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Cabinet Sweep Likely

It looks as though President Trump's Cabinet will be confirmed as nominated, with the exception of course of Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz, currently the subject of disciplinary proceedings by the Florida Bar. Pam Bondi, Howard Lutnick and Scott Bessent appear to be tracking to confirmation, although Lutnick's confirmation paperwork is reportedly incomplete, creating a delay. During his Senate confirmation hearing, Sen. Marco Rubio, the President's nominee for Secretary of State, called for the continuation and potential expansion of sanctions, particularly targeting the energy sector, to pressure Moscow over its activities in Ukraine. [READ MORE](#)

Time Runs Out on TikTok

In a unanimous ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court Friday upheld a law requiring ByteDance, TikTok's Chinese parent company, to sell the app by January 19, 2025, citing national security concerns over data collection and links to China. If ByteDance fails to divest, service providers like Apple and Google must block TikTok updates, effectively disabling the app. TikTok currently has 170 million U.S. users, with a sale potentially valued at \$40–\$50 billion, according to CFRA Research. [READ MORE](#)

Cuba Concessions in Vatican Brokered Deal

In cooperation with the Vatican, the Biden Administration made several meaningful diplomatic concessions in a negotiation for the release of political prisoners by the Havana regime.

"We are taking several steps to support the Cuban people as part of an understanding with the Catholic Church under the leadership of Pope Francis and improve the livelihood of Cubans," said Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. Cuba has announced that it will release from prison 553 people "convicted of various crimes. [READ MORE](#)

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[China Maritime, Logistics & Shipbuilding "Actionable"](#)

The U.S. Trade Representative has issued findings in the Section 301 investigation of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) targeting the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors for dominance, concluding that the PRC's targeted dominance in these sectors is unreasonable and burdens or restricts U.S. commerce, and is therefore "actionable" under Section 301. As the petitioner U.S. unions have highlighted, the entrenchment of the PRC's dominance means that U.S. international trade is "carried out on vessels made in China, financed by state-owned Chinese institutions, owned by Chinese shipping companies, and reliant on a global maritime and logistics infrastructure increasingly dominated by China." [READ MORE](#)

[Hill Renews Targeting of Chinese Battery Firms](#)

Legislation to prohibit companies affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party from qualifying for green energy production tax credits implemented by the Biden administration through the Inflation Reduction Act has been reintroduced in the 119th Congress. If signed into law, the bill would prevent any company based in China, Russia, Iran or North Korea, and the subsidiaries of those companies from benefiting from these tax credits. [READ MORE](#)

[Foreign Affairs Minority Leadership Roster](#)

Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, announced the Vice Ranking Member and subcommittee Ranking Members for the 119th Congress and the Democratic roster for the full Committee. [READ MORE](#)

POLICY NOTES

[Indigenous IP Origins Treaty Under Review](#)

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office invites public comments and testimony on whether the U.S. should sign and implement the Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge. The treaty addresses IP issues concerning genetic resources (GRs), traditional knowledge (TK), and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs). Article 3 mandates patent applicants disclose the origin or source of GRs or TK when a claimed invention depends on their specific properties. [READ MORE](#)

[OFAC Collaboration with Britain's OFSI Formalized](#)

The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has published its Memorandum of Understanding with the United Kingdom's Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlines a framework for collaboration to strengthen their shared mission of enforcing and promoting compliance with economic and trade sanctions [READ MORE](#)

[Biotech as Domain for Great Power Competition](#)

The Center for a New American Security (CNAS) released a new report, Biopower: Securing American Leadership in Biotechnology by Vivek Chilukuri and Hannah Kelley . The report introduces the concept of "biopower"—a nation's capacity to harness emerging biotechnologies to enhance national and economic security—and describes its vast potential applications for defense, health, energy, and food security. ... [READ MORE](#)

[US, Colombia Investment Provisions Agreement](#)

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said Thursday it has reached an agreement with Colombia aimed at strengthening the two countries' defenses against investor-state claims in an underlying trade pact, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai met with Minister Luis Carlos Reyes of Colombia's Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Tourism to announce a mutual agreement on a Free Trade Commission (FTC) decision under the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA). The decision provides an official interpretation of the TPA's investment chapter provisions. [READ MORE](#)

SUPPLY CHAIN

[Low-Value Shipment Rules Published](#)

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has issued a proposed amendment to its regulations to strengthen oversight of low-value shipments valued at \$800 or less. The proposed rule would establish a new process for entering low-value shipments under Section 321(a)(2)(C) of the Tariff Act. This process would enable CBP to collect enhanced electronic data to better identify high-risk shipments, including those potentially containing illicit drugs such as fentanyl, counterfeit goods, or other contraband. [READ MORE](#)

[National Security Exception to de minimus](#)

CBP proposes to make merchandise that is subject to specified trade or national security actions (Section 301, Section 232, or Section 201 trade measures) ineligible for the \$800 de minimis administrative exemption. They propose to require that certain shipments claiming this exemption

provide the 10-digit Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) classification of the merchandise. [READ MORE](#)

[Connected Vehicle Ban Finalized](#)

The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) issued a final rule prohibiting transactions involving the sale or import of connected vehicles or components integrating specific hardware and software linked to the PRC or Russia. The final rule bans the import of VCS hardware or connected vehicles containing such hardware, as well as the import and sale of vehicles with VCS or ADS software linked to the PRC or Russia. VCS encompasses systems enabling external communication, such as telematics, Bluetooth, cellular, satellite, and Wi-Fi modules. ADS refers to components enabling highly autonomous vehicle operation without a driver. The rule also prohibits manufacturers with a sufficient nexus to the PRC or Russia from selling new connected vehicles that incorporate VCS hardware or software or ADS software in the United States, even if the vehicle was made in the United States. [READ MORE](#)

EXPORT CONTROLS

[Estevez Exit Interview](#)

Alan Estevez, Undersecretary of Commerce for Industry and Security, delivered remarks Tuesday at Washington's CSIS Wadhvani AI Center, focusing on the evolving role of export controls in safeguarding U.S. national security and addressing technological threats. The conversation, moderated by Greg Allen, Director of CSIS's Wadhvani AI Center, covered key achievements, challenges, and future priorities for the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS). [READ MORE](#)

[AI Diffusion Rule Published](#)

The Biden Administration released its proposed "AI Diffusion Rule" Monday morning, aiming to control exports of chips used for artificial intelligence. Quotas will restrict the number of chips to be exported to about 120 countries, while a short list of G-7 and other allied countries are exempt from restrictions. Sales to China, Iran, Russia & North Korea are blocked. The limits focus on Advanced Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) used to train AI models. Cloud services providers like AWS and Microsoft will enjoy some waivers from the rules, in a material concession to the data center industry. Cloud providers will have geographic limits, ensuring no more than half their computing power resides offshore. [READ MORE](#)

[Bio-Lab Equipment Dual Use Controls Released](#)

BIS has published an Interim Final Rule revising the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) to address national security and foreign policy concerns related to dual-use biotechnology tools. It imposes new export controls on specific laboratory equipment and related technology to prevent misuse, particularly by foreign adversaries. [READ MORE](#)

[Foundry Due Diligence Measures Rule Released](#)

The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is revising the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) to provide additional due diligence procedures for advanced computing integrated circuits (ICs). This interim final rule (IFR) aims to safeguard U.S. national security and support foundries and Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) companies in complying with EAR provisions related to advanced computing ICs in the supply chain. Additionally, the IFR updates and clarifies changes introduced in BIS's December 2, 2024, IFR, titled "Foreign-Produced Direct Product Rule Additions, and Refinements to Controls for Advanced Computing and Semiconductor Manufacturing Items" (FDP IFR). [READ MORE](#)

[Munitions List Cleanup Rule](#)

The Department of State amends the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) to remove from the U.S. Munitions List (USML) items that no longer warrant inclusion, add to the USML items that warrant inclusion, and clarify certain entries. With these amendments, the Department also supersedes and thus terminates the temporary modification to USML Category VIII that was published on December 4, 2023, and extended on November 26, 2024. [READ MORE](#)

[Commerce Defense Export Handbook](#)

The International Trade Administration's (ITA) Office of Transportation and Machinery (OTM) is pleased to announce a new comprehensive handbook designed to assist companies in the U.S. defense industry to navigate the complexities of exporting their products to foreign markets. With this Defense Export Handbook, ITA delivers valuable information to support American businesses in expanding their global reach while ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. [READ MORE](#)

SANCTIONS & SECURITY

[Russia Sanctions Bills Reintroduced](#)

Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, reintroduced two pivotal pieces of legislation aimed at reinforcing sanctions against Russian aggression and U.S. support for Ukraine's sovereignty and safety. The "*Sanction Russian Nuclear Safety Violators Act of 2025*" (H.R. 475) would target individuals and entities who endanger the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest nuclear facility. Russian forces have occupied the site since 2022, raising grave concerns about the plant's stability and Rosatom's involvement. The "*No Russian Tunnel to Crimea Act*" (H.R. 476) would impose sanctions on any foreign actor who knowingly supports the construction, maintenance, or repair of tunnels or bridges connecting the Russian mainland to Crimea. [READ MORE](#)

[Re-Designation Stymies Sanctions Revanchists](#)

In a move some read as an effort to "Trump Proof" the Treasury's Russian sanctions regime, OFAC is re-designating pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13662 almost 100 entities already designated pursuant to E.O. 14024. This codification provides legislative backing, making it more difficult for any administration to unilaterally lift these sanctions. This move places the sanctions under rules governed by the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). CAATSA, enacted in 2017, codified and expanded existing sanctions imposed by executive orders, including E.O. 13662. As a result of these entities' designation pursuant to E.O. 13662, foreign persons, including foreign financial institutions, that knowingly facilitate significant transactions for or on behalf of any of these entities could be subject to mandatory secondary sanctions under the Ukraine-/Russia-related sanctions program. [READ MORE](#)

[Entity List Updates Target Chinese AI & Chipmaking](#)

BIS added 11 Chinese entities to the Entity List, 10 for advanced artificial intelligence research and one for development of lithography technology for advanced-node fabrication facilities. The committee also removed three Indian nuclear research entities after diplomatic considerations. In another filing the same day, BIS added 16 entities to the Entity List, under the destinations of China, People's Republic of (China) (14) and Singapore (2) due to their involvement in supporting or directly contributing to the development of advanced computing integrated circuits that further China's development of advanced weapons systems, weapons of mass destruction, and high-tech surveillance applications, and because these entities supply Chinese public security end users and pose a risk of diversion to Huawei, an entity on the Entity List.... [READ MORE](#)

[Sudan Army Chief Sanctioned](#)

OFAC is sanctioning Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan (Burhan), the leader of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), under Executive Order (E.O.) 14098, "Imposing Sanctions on Certain Persons Destabilizing Sudan and Undermining the Goal of a Democratic Transition." This action follows the designation of the leader of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Mohammad Hamdan Daglo Mousa, on January 7, 2025. In addition, OFAC is sanctioning one company and one individual involved in weapons procurement on behalf of the Defense Industries System (DIS), a procurement arm of the SAF that OFAC sanctioned in June 2023. [READ MORE](#)

[More Republika Srpska Sanctions](#)

The United States today designated eight individuals who organized and executed the commemoration of Republika Srpska (RS) Day on January 8-10, 2024 in support of RS President Milorad Dodik's secessionist agenda. Seven of those sanctioned today also helped plan and organize the 2025 commemoration. RS commemorations have been determined to be unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. Directed and overseen by Dodik, they are emblematic of Dodik's longstanding

efforts to undermine the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, a cornerstone for regional peace and security. [READ MORE](#)

ENFORCEMENT

[Lax Compliance Costs Toolbuilder \\$2.5 Million](#)

The Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security and the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control imposed approximately \$2.5 million in combined civil penalties against a California machine tool builder for permitting authorized distributors to sell equipment and repair parts to sanctioned entities in China and Russia. "Today's coordinated resolution with OFAC demonstrates our resolve to hold accountable companies that do not put in place effective compliance programs to prevent exports to Entity Listed companies," said Acting Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement Kevin J. Kurland. [READ MORE](#)

[Realtor Guilty in Miami Sanctions Ruse](#)

Miami real estate broker Roman Sinyavsky pleaded guilty today to engaging in a scheme to violate U.S. sanctions and commit money laundering by conducting transactions involving blocked properties owned by sanctioned Russian oligarchs Viktor Perevalov and Valeri Abramov. The properties, valued approximately \$1.8 million were forfeited earlier this month. In a separate settlement, Sinyavsky and his company have agreed to pay a civil penalty of approximately \$1,076,923. [READ MORE](#)

[Chinese Radio Firm Guilty in IP Theft Case](#)

A Chinese telecommunications company has admitted in federal court in Chicago that it conspired to steal digital mobile radio technology developed by Illinois-based Motorola Solutions, Inc. Hytera Communications Corp. Ltd. pleaded guilty on Monday in the Northern District of Illinois to a federal charge of conspiracy to steal trade secrets. Under the terms of a plea agreement, Hytera may be fined up to \$60 million. ... [READ MORE](#)
, and enhancing efforts to end international human trafficking on Tuesday, February 6th. [READ MORE](#)