
Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement Efforts to Combat China's Military- Civilian Fusion Strategy

REPORT NO. OIG-26-021-A

JUNE 23, 2026

U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Inspector General
Office of Audit and Evaluation





June 23, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR: David Peters
Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement
Bureau of Industry and Security

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur L. Scott Jr.".

FROM: Arthur L. Scott Jr.
Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation

SUBJECT: Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement
Efforts to Combat China's Military-Civilian Fusion Strategy
Report No. OIG-26-021-A

Attached is the final report on our audit of the actions taken by the Bureau of Industry and Security to enforce export controls for China and Hong Kong. The Bureau of Industry and Security reviewed a draft of this report and at its request, we redacted from the public version of this report certain export enforcement-sensitive information that warrants protection from disclosure. We will post the redacted final report on [our website](#) per the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. §§ 404, 420).

Within 60 calendar days, please provide an action plan addressing the report's recommendations, as required by Department Administrative Order 213-5.

We appreciate your staff's cooperation and professionalism during this audit.

Attachment





Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement Efforts to Combat China's Military-Civilian Fusion Strategy

Audit Report OIG-26-021-A

June 23, 2026

➤ **What We Audited** | Our objective was to assess the adequacy of the actions BIS has taken to enforce export controls for China. Specifically, we assessed whether BIS conducted post-shipment verifications for China and Hong Kong within the required timeframes and took the required steps to hold potential violators accountable for noncompliance with export control regulations.

➤ **Why This Matters** | In recent years, BIS has amended export regulations to counter China's Military-Civilian Fusion strategy. To monitor the compliance of China and other foreign end users with export laws and regulations, BIS conducts two types of reviews, pre-license checks and post-shipment verifications. For this audit, we focused on post-shipment verifications, which help strengthen assurances that all end users are complying with export laws and licenses.

With export control officers performing post-shipment verifications on less than 1 percent of the total items exported each year to China and Hong Kong, it is vital for BIS to monitor the verification process. If BIS's oversight is inadequate, Chinese end users that violate export regulations may evade accountability. Inadequate oversight also weakens BIS's enforcement efforts for items of concern exported to China and Hong Kong that could be used to modernize China's military capabilities.

➤ **What We Found** | We found that BIS has not taken adequate action to enforce export controls for China and Hong Kong. Specifically, BIS is not effectively monitoring post-shipment verifications for exported items of concern to China and Hong Kong. For the open verifications we reviewed, we found that BIS management did not ensure that the verifications had been conducted. They also did not consistently review and approve completed verifications within the timeframes outlined in BIS guidance or effectively use them to hold potential violators accountable.

➤ **What We Recommend** | We made two recommendations to BIS to improve its quality control and monitoring of post-shipment verifications. BIS concurred with our recommendations and is working to implement them.



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Introduction

The Export Administration Regulations establish controls to help prevent the illegal export of items of concern to embargoed or sanctioned destinations, to prohibited end users, and for prohibited end uses. As part of its responsibility for administering and enforcing the regulations, the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) prevents the diversion or misuse of export-controlled items abroad and conducts law enforcement actions against violators of export control laws.

In recent years, BIS amended the export regulations to counter China's Military-Civilian Fusion strategy,¹ which aims to modernize China's military capabilities by developing and acquiring key technologies. The targeted technologies, many of which have both commercial and military applications, include quantum information sciences, robotics, semiconductors, aerospace technologies, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence.

To monitor the compliance of China and other foreign end users with export laws and regulations, BIS conducts two types of reviews, pre-license checks and post-shipment verifications. Pre-license checks, which occur before the U.S. exports are shipped, establish the validity of the end user or users. Post-shipment verifications, which occur after the exports are shipped, help strengthen assurances that all end users are complying with export laws and licenses. For this audit, we focused on post-shipment verifications.

► **Post-Shipment Verification: A Tool for Ensuring Compliance**

A post-shipment verification of a U.S. export involves coordination between two groups of BIS employees:

1. **Export compliance specialists** analyze shipping records, licensing records, and intelligence reports to identify high-risk shipments, end users, or destinations to review. They also notify export control officers about verifications that need to be conducted.
2. **Export control officers** visit the end users to verify that the exported goods and technologies are accounted for and being used as intended.

Export compliance specialists use BIS's Investigative Management System-Redesign (IMS-R) to track and manage post-shipment verifications. IMS-R is also used to organize and prioritize verification candidates, track verification statuses and outcomes, document verification results, and maintain supporting records.

¹ See 87 Fed. Reg. 62,186 (Oct. 13, 2022).

Specialists submit verification results to their supervisor² and make recommendations for adjudicating the verifications (reviewing and assigning a rating to the end-use check based on the verification results). One of three ratings may be assigned:

1. **Favorable:** The end user is using the exported item in full compliance with license terms and U.S. export regulations.
2. **Unfavorable:** Noncompliance is indicated, such as unauthorized use, diversion of the item to an unintended user or location, or other violations of export control regulations.
3. **Unverified:** The export control officer cannot complete the check for some reason (for example, lack of cooperation from the end user, restricted access to facilities, inability to locate the end user, or inability to determine the item's disposition).

For a favorable rating, no further action is needed. For unsatisfactory ratings (that is, unfavorable or unverified), specialists must take additional steps to hold potential violators accountable, such as adding the parties to watchlists to ensure that future licenses are appropriately screened or referring cases to BIS special agents for investigation.

► Why We Did This Audit

Enforcing export controls is critical to preventing U.S. goods and technology from being used to support China's military modernization goals. We initiated this audit to evaluate BIS's enforcement efforts related to China and Hong Kong.³ This review focuses on BIS's ability to effectively monitor post-shipment verifications that help prevent the misuse of items of concern shipped to China and Hong Kong.

Each year, BIS conducts post-shipment verifications on less than 1 percent of the total items exported that year to China and Hong Kong. This audit did not focus on BIS's selection strategy for post-shipment verifications because we discussed the selection methodology, including the number of selections, in a recent audit.⁴

Table 1 shows the percentage of exports to China and Hong Kong that received a post-shipment verification between fiscal years (FYs) 2020 and 2024.

² The BIS assistant director for international operations supervises the export compliance specialists.

³ The Export Administration Regulations consider Hong Kong part of the People's Republic of China (see 15 C.F.R. § 758.1(b)(10), note 1).

⁴ Commerce OIG. May 4, 2026. *Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement of Russia and Belarus Export Controls*, [OIG-26-019-A](#).

Table 1. Percentage of Exports to China and Hong Kong That Were Selected for a Post-Shipment Verification

Fiscal Year	Total Exports to China and Hong Kong*	Number of Post-Shipment Verifications	Percentage of Exports Selected for a Verification
2020	1,565,597	84	0.0054%
2021	2,067,020	84	0.0041%
2022	2,023,405	62	0.0031%
2023	1,907,162	238	0.0125%
2024	1,786,369	174	0.0097%
Total	9,349,553	642	

Source: Census export data and BIS end-use check records obtained from IMS-R

*Based on raw, unpublished export data from the Automated Commercial Environment, a system for reporting imports and exports.

► Objective

Our audit objective was to assess the adequacy of the actions BIS has taken to enforce export controls for China. We separated this objective into two components: monitoring post-shipment verifications for exported items of concern to China and Hong Kong, and identifying and selecting post-shipment verifications for items restricted from export to China.

This report focuses on the first component. We assessed whether BIS conducted post-shipment verifications for China and Hong Kong within the required timeframes and took the required steps to hold potential violators accountable for noncompliance with export control regulations. Appendix 1 details our scope and methodology. We will report separately if we identify any findings related to the second component.



Findings and Recommendations

Summary: Overall, we found that BIS has not taken adequate action to enforce export controls for China and Hong Kong. Specifically, BIS is not effectively monitoring post-shipment verifications for exported items of concern to China and Hong Kong. For the open verifications we reviewed, we found that BIS management did not:

- Ensure that the verifications had been conducted
- Consistently review and approve completed verifications within the timeframes outlined in BIS guidance or effectively use them to hold potential violators accountable

As a result, Chinese end users that violate export regulations may evade accountability. In addition, this inadequate oversight weakens enforcement efforts for items of concern exported to China and Hong Kong that could be used to modernize China’s military capabilities.

We found that BIS did not conduct some post-shipment verifications for China and Hong Kong or consistently review and approve completed verifications to take the required steps to hold potential violators accountable for noncompliance with regulations. When we reviewed the 642 post-shipment verifications on exports to China and Hong Kong between FYs 2020 and 2024, we found that 99 remained open in IMS-R for months or even years, instead of the specialist closing them out, per BIS guidance.

► **Some Post-Shipment Verifications Not Conducted**

In our review of the post-shipment verifications, we found that 23 of the 99 open verifications had not been conducted. Some of the exported items related to the 23 verifications included [REDACTED].

Table 2 lists the categories of unverified exported items of concern to China and Hong Kong between FYs 2020 and 2024. These items may be of concern for reasons related to national security, weapons of mass destruction, military end users, or investigative concerns.

Table 2. Post-Shipment Verifications Not Performed on Exported Items of Concern to China and Hong Kong

	Total Value	Number of Verifications
[REDACTED]	\$8,040	1
[REDACTED]	\$4,716	1
[REDACTED]	\$467,308	4
[REDACTED]	\$117,075	7
[REDACTED]	\$29,068	1
[REDACTED]	\$289,249	1
[REDACTED]	\$664,000	2
[REDACTED]	\$9,513	1
[REDACTED]	\$157,972	4
[REDACTED]	\$3,150	1
Total	\$1,750,091	23

Source: OIG analysis of post-shipment verification records obtained from IMS-R

With export control officers performing post-shipment verifications on less than 1 percent of the total items exported each year to China and Hong Kong (as shown in table 1), it is vital for BIS to monitor the verification process.⁵ Because these 23 verifications were not conducted, BIS missed opportunities to confirm that items of concern exported to China and Hong Kong were being used as intended and that all end users are complying with export laws and licenses. When we notified BIS officials of the uncompleted verifications, BIS created internal notifications in IMS-R to ensure that the Chinese end users receive additional scrutiny before obtaining any future U.S. exports.

► Post-Shipment Verifications Not Consistently Closed Within Timeframes or Effectively Used to Hold Violators Accountable

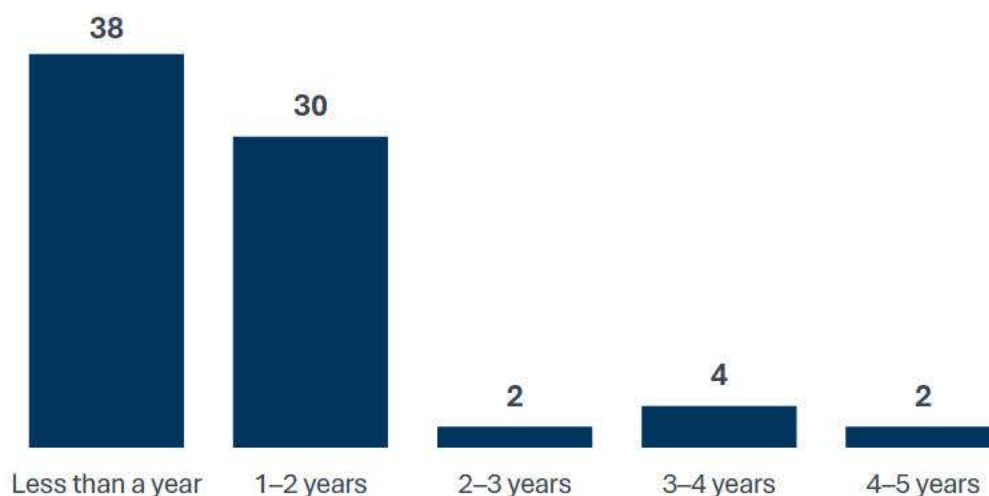
We found that the remaining 76 verifications were not closed in IMS-R within the timeframes outlined by BIS guidance. BIS guidance requires specialists to submit the results of favorable verifications for closure to supervisors within 10 days of receipt of the results from the export control officer and within 5 days for unsatisfactory (unfavorable or unverified) verifications.⁶

⁵ As previously stated, this audit did not focus on BIS's selection methodology for post-shipment verifications or the number of shipments selected because those issues are addressed in our audit of BIS's enforcement of export controls over Russia and Belarus (OIG-26-019-A).

⁶ BIS. November 2, 2020. *BIS Guide for Closing End-Use Checks (EUCs) in IMS-R*.

During our review, we found that the 76 verifications remained open in IMS-R for periods ranging from months to many years. We found that half of the verifications (38 out of 76) had been open more than a year, with 8 of those open 2 years or more. Figure 1 illustrates how long verifications went unreviewed and remained open in IMS-R.

Figure 1. Almost 40 Post-Shipment Verifications Stayed Open More Than a Year



Source: Post-shipment verification records obtained from IMS-R

Although most of the 76 verifications were conducted, the export compliance specialist did not rate and submit them for closure to the supervisor, which caused them to remain open in IMS-R beyond the established timeframes. Because the 76 verifications were not consistently closed within these timeframes, export compliance specialists did not initiate preliminary investigations (known as investigative leads) for 5 of the verifications, and for 13 verifications they did not add Chinese parties with unsatisfactory results to the watchlist maintained by BIS's Office of Enforcement Analysis (OEA).

BIS guidance⁷ states that specialists will initiate an investigative lead in IMS-R for post-shipment verifications rated as unfavorable (if a lead has not already been created). In addition, specialists are to add parties to the watchlist for verifications with unsatisfactory results.⁸ Both of these actions are crucial to maintaining the integrity of the BIS export control system and ensuring that follow-up actions are performed to help deter future misconduct. Failing to initiate investigations can result in missing opportunities to uncover critical information, potentially leaving export control issues unresolved. In

⁷ BIS, May 28, 2024, *Special Agent Manual*; and January 2025, *End-Use Monitoring FY2025 Targeting Priorities and Guidelines*.

⁸ BIS, *End-Use Monitoring FY2025 Targeting Priorities and Guidelines*.

addition, excluding parties from the OEA Watch List, or delaying their addition to the list, diminishes the impact of increased screening for entities that have had negative verifications and enables them to evade export controls. As a result of this audit, BIS added the Chinese parties in the 13 unsatisfactory verifications to the OEA Watch List or initiated investigative leads (or both).

➤ **Lack of Management Oversight Hindered Effectiveness of Post-Shipment Verifications**

The issues we describe in this report occurred because BIS lacked sufficient oversight of monitoring post-shipment verifications and had not established effective quality control mechanisms that included procedures for routinely monitoring post-shipment verifications from approval to closure. The Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-123 requires agencies to establish and maintain controls related to operations, yet BIS did not have a mechanism to ensure that responsible officials were managing post-shipment verifications from approval to closure in IMS-R. A BIS supervisor partly attributed the lack of oversight to the fact that IMS-R cannot notify responsible officials about outstanding post-shipment verifications. Because of this inability, the officials must track post-shipment verifications by manually reviewing each individually in IMS-R—an inefficient responsibility.

According to BIS, there are no plans to update IMS-R to include automated notifications. Instead, BIS plans to overhaul its information technology systems, including IMS-R. Therefore, it is imperative that adequate oversight of post-shipment verifications be established. Closer monitoring by responsible officials would have revealed that some verifications had not been completed and that others had not been reviewed and adjudicated within the required timeframes. In fact, it was not until our audit that BIS management

learned that the 99 approved verifications for exported items to China or Hong Kong had not been conducted or that verifications remained open for extended periods of time.

➤ ➤ It was not until our audit that BIS officials became aware of the long-overdue or unperformed post-shipment verifications for items of concern exported to China and Hong Kong. <<

We also observed and reported on BIS's lack of oversight in our recent audit of the enforcement of export controls for Russia and Belarus.⁹ For example, we reported that BIS did not document its processes or establish detailed procedures for end-use checks, a process that includes post-shipment verifications. We also reported that supervisors did not consistently enforce required follow-up actions for potential violators. To address these issues, we recommended that BIS develop policies and procedures describing specialists'

⁹ [OIG-26-019-A](#).

and supervisors' roles and responsibilities and implement oversight controls to ensure that supervisors are verifying the completion of follow-up actions to hold export violators accountable when closing end-use checks.

Implementing the actions we recommended in that audit, as well as the recommendations below, will help strengthen the integrity of the BIS export control system and improve the monitoring and overall accountability of post-shipment verifications.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement:

1. Establish quality control mechanisms for supervisors to routinely monitor the progress of post-shipment verifications from approval to closure to verify that export compliance specialists:
 - a. Notify export control officers to conduct post-shipment verifications.
 - b. Submit the post-shipment verification results for approval within the required timeframes.
 - c. Initiate investigative leads within required timeframes when applicable.
2. Once quality control mechanisms are established, require that supervisors who are responsible for monitoring post-shipment verifications report the following to the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement:
 - a. Status of all approved post-shipment verifications, including verifications that remain open in IMS-R.
 - b. Completion of accountability actions for verifications with unsatisfactory results.



Conclusion

Insufficient oversight and quality controls of the post-shipment verification process can lead to failure to detect Chinese end users' noncompliance with regulatory standards. This increases the risk that violations may go unaddressed and that controlled items are not properly accounted for after export. Without routine reviews and timely closure of verifications, end users that violate export control regulations may evade accountability, weakening enforcement efforts for items of concern exported to sensitive destinations like China and Hong Kong, potentially for use in modernizing military capabilities.

Because BIS has not developed strong mechanisms for oversight over this important process, foreign companies may have continued to receive U.S. exports without verification that the companies were legitimate and reliable. Establishing effective oversight and quality control is critical in ensuring that end users that violate export control regulations are promptly detected and held accountable to prevent repeat violations.



Summary of BIS's Response and OIG's Comments

BIS received a draft version of this report on February 2, 2026. In its May 8, 2026, response, BIS concurred with both of our recommendations and described the actions it plans to take to address them. BIS also provided one technical comment on the draft report. We considered the comment and revised the report where appropriate. BIS's complete response is included in this report as appendix 2. In addition, at BIS's request, we redacted from the public version of this report certain export enforcement-sensitive information that warrants protection from disclosure. The response also included a specific comment about the finding, which we discuss below.

➤ **BIS Comment on the Finding**

While BIS agreed with our recommendations, it disagreed that it had not taken adequate action to enforce export controls for China and Hong Kong. BIS stated that the report focused on end-use checks as only one component of its enforcement efforts. BIS acknowledged, however, that improvements to the end-use check process were needed and stated that it was taking action to address weaknesses in its export control enforcement.

➤ **OIG Response**

As we stated in our objective, this audit focused specifically on BIS's ability to effectively monitor post-shipment verifications for items of concern exported to China and Hong Kong. These verifications, conducted after the items have left the United States, help strengthen assurances that end users are complying with export laws and license conditions.

We agree that end-use checks are only one component of BIS's enforcement efforts. However, end-use checks are the primary mechanism BIS uses to verify that exported items are not diverted and being used as intended. Effective export control enforcement, through end-use checks, is critical for preventing the use of U.S. goods and technology to support China's military modernization goals, and inadequate oversight weakens enforcement efforts for items of concern exported to China and Hong Kong that could be used to modernize China's military capabilities. With that context in mind, we appreciate BIS's acknowledgement that improvements to the end-use check process are needed, and we are pleased that BIS concurs with our recommendations. We look forward to receiving BIS's action plan, which will provide details on its corrective actions.



Appendix 1. Scope and Methodology

The objective of our audit was to assess the adequacy of the actions BIS has taken to enforce export controls for China. We separated this objective into two components: (1) monitoring post-shipment verifications for exported items of concern to China and Hong Kong and (2) selecting and completing post-shipment verifications for items restricted from export to China. This report focuses on the first component, assessing whether BIS conducted post-shipment verifications for China and Hong Kong within the required timeframes and took the required steps to hold potential violators accountable for noncompliance with export control regulations.

To accomplish our objective, we:

- Interviewed BIS officials to understand the timelines for conducting and closing post-shipment verifications and the actions that must be taken to hold potential violators accountable
- Reviewed relevant regulations and procedures, including:
 - 15 C.F.R. chapter VII, subchapter C, *Export Administration Regulations*
 - *End-Use Monitoring FY2025 Targeting Priorities and Guidelines*, version issued January 2025
 - *Special Agent Manual*, updated May 28, 2024
 - *BIS Guide for Closing End-Use Checks (EUCs) in IMS-R*, updated November 2, 2020
 - *How to Conduct Pre-License Checks and Post-Shipment Verifications*, June 2011 edition
 - Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123
- Obtained from IMS-R a universe of 642 post-shipment verifications approved between October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2024, for items exported to China or Hong Kong
- Assessed the 642 verifications to determine whether BIS:
 - Completed the verifications within required timeframes
 - Completed the required steps to hold potential violators accountable for noncompliance with export control regulations

For the post-shipment verifications that were open for months to years, we interviewed a BIS export compliance specialist and supervisors to determine why they remained open.

We also assessed BIS's internal controls related to post-shipment verifications for China and Hong Kong. We gained an understanding of the internal controls significant to the audit objective by interviewing BIS personnel, walking through the post-shipment verification process with subject matter experts, reviewing IMS-R records, and reviewing relevant policies and procedures. We did not detect any incidents of fraud, waste, or abuse during our fieldwork.

In satisfying the audit objective, we relied on computer-processed data from IMS-R, which was provided by BIS. We assessed the reliability of the IMS-R data by electronic testing and interviewing BIS officials knowledgeable about the data. Our assessment determined that the data was sufficiently reliable to support the findings and conclusions in this report.

We conducted our audit from July 2024 through February 2026 under the authority of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. §§ 401–424), and Department Organization Order 10-13, as amended October 21, 2020.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence that provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.



Appendix 2. BIS's Response

BIS's response to our draft report begins on the next page.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Under Secretary for Industry and Security
Washington, D.C. 20230

May 8, 2026

TO: Arthur L. Scott Jr.
Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation
Office of Inspector General

FROM: Jeffrey I. Kessler
Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security

THROUGH: David A. Peters
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Enforcement

SUBJECT: **Audit Report:** *Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement Efforts to Combat China's Military-Civilian Fusion Strategy*

Report Date: February 2, 2026 (Draft Report)

Audited Entity: Bureau of Industry and Security

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the OIG draft report entitled *Audit of the Bureau of Industry and Security's Enforcement Efforts to Combat China's Military-Civilian Fusion Strategy*.

The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) disagrees with the wording of the finding but agrees with the recommendations and will prepare a formal action plan upon issuance of OIG's final report.

OIG Finding: Overall, we found that BIS has not taken adequate action to enforce export controls for China and Hong Kong. Specifically, BIS is not effectively monitoring post-shipment verifications for exported items of concern to China and Hong Kong.

BIS Comment: BIS disagrees with the wording of this finding. This report examined end-use checks, which is one part of BIS's enforcement apparatus. However, BIS does agree that there are improvements that can be made to the end-use check process, and this Administration is taking robust action to fix the last administration's weaknesses in export control enforcement matters.

- **OIG’s Recommendation #1:** Establish quality control mechanisms for supervisors to routinely monitor the progress of post-shipment verifications from approval to closure to verify that export compliance specialists:
 - a. Notify export control officers to conduct post shipment verifications.
 - b. Submit the post-shipment verification results for approval within the required timeframes.
 - c. Initiate investigative leads within required timeframes when applicable.

BIS Comment: BIS agrees with this recommendation and will work with the BIS Office of Chief Information Officer to establish quality control mechanisms.

- **OIG’s Recommendation #2:** Once quality control mechanisms are established, require that supervisors who are responsible for monitoring post-shipment verifications report the following to the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement:
 - a. Status of all approved post-shipment verifications, including verifications that remain open in IMS-R.
 - b. Completion of accountability actions for verifications with unsatisfactory results

BIS Comment: BIS agrees with this recommendation and will provide regularly scheduled updates to the Assistant Secretary of the outcomes of the post shipment verifications.

Additional BIS Comments on Report:

On Page 1 in the Introduction, the report states, “...the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) prevents the diversion or misuse of export-controlled items abroad and supports law enforcement actions against violators or export control laws.” It is more correct to say that BIS conducts law enforcement actions. BIS has Federal special agents with full law enforcement authorities to pursue criminal and administrative enforcement actions.

If you have any questions, please contact, Jennifer Kuo, Audit Liaison, at jennifer.kuo@bis.doc.gov.

REPORT

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