



Department for International Trade

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Dear Darren,

Update on Strategic Export Licensing

I am writing to inform you and your committee about changes being made to update the United Kingdom's export control regime. These are set out in more detail in my Written Ministerial Statement of 8 December 2021.

I am writing in similar capacity to the chairs of the International Trade Committee, Committees on Arms Export Controls, the Defence Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The purpose of export controls is to promote global security and facilitate responsible exports. They help ensure that goods exported from the United Kingdom do not contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or a destabilising accumulation of conventional weapons. They protect the United Kingdom's security and our expertise by restricting who has access to sensitive technologies and capabilities. Export controls also help ensure that controlled items are not used for internal repression or in the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law. They are the primary means by which we implement a range of international legal commitments including the Arms Trade Treaty.

We keep our controls under regular review to ensure that they continue to properly address the threats we face, keep pace with new technologies, and adapt to changing circumstances such as our exit from the EU, while providing an efficient service which does not impose an unworkable administrative burden on the defence and security industry.

This is why I am introducing the following package of measures.

First, I have laid before Parliament a revised version of the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria. These are set out in full in my written statement and will be applied with immediate effect.

The application of these Criteria will be without prejudice to specific measures as may be announced to Parliament from time to time. The statement does not impact upon existing specific measures which remain extant until revoked.

Second, the Government will be taking steps to enhance the Military End-Use Control. The current control does not allow us to fully address threats to national security, international peace and security, and human rights arising from the use of non-listed items by the military, police or security forces, or entities acting on their behalf, in an embargoed destination.

We will achieve this by amending the definition “military end-use”. However, the control would only be applied where the Government informs the exporter that the proposed export is or may be intended for a military end-use in an embargoed destination. To minimise the impact on legitimate trade, there will be exemptions for medical supplies and equipment, food, clothing and other consumer goods.

The review also concluded that there were anomalies and inconsistencies within the UK's export control regime. As a result of this review, China will be added to the list of those destinations subject to military end use controls.

Taken together, these changes will strengthen our ability to prevent exports that might be used for human rights violations in destinations subject to military end-use controls. This completes the export control review announced to Parliament on 12 January 2021 by the then Foreign Secretary.

Both these changes require amendments to the Export Control Order 2008. We intend to lay the secondary legislation to implement them in the Spring of 2022.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Marie Trevelyan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

THE RT HON ANNE-MARIE TREVELYAN MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
& President of the Board of Trade