-year degree, in a field where programming and digital-tool skills now sit beside the traditional trades. Third, competition: JetZero's head of government affairs has said the region has about 20,000 job pledges from several advanced manufacturers, including Boom Supersonic, HondaJet, Siemens, and Toyota Battery Manufacturing, all drawing on the same workers. Workforce capacity is a shared regional constraint, which is an argument for public investment at regional scale rather than company by company.

The supply chain. The demonstrator is built with domestic partners. For production, an Air Force-funded commercial solutions process is now in its third phase, evaluating engine options from the three major engine makers. JetZero is working with major suppliers on long-lead items such as landing gear and cabin seating to avoid the bottlenecks that have slowed other programs. We anticipate greater than 80% US content.

Our position on China. JetZero's CEO has stated publicly that the company will not sell these aircraft directly to China. [Insert the date and venue of the public statement.] The Select Committee's report explains why this matters: for decades, joint-venture requirements, offsets, and disclosure rules were used to draw aerospace technology out of Western firms, and COMAC gave priority to suppliers that formed joint ventures with Chinese companies, producing more than a dozen such ventures. Companies

that traded technology for market access gained sales in the short term while helping to build a state-backed competitor. JetZero's view is that U.S. industry should make decisions that build the country's wealth and capability, not only its investors' returns. In practice that means design, final assembly, and the supply chain stay in the United States, with U.S. content expected to exceed 80 percent. [CEO to add any further safeguards: export-control compliance, supplier and investor vetting, and how the commitment treats lessors and third-country resale.]

The capital. JetZero raised a $175 million Series B in January 2026, with participation from United Airlines Ventures, RTX Ventures, and Northrop Grumman, and has said it plans a substantially larger Series C that will close in weeks. Private capital at this scale for a first-of-a-kind aircraft factory is scarce, and it was assembled alongside a federal contract, airline commitments, and state incentives, each negotiated separately.

The regulator. The FAA has moved JetZero from its emerging-technologies group into the Integrated Certificate Management Office (AIR-500), the office that oversees established manufacturers. JetZero plans to file for type certification under Part 25. [Confirm status and timing before submission.]

What is ahead.

1. Late 2026: formal application for FAA type certification.
2. 2027: first flight of the full-scale demonstrator, a 185-foot wingspan aircraft, with fewer than 20 flights planned to validate the design.
3. Early 2030s: Z4 entry into service from Greensboro.
4. Late 2030s: up to 20 aircraft a month at full rate.

What was hard. [We need to insert, in plain terms: what it took to finance a factory before first revenue, which supplier gaps or single points of failure exist, how long permitting and certification take, and where the workforce pipeline is thin. This is the most useful part of the testimony for a Committee writing policy; specifics beat generalities and how difficut it is to get the government to stand behind something they say they want but are hesitnt to help stand up through loans.]

V. The Air Force demonstrator and the airline partners

The Z4 program has two anchors: a federal demonstrator contract that took the technical risk, and U.S. airlines that are committing capital to the commercial aircraft.

The Air Force demonstrator. In August 2023, the U.S. Air Force awarded JetZero a $235 million, four-year contract to build and fly a full-scale demonstrator. [Confirm contracting channel and wording, including any Defense Innovation Unit role.] The demonstrator is under construction with Northrop Grumman's Scaled Composites and is scheduled to fly in 2027. The Air Force's interest is the military variant: the blended wing body is one large lifting surface, and JetZero estimates a tanker built on it could carry roughly twice the fuel or fly twice the range of a conventional tube-and-wing tanker, with potential fuel savings to the Department of the Air Force of up to $1 billion a year. [These are company estimates; confirm they are substantiated and cleared before they enter the record.] JetZero is developing a military variant, the KC-Z4, though the path to a tanker program is not yet set: Air & Space Forces Magazine reports that the Air Force's fiscal 2027 budget request shifted its near-term focus from exploring a new tanker aircraft toward protection systems. [Confirm current status of the Next-Generation Air Refueling System effort.]

The scale matters. COMAC began with more than $7 billion in state equity and credit, and CSIS estimates tens of billions more followed. The Air Force's demonstrator contract is $235 million. It was enough to prove a concept and attract $4.7 billion of private and state investment, but a gap remains between a successful demonstrator and a fielded fleet. Closing that gap is a procurement and financing question that only the government can answer.

What the Hudson Institute says it will take. On October 27, the Hudson Institute released *Resilient Reach: Redesigning Aerial Refueling for Contested Global Operations*, by Timothy Walton and Shane Dennin, which asks what it would take to sustain U.S. air operations against China. Its core finding is that by 2035 Chinese forces will likely be able to suppress large-scale tanker operations from the forward and many intermediate airfields that tankers rely on today, which the authors warn could collapse U.S. air operations in a war with China. Its answer is a tanker that launches from farther away and carries more fuel. The report finds that a medium-sized blended wing body could refuel more than twice as many force packages, or refuel the same packages more than twice as far, as the KC-46A, and up to five times as many operationally relevant fuel increments at longer ranges and higher offloads.

The report is also specific about sequencing, which makes it a useful guide to what it would take to stay ahead:

1. **Hold the current line.** Continue the KC-46 production extension while the new tanker matures.
2. **Fund maturation on a schedule.** Assuming the 2027–2028 demonstrator evaluation goes well, direct fiscal 2027 research and development funding to mature a medium-sized, long-range, high-offload tanker such as a medium blended wing body, with a development contract in fiscal 2028 and fielding beginning in the mid-2030s.
3. **Treat it as a system.** Harden the most important tanker airfields and keep funding communications, self-defense, fuel-transfer, and automation systems for current and future tankers.
4. **Commit to the fleet.** The report models 250 medium blended wing body tankers and estimates 30-year costs of about $15.5 billion less than buying only KC-46As. Its mixed-fleet plan, roughly 260 KC-46s plus 250 medium blended wing bodies, is estimated at $398 billion over 30 years, against $413 billion for 510 KC-46s.

A fleet of that size is also an industrial question. It needs factories, suppliers, and a trained workforce in place before the contract is signed, not after, which is why the Greensboro factory and the workforce pipeline described above matter to the tanker as much as to the airliner.

The airline partners. Commercial airlines are not waiting for the demonstrator to fly before shaping the aircraft. They are participating in that now.

VI. What the manufacturing reports say about aerospace

Two recent reports bear directly on this hearing, and JetZero's experience speaks to both.

The Select Committee's report, and its aerospace case study. On November 13, Chairman Moolenaar and Ranking Member Khanna released *Rigging the Game: How China Undermined Western Manufacturing and Helped Hollow Out American Industry*, with case studies of biomanufacturing, aerospace, semiconductors, and machine tools. Its aerospace chapter finds that China's industrial policy has so far produced limited results at significant cost, with COMAC missing delivery targets and still

reliant on Western engines and avionics, and that Beijing is nonetheless backing the sector with subsidies, regulatory control, state-directed demand, and guidance funds. The report concludes that the United States needs a deliberate, multi-decade industrial strategy, pursued with the urgency of the Manhattan Project or the interstate highway system, to identify and revitalize key industries.

JetZero's experience maps onto the report's four mechanisms. The comparison shows that the American approach works company by company and rarely matches the scale or coordination of the Chinese model.

Mechanism	China, per the Committee's report	JetZero's U.S. experience	Gap to close
Subsidies and capital	About $49 billion in financing and subsidies for COMAC through 2020 (CSIS estimate); local governments cover R&D, certification, and equipment costs	$235 million Air Force demonstrator contract; $1.1 billion-plus state incentives contingent on jobs; private Series B of $175 million	[CEO: federal tools used or unavailable for first-of-a-kind aircraft factories]
Regulation	CAAC certification used to transfer technology and as leverage over foreign aircraft	FAA Part 25 type certification; AIR-500 oversight established in 2026	Resources and a predictable timeline for novel configurations
SOE coordination and demand	State airlines directed to order 100 C919s each	Conditional airline commitments from United and Alaska; Delta as development partner; Air Force as potential tanker customer	A government demand signal that carries a demonstrator into production
Guidance funds	Central and provincial funds steer capital into aerospace and its supply chain	Venture and strategic capital assembled deal by deal	[CEO: patient capital for supplier tiers and engines]

The administration's manufacturing report. The White House's American Manufacturing Renaissance report, released in November, catalogs 522 announced manufacturing projects worth $383.3 billion. Its aerospace, defense, and ships sector accounts for 53 projects, $29.9 billion, and 44,258 announced direct jobs, the most of any sector. American companies supply 70 percent of that sector's dollars, and 67 percent of the money goes to new sites. The report singles out JetZero's 14,500 jobs in Greensboro and Saronic's 10,000 in Brownsville as the two largest job announcements on the entire list, and it describes JetZero's $4.7 billion Z4 final assembly plant as the largest aircraft investment in the sector.

The two reports point to the same conclusion. Capital is flowing into American aerospace, and the Committee has documented that China's model is a long-term, coordinated one. What is missing is a coordinated strategy that makes the American investments compound into capacity: engines, structures, certification, and demand, rather than a set of separate bets.

VII. Recommendations for the Committee's consideration

The central recommendation is that Congress treat aerospace as a strategic industry and back that designation with sustained focus and resources. Seven actions follow from it.

1. **Designate aerospace a strategic industry in the national industrial strategy.** The Committee's report calls for a deliberate strategy to identify and revitalize key industries. Aerospace meets every test the report applies: a large trade surplus, dual-use capacity, long development cycles, and a named Chinese priority. Designation should come with a lead coordinating office, multi-year targets, and regular reporting to Congress. The Committee may wish to consider a modern successor to the 2001–2002 Commission on the Future of the United States Aerospace Industry.
2. **Bridge demonstrators to production.** Federal demonstrator programs prove concepts but do not by themselves create fleets. Pair them with procurement signals, such as the sequenced tanker plan in the Hudson Institute's Resilient Reach report and airlift requirements, and with multi-year commitments that let suppliers and lenders invest. Extend patient-capital tools, including federal loan programs, Defense Production Act authorities, and export credit, to first-of-a-kind aircraft factories and their supplier tiers. The 2025 provision allowing full expensing of new factory construction helps; the Committee could consider extending similar treatment to long-lead tooling and supplier capacity.
3. **Support the FAA Certification Reform Efforts.** Beijing uses certification as leverage: it grounded the 737 MAX for nearly four years and delayed Airbus approvals in 2026 to pressure European regulators. The United States should resource the FAA offices that certify new airplanes, give them a predictable basis and timeline, and engage allied regulators early on blended wing body questions such as evacuation, pressurization of non-cylindrical structure, and flight controls, so that U.S. standards remain the global reference.
4. **Invest in the chokepoints: engines, castings, forgings, composites, and workforce.** Engines are China's most acute weakness and a long-lead item for any new U.S. aircraft. Support engine development and qualification, secure the domestic supply of critical castings and forgings, and fund apprenticeship and community college pipelines near new plants. Start the pipeline early, because training must begin years before hiring: JetZero's partners began in 2026 with middle and high school teachers for hiring that ramps in 2028 and 2029. Support teacher-training and industry-recognized credential programs, expand community college aviation capacity, and help smaller suppliers adopt digital manufacturing tools so they are not left behind by the factories they supply. Workforce is a shared constraint: the Triad has about 20,000 job pledges from several advanced manufacturers competing for the same workers.
5. **Protect the base.** Review whether export control, investment screening, and supply-chain security authorities adequately address subsidiaries of Chinese state defense enterprises, such as those controlled by AVIC, that sit inside U.S. and allied aerospace supply chains. Many of these acquisitions were lawful and no wrongdoing is alleged. Examine remaining research relationships with Chinese defense-affiliated universities, particularly in aerodynamics, flight controls, and propulsion, and maintain export controls on engines and components, which the Committee's report notes hurt COMAC in 2025.
6. **Compete for third-country markets.** Confirm that export credit tools can match state-backed financing in aircraft competitions across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

7. **Direct a net assessment.** Ask the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community to assess Chinese BWB tanker and transport development and its implications for the Indo-Pacific.

VIII. Conclusion

American researchers conceived the blended wing body, American laboratories proved it, and an American company is now building it in North Carolina with American partners and customers. China has spent more than fifteen years preparing to follow, and it has a record of persisting in strategic industries across decades.

Aerospace is one of the few remaining places where the United States holds a clear lead, and the Committee's own report shows how quickly such leads can disappear. Keeping this one is a choice. It will require the focus and the resources that Congress gives to industries it recognizes as strategic.

In the end this comes down to people: the technicians who will assemble the aircraft, the engineers who will design the next one, the teachers preparing students for those jobs today, and the communities that have waited for factory work to return. A strategic industry is, finally, the people who work in it.

One of us will fly a blended wing body across the Pacific first. The question before this Committee, and before the country, is whether it will be us or them.

Thank you. I look forward to the Committee's questions.

Drafting notes

The hearing is Friday, November 20, so the first priority is confirming the submission deadline and disclosure requirements with Committee staff, then clearing the facts below. Nothing here has been confirmed with JetZero; the facts come from public reporting and the two reports.

Confirm before submission

- ☐ **Submission deadline and disclosures.** Committees typically want written testimony about 48 hours ahead, which may mean Wednesday. House rules also generally require non-governmental witnesses to disclose relevant federal contracts and grants, which would include the Air Force demonstrator contract. Confirm both with staff.
- ☐ **Clearance.** The source deck is marked confidential and proprietary. Have legal and government affairs clear all content, and review the language on intellectual property theft and the military assessments, which are written as JetZero's assessments rather than established facts.
- ☐ **Witness and company description.** Insert the CEO's name and title. The earlier draft called JetZero "North Carolina based"; public sources place its headquarters in Long Beach, California, with the factory in Greensboro. This draft uses the Long Beach description.
- ☐ **Air Force contract.** Confirm the $235 million, four-year award (August 2023), the contracting channel (one source mentions the Defense Innovation Unit), and the flight date. You said the demonstrator flies next year; a July 2026 program update says late 2027.
- ☐ **Company claims.** Confirm the 50 percent fuel-burn figure, the "twice the fuel or range" and "$1 billion a year" tanker estimates, the 12,000-airframe market, and the 20-aircraft-per-month rate are cleared for the public record.

- ☐ **Jobs and incentives.** Confirm whether 14,500 is direct jobs or direct plus indirect, the hiring schedule (public reporting says the state incentive contract was amended in June 2026 to lower 2027 and 2028 hiring targets after a state budget delay, with at least 3,020 employees by the end of 2029), and which incentive figure to cite ($1.1 billion in state performance incentives; some reports cite more than $2.35 billion including local incentives).
- ☐ **Airline details.** Confirm United's terms (up to 100 aircraft plus 100 options, conditional), the year of Alaska's Series A investment (reports differ), Delta's role in the Series B (only one source says it participated), and the Japan Airlines partnership (one secondary source).
- ☐ **Regulatory and financing details.** The FAA AIR-500 move and the filing timeline come from a single trade-press report of a company briefing. Confirm the Series B lead investor and the Pathfinder subscale program.
- ☐ **Carried-over China facts.** Refresh the C919 order share and flight-hour figures from the earlier draft, which predate the Committee's report, and confirm the AVIC ownership positions, the Entity List status of NPU and Beihang, and the Chinese test-facility details.
- ☐ **Political framing.** The White House report carries partisan commentary. This draft uses only its data (project counts, jobs, trade surplus). Confirm the CEO is comfortable citing it at a bipartisan hearing, and verify the trade-surplus figure against Census or BEA data.
- ☐ **Workforce and digital-factory details.** Confirm the groundbreaking date (June 2026 in two sources, July 15 in one), the Nvidia and AWS references, the GTCC facility cost and status, the state training funding (reports cite $22 million and $32 million), the NC State and UNC Charlotte roles, and the Believers figures. Public reporting also says about 20,000 regional job pledges compete for the same workers; confirm the CEO is comfortable citing that.
- ☐ **Oral statement length.** The oral statement is now longer than five minutes with the people, digital-factory, and workforce paragraph and the earlier edits. Time it aloud and trim, or move detail to the written statement.
- ☐ **Hudson Institute report.** Confirm the CEO wants to cite *Resilient Reach* (October 27, 2026; Timothy Walton and Shane Dennin), and check every figure against the report itself, because this draft relies on Air & Space Forces Magazine's coverage: the 2035 airfield threat, the "more than twice" force-package finding, 250 aircraft, $15.5 billion savings, and $398 billion versus $413 billion. The report models a representative medium blended wing body, not the KC-Z4, so the testimony should not imply Hudson endorsed JetZero. Retired Gen. Mike Minihan, quoted in the coverage, advises JetZero and is not cited here.
- ☐ **Tanker program status.** The Air Force's fiscal 2027 request reportedly shifted the Next-Generation Air Refueling System effort toward protection systems, so this draft no longer says JetZero is positioned to compete for it. An Air Force spokesperson told the magazine the demonstrator is on schedule with first flight in late 2027. Confirm both with JetZero's government affairs team.
- ☐ **Statement on not selling to China.** I could not find the CEO's public statement in the sources I searched, so cite its date and venue and match his exact words. As given, the commitment is about selling directly to China. Decide whether the testimony should also address lessors, third-country resale, joint ventures, and investors, since Members may ask. Have legal and government affairs confirm before it enters the record.

What changed from the earlier draft

The China analysis now leads with the Committee's own report and its newer figures: 15 C919 deliveries in 2025 against a 75 target, an order backlog above 1,000, and the 2026 Airbus approval delays. The earlier draft's line that a Chinese BWB "should be expected to reach service" was softened to match the Committee's finding that aerospace results have been mixed. New sections cover JetZero's factory and supply chain, the Air Force and airline partners, and the two manufacturing reports. The recommendations now open with the strategic-industry designation, and the original seven were reworked around it.

Carried over from the earlier draft, not reproduced here

Appendix A (chronology), Appendix B (AVIC-controlled entities outside China), and Appendix C (Chinese wind tunnels) can be attached unchanged, after the verification above. Appendix B in particular notes that its ownership positions should be confirmed as current.

Sources

Pages opened in full:

- *Rigging the Game*, Select Committee on China, November 13, 2026, and its press release
- American Manufacturing Renaissance report, White House, November 2026
- JetZero program update, AirInsight, July 2, 2026
- Groundbreaking announcement, Trade and Industry Development, June 2026
- "JetZero Turns to Classrooms To Meet Massive Hiring Challenge," News & Record via Aviation Pros, August 5, 2026
- "New Analysis: Air Force Should Buy 250 Blended-Wing Tankers," Air & Space Forces Magazine, October 29, 2026

Seen in search results only (verify before relying on them):

- Hearing advisory, Select Committee on China
- AP report on the Greensboro plant, via BNN Bloomberg, June 2025
- Fox Business on the Greensboro plant
- Aviation Week via Yahoo Finance on the Series B and suppliers
- Leeham News summary of the CEO's remarks at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce summit
- Airline Geeks on United's investment
- The Register on the Delta partnership
- Orange County Business Journal profile
- Avi-Go on the Japan Airlines partnership
- GTCC on its JetZero training partnership
- UNC Greensboro on the Deloitte Believers program
- N.C. A&T on the JetZero announcement
- Manufacturing Dive on the NCEdge training plan
- Spectrum News on the GTCC training center
- WRAL on the state incentive package
- Hudson Institute, *Resilient Reach* (linked from the Air & Space Forces article; report itself not opened)

- Aerospace Global News on the Hudson report