

MIT Report: Cargo Growth To Have Strong Impact on China's Airport Infrastructure

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CHINA CARGO BOOM

By 2020, air cargo traffic in China will expand more than sevenfold and exert a huge impact on airport infrastructure, according to a report by Prof. R. John Hansman and two graduate students, Hong Jiang and Liling Ren, in Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Aeronautics and Astronautics Dept. Mainland-based airlines, which in 2002 carried 39% of the international cargo, are expected to take a growing share of the overseas market. Foreign investors now have new access to ownership of domestic carriers and airports under 2002 regulations that relaxed the share-holding limitation to 49% from 35%. But lift from the outside also should continue to grow at a rapid rate, the report said. The inefficient flow of cargo across the Formosa Strait--now shipped for political reasons via a separate transit point such as Hong Kong or Macau--will be abandoned in the next decade, the authors predict. Their forecast projects annual air cargo traffic growth at 11.2%. Over the forecast period, major airports that will transform into international hubs are Beijing Capital, Shanghai Pudong and Guangzhou. Six other inland and western airports are expected to become second-tier hubs, including Shenyang, Wuhan, Chengdu, Kunming, Xi'an and Urumqi.