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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

August 5, 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

I write to request information regarding the Commerce Department's recent decision to roll back export controls and grant the United Arab Emirates (UAE) sweeping, license-free access to sensitive U.S. technology.¹ This decision comes after UAE entities tied to the nation's top intelligence official reportedly invested half a billion dollars and took board seats in the Trump family crypto venture, World Liberty Financial (WLF).² It is deeply concerning that some of those same UAE entities will now have license-free access to advanced AI chips, despite reported warnings from the Department of Commerce's own staff that the technology could get diverted to China.³ The Department's actions raise significant questions about the potential influence the President's cryptocurrency business interests may be having on the agency's operations and our national security.

The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) plays an important role in safeguarding sensitive U.S. technology. BIS requires licenses for exports of sensitive items, and harmonizes export controls with allies and partners to ensure compliance by regulated industries. BIS designates countries with close strategic trading relationships, including U.S. allies like the United Kingdom and Australia, within Country Group A:5.⁴ This designation specifically authorizes the export of

¹ Politico, "Staff warned of major security risks from giving UAE new tech access. The White House went ahead anyway," Ari Hawkins and Ben Johansen, July 22, 2026, <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/07/21/uae-tech-security-risks-white-house-01006866>.

² Wall Street Journal, "The CIA Operative Who Spied on the U.A.E.—and Played a Role in Its AI Win," Joel Schectman, Aruna Viswanatha, and Evan Gershkovich, July 18, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/cia-spy-united-arab-emirates-ai-49d909a8>; Wall Street Journal, "'Spy Sheikh' Bought Secret Stake in Trump Company," Sam Kessler et al., January 31, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/spy-sheikh-secret-stake-trump-crypto-tahnoon-ea4d97e8>.

³ Politico, "Staff warned of major security risks from giving UAE new tech access. The White House went ahead anyway," Ari Hawkins and Ben Johansen, July 22, 2026, <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/07/21/uae-tech-security-risks-white-house-01006866>; Federal Register, "Rule Enhanced Favorable Treatment for the United Arab Emirates Under the Export Administration Regulations," July 14, 2026, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/07/14/2026-14132/enhanced-favorable-treatment-for-the-united-arab-emirates-under-the-export-administration>

⁴ Federal Register, "Supplement No. 1 to Part 740—Country Groups," <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-15/subtitle-B/chapter-VII/subchapter-C/part-740/appendix-Supplement%20No.%201%20to%20Part%20740>.

certain sensitive goods without an export license.⁵ In past administrations, inclusion in Country Group A is reserved for countries that are members of multilateral export control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Australia Group, and Wassenaar Arrangement.⁶ In short, countries that are members of these multilateral regimes coordinate their export control restrictions to ensure that critical technology is not diverted, including potentially for military uses and for weapons of mass destruction.

Last month, the Trump Administration upended that precedent. Specifically, the Trump Administration reportedly overruled recommendations from career staff to add the UAE to Country Group A:5 and granted specific UAE firms license-free access to export sensitive U.S. technology.⁷ Unlike every other country in Country Group A:5, the UAE does not belong to any of the multilateral export control regimes and has not sought to join these regimes—dramatically increasing the risk that U.S. technology may be diverted to those that seek to undermine U.S. national security. These risks are magnified by the UAE’s long history of serving as a leading transshipment hub for illicit diversion of controlled technology to the Middle East and China. Experts described the decision to relax export controls as “impossible to justify on national security or economic grounds.”⁸

The timing of this decision is alarming. It came after UAE firms linked to Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE’s top national security official, invested hundreds of millions in the Trump family crypto venture, World Liberty Financial, in 2025.⁹ After that investment into WLF, Sheikh Tahnoon reportedly sought approvals to import advanced AI chips in meetings with U.S. officials.¹⁰ Now, the Trump Administration has apparently granted the request, allowing G42 – the AI company chaired by Sheikh Tahnoon – license-free access for advanced AI chips and other sensitive U.S. technology. This decision was made despite reports that the “U.S. had learned from intercepted communications that China was aiming to use its relationship with G42 to steal American technology and AI algorithms.”¹¹

To understand the Department of Commerce’s rationale and the potential national security risks of this decision, I ask that you address the following questions:

⁵ Federal Register, “§ 740.20 License Exception Strategic Trade Authorization (STA),”

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-15/subtitle-B/chapter-VII/subchapter-C/part-740/section-740.20>

⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, “Multilateral Export Control Regimes,”

<https://www.bis.gov/guidance-frequently-asked-questions/multilateral-export-control-regimes>.

⁷ Politico, “Staff warned of major security risks from giving UAE new tech access. The White House went ahead anyway,” Ari Hawkins and Ben Johansen, July 22, 2026, <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/07/21/uae-tech-security-risks-white-house-01006866>.

⁸ *Id.*; Financial Times, “US relaxes export controls on advanced chips and drones for UAE,” Abigail Hauslohner and Demetri Sevastopulo, July 10, 2026, <https://www.ft.com/content/8f33a9b2-bf8a-4c11-8a94-5d86a93b29ba>.

⁹ Wall Street Journal, “U.A.E. Rewarded With Coveted AI Chips for Supporting U.S. War in Iran,” Eliot Brown, Amrith Ramkumar, and Rebecca Ballhaus, July 14, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/uae-ai-chips-iran-war-26c10d77>.

¹⁰ Wall Street Journal, “‘Spy Sheikh’ Bought Secret Stake in Trump Company,” January 31, 2026, Sam Kessler et al., <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/spy-sheikh-secret-stake-trump-crypto-tahnoon-ea4d97e8>.

¹¹ Wall Street Journal, “The CIA Operative Who Spied on the U.A.E.—and Played a Role in Its AI Win,” Joel Schectman, Aruna Viswanatha, and Evan Gershkovich, July 18, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/cia-spy-united-arab-emirates-ai-49d909a8>.

1. What analysis, if any, did the Department conduct on the national security risks of granting license-free access to controlled items, including items relevant to military capabilities, to the UAE, prior to adding UAE to Country Group A? Provide copies. If no analysis was conducted, why not?
2. Why was the UAE added to Country Group A:5, even though it is not a member of any multilateral export control regime?
3. Were the Departments of Energy, Defense, and State involved in analyzing potential national security risks of moving the UAE to Country Group A:5?
 - a. If so, did the Department of Commerce consider any analysis from the other agencies on the national security risk of the UAE rule?
 - b. Did any departments or agencies raise national security concerns about this decision?
4. Since the Strategic Trade Authorization licensing exception allows U.S. companies to export certain items on the Commerce Control List to the UAE without license applications and end-use documentation, how does BIS plan to address potential national security threats from the illicit diversion of controlled items?
5. What analysis, if any, did the Department conduct on the UAE's history as a transshipment point for controlled technology to China and Iran prior to adding [the country/the firms] to Country Group A? Provide copies. If no analysis was conducted, why not?
6. What analysis, if any, did the Department conduct on the risk that advanced AI chips shipped to G42 may be accessed by entities linked to China's military or intelligence agencies? Provide copies. If no analysis was conducted, why not?
7. What plans, if any, does BIS have to add additional countries to Country Group A:5 that are not currently members of any multilateral export control regimes?

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking,
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