Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Room 3E880
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta,

On December 22, 2011, the United States Air Force (USAF) awarded a $355 million contract to Sierra Nevada/Embraer for Light Air Support (LAS) aircraft to be used by the Afghan National Army Air Force. This award represents the first USAF purchase made under the LAS contract's $950 million ceiling. Prior to the award, the USAF controversially excluded Hawker Beechcraft (HBC) from competition, creating what amounts to a sole-source contract for the Brazilian-based jet manufacturer, Embraer. We respectfully request the Department to provide Congress with a thorough explanation as to why the USAF excluded Hawker Beechcraft from the competition.

Up until the time the USAF excluded HBC, LAS was a closely fought contest between the Hawker Beechcraft Corporation's AT-6B and Embraer's Super Tucano. The U.S. taxpayers have already invested billions of dollars into the U.S. Air Force and Navy T-6 trainer fleets built and maintained by HBC. This investment has allowed Hawker to make a competitive LAS bid that leverages and maximizes the existing logistics, support, and pilot training investment already made by the United States Government. HBC is a trusted supplier to the U.S. military and a valued part of many local communities.

Mr. Secretary, we believe it is important that the Air Force be abundantly transparent and forthright given that it has excluded an American company from a significant competition. We hope you recognize the importance of this situation.

Thank you for your personal attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mike Pompeo
Member of Congress

Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress

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