26 June 2019

Dear Stuart,

You will have seen recent media reports of problems with the F-35 programme, and I understand that the Department has already agreed to cover some of them in the next regular six-monthly F-35 update, which is due in August. We are, however, particularly concerned by reports that circuit boards in the plane are made by a Chinese-owned company. The Department is reported as saying that this presents no risk to security but we would be grateful if you could explain the basis on which you reached this conclusion, given that companies registered in China are required to co-operate with the Chinese intelligence agencies. We would also be grateful for a timeline of events, including when the order for the circuit boards was placed and when you realised that the company was Chinese-owned, and for details of any discussions you have had on the issue with the other countries in the project or with Lockheed Martin.

Yours sincerely,

Julian