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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

May 11, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
 Secretary
 Department of Defense

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

Preventing the use of counterfeit Chinese parts by our military is critical to national security, ensuring the reliability of weapons systems, and protecting the safety of military personnel.¹ Substandard, forged, or cloned components can cause mission failures, jeopardize lives, and allow for potential interception of classified data.² According to a February 2016 Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit, “[a]lmost anything is at risk of being counterfeited, including microelectronics used in fighter jets and missile guidance systems, fasteners used in aircraft, and materials used in engine mounts.”³ Proactive detection is necessary to combat the increasing infiltration of American supply chains.⁴

Chinese equipment has penetrated military supply chains for years.⁵ For example, in 2019 it was discovered by Department of Justice (DOJ) officials that the U.S. military, government agencies, and “other purchasers bought more than \$20 million worth of Chinese-made counterfeit goods designed to look like domestically produced gear from a company that defrauded the government and helped to orchestrate the counterfeiting process between January 2013 and October 2018.”⁶ The counterfeit gear in this example included 200 specialized parkas designed to counter night vision goggles that would have been used by military personnel stationed in Afghanistan.⁷ The counterfeit versions, however, lacked the night vision prevention technology, unbeknownst to the wearer.⁸

Reporting has also found that, despite previous investigations and findings, China continues to supply goods and services used by the United States for dual-use and defense purposes.⁹ From 2018 to 2022, 471 Chinese primary contractors and manufacturers and 299 Chinese subcontractors reportedly supplied semiconductors and related devices to the U.S. defense industry, more than any country other than the U.S. itself.¹⁰ The reporting also stated that a data analytics company has identified a surplus of Chinese vendors and suppliers in twelve critical technology areas, “including biotechnology, nuclear modernization, hypersonic, and space technologies that are vital to U.S. national security.”¹¹

¹ U.S. Gov’t Accountability Office, GAO-16-236, *Counterfeit Parts: DOD Needs to Improve Reporting and Oversight to Reduce Supply Chain Risk* (Feb. 2016), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-16-236.pdf>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Kyle Rempfer, *DoD bought phony military gear made in China, including counter-night vision clothing that didn’t actually work* (May 30, 2019), AIRFORCETIMES, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/05/30/dod-bought-phony-military-gear-made-in-china-including-counter-night-vision-clothing-that-didnt-actually-work/>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Kathleen Snyder, *Despite Sanctions, U.S. Defense Still Sources from China* (Sep. 26, 2023), AMERICAN SECURITY PROJECT, <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/us-defense-supplies-china/>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

Officials and experts say counterfeits within the U.S. military supply chain are a growing concern.¹² Pentagon leaders state they are formulating new tests to detect counterfeit parts, putting a renewed focus on mandatory reporting when problematic components are found, and encouraging the military and industry to communicate more often about counterfeit parts they discover.¹³

I have long sought to bring attention to the threat that counterfeit goods, in a variety of areas, pose to our Nation.¹⁴ I have highlighted my particular concern for counterfeits in the Department of Defense's (DoD) supply chain and the threat to national security and the lives of our military service members they can create.¹⁵ Additionally, on January 14, 2025, I sent letters to a number of government agencies, including the DoD, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Army, regarding American critical military technology and China's attempted infiltration of it.¹⁶

In order to better understand DoD's efforts in preventing Chinese counterfeit materials within its supply chain, I ask that you respond to the following questions no later than May 25, 2026:

1. What specific programs, training or otherwise, have been implemented for personnel responsible for assembling and repairing equipment to help them identify counterfeit parts?
2. What measures are in place to ensure that unvetted suppliers of military equipment are identified and removed? Provide all records.¹⁷
3. How is the DoD overseeing defense agencies to ensure they are reporting all suspected cases of counterfeiting as is required by the DoD's Counterfeit Prevention Policy, DoDI 4140.67?
4. What is the process for auditing a contractor's compliance with Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) regarding counterfeit avoidance? How many contractors have been held accountable for failing to notify the government of counterfeit parts? Provide a list of contractors who have failed to notify, and the actions DoD has taken in response.
5. What weapon systems have been identified as having the highest percentage of potential counterfeit parts? What is the DoD doing to counteract the risk?

¹² Stephen Losey and Joe Gould, *Fake parts: A Pentagon supply chain problem hiding in plain sight* (Dec. 5, 2022), DEFENSENEWS, <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2022/12/06/fake-parts-a-pentagon-supply-chain-problem-hiding-in-plain-sight/>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Chairman Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Grassley Raises Awareness Of Sports Knockoffs At Congressional Trademark Caucus Event* (Mar. 25, 2026), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/03/25/2026/grassley-raises-awareness-of-sports-knockoffs-at-congressional-trademark-caucus-event>; Chairman Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Grassley, Hassan Lead Bipartisan Push To Curb Counterfeit Imports* (Aug. 8, 2025), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-hassan-lead-bipartisan-push-to-curb-counterfeit-imports>; Senator Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Grassley, Coons Promote Anti-Counterfeiting Awareness* (Jun. 14, 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-coons-promote-anti-counterfeiting-awareness>; Senator Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Grassley & Coons Drive Awareness of Counterfeits* (Aug. 2, 2023), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-and-coons-drive-awareness-of-counterfeits>; Senator Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Grassley Introduces Resolution Commemorating Increased Anti-Counterfeiting Efforts* (Jul. 21, 2021), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-introduces-resolution-commemorating-increased-anti-counterfeiting-efforts>; Chairman Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Grassley, Tillis, Ernst And Coons Lead Bipartisan Push to Protect Americans From Counterfeit Vaccines* (Dec.21, 2020), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-tillis-ernst-and-coons-lead-bipartisan-push-protect-americans>; Chairman Charles E. Grassley Press Release, *Counterfeits Pose Significant Economic & Safety Threat Report Finds* (Nov. 11, 2019), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/counterfeits-pose-significant-economic-safety-threat-report-finds>.

¹⁵ Letter from Senator Charles E. Grassley, to the Honorable Mark Esper, Secretary, Department of Defense (Aug. 1, 2019), On file with Committee staff.

¹⁶ Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, to the Honorable Lloyd Austin, Secretary, Department of Defense (Jan. 14, 2025), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_dod_-_critical_technology.pdf; Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, to the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary, Department of the Navy (Jan. 14, 2025), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_navy_-_critical_technology.pdf; Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, to the Honorable Christine Wormuth, Secretary, Department of the Army (Jan. 14, 2025), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_army_-_critical_technology.pdf.

¹⁷ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether they resulted in final documents).

6. Does the DoD purchase and utilize refurbished components being sold as new? If so, how does the DoD validate the authenticity of those components?
7. How many contractors have violated the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act's (NDAA) requirement to report suspected counterfeits to the Government-Industry Data Exchange Program (GIDEP) within 60 days of discovery? Provide a list of each contractor and the dates it failed to report.

Your cooperation and prompt attention to this matter would be appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Tucker Akin with my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary