

White House Pursues Multilateral Approach to AI Leadership Amid Trade Negotiations and Commerce Department's AI Exports Program - AI: The Washington Report

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VIEWPOINT TOPICS

- Artificial Intelligence
- AI: The Washington Report

Key Takeaways:

- The Trump administration is advancing a multilateral strategy to reinforce US leadership in AI through domestic initiatives and international diplomacy. This approach, rooted in Pillar III of the White House's AI Action Plan (*Leading in International AI Diplomacy and Security*), focuses on building a coalition of allies, leveraging export controls, and securing critical minerals for AI infrastructure.
 - On October 21, the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) **announced** the launch of the American AI Exports Program (the Program), a strategic initiative to promote the global deployment of US-developed AI technologies. The Program fulfills a core AI Action Plan recommendation and implements President Trump's Executive Order on promoting the export of the American AI technology stack.
 - The Program is seeking public input on export priorities, federal support mechanisms, and international standards—setting to inform its design and future solicitations from “industry-led consortia” to export comprehensive AI packages. **Comments are due November 28, offering stakeholders an opportunity to help structure mechanisms in AI export collaborations.**
 - At the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit on October 26, President Trump announced a series of trade frameworks with Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam to secure access to critical minerals, along with similar arrangements with South Korea and Japan to strengthen AI export and supply chain cooperation. Many of these agreements are nonbinding, with formal contracts and enforceable investment commitments yet to be established.
 - Collectively these efforts, both domestically and abroad, advance the White House's goal of building a US-led global AI alliance to “counter Chinese influence in international governance bodies” and to coordinate AI export controls among allies.
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Commerce Department Solicits Feedback on AI Exports Program

On October 21, the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) **announced** the launch of the American AI Exports Program (the Program), a strategic initiative to promote the global deployment of US-developed AI technologies. The Program fulfills a key recommendation in Pillar III of the White House's AI Action Plan, which calls to “establish and operationalize a program within DOC aimed at gathering proposals from industry consortia for full-stack AI export packages.”

This initiative also advances **Executive Order 14320**, issued by President Trump, which directs federal agencies to develop a framework for the international deployment of US-developed AI technologies under principles of transparency, security, and innovation. To implement this directive, the Commerce Department is soliciting industry proposals for exporting comprehensive “full-stack” AI packages, including hardware, software, models, and applications.

Program Overview

The American AI Exports Program begins with a Request for Information (RFI) to gather public input on priority export regions, federal support mechanisms, and international standards—setting. Responses will inform the Program's design and future solicitations for proposals from “industry-led consortia” to export

comprehensive AI packages. These proposals, covering AI-focused computing hardware, AI models and systems, and tailored applications, will be reviewed in coordination with the Departments of State, Defense, and Energy, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Selected packages will receive support from the interagency Economic Diplomacy Action Group, a whole-of-government initiative to connect US innovators with global partners.

To support engagement, ITA is also launching [Alexports.gov](https://alexports.gov), a new portal designed to “amplify [the] AI deal pipeline” and to connect American companies with foreign buyers. The Program will also leverage the reach of ITA’s commercial service officers and the State Department’s foreign service officers and ambassadors to promote US AI technologies abroad.

Strategic Significance

The American AI Exports Program serves as an operational arm of the Trump administration’s broader AI strategy. [As we reported](#), the White House’s AI Action Plan, released in July, outlines over 90 federal actions to ensure US leadership in AI. Among its goals is the secure export of full-stack AI technologies to allied nations.

While primarily aligned with Pillar III, the program advances all three pillars of the AI Action Plan:

- **Pillar I: Accelerating AI innovation** through soliciting industry stakeholders’ comments and collaborating with the industry.
- **Pillar II: Building American AI infrastructure** by promoting US-built AI systems.
- **Pillar III: Leading international AI diplomacy and security** by ensuring global partners adopt American AI technologies over adversarial alternatives.

Public comments for the American AI Exports Program are due November 28, offering stakeholders an opportunity to help structure mechanisms in AI export collaborations.

Trump Administration Negotiates Trade Frameworks to Bolster US AI Infrastructure

President Trump also signed a series of trade frameworks during his visit to Asia this week, laying the groundwork for US AI expansion and supply chain security.

At the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Kuala Lumpur on October 26, President Trump signed a series of reciprocal trade agreements with Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, with stipulations aimed at securing access to critical minerals essential to AI infrastructure, including for use in semiconductors, data centers, and advanced computing systems. President Trump also discussed trade frameworks with South Korea and Japan to strengthen cooperation on AI exports and supply chains, although no agreements were announced.

Highlights include:

- **Malaysia:** With an estimated 16.1 million tons of rare earth deposits, Malaysia agreed not to impose bans or quotas on critical minerals or rare earth elements to the US. Malaysian firms also committed to purchasing approximately \$150 billion in US semiconductors, aerospace equipment, and data center equipment over the next five years, as part of a broader trade package that includes reduced US tariffs on Malaysian goods.
- **Thailand and Malaysia:** Both countries [signed](#) Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the US to expand cooperation on critical minerals, a sector that Malaysia and Thailand seek to develop. The memorandums come as the US looks to strengthen its position in the global AI supply chain and work around China’s dominant role in rare earth mining and processing.
- **Japan:** Expanding engagement with China’s neighboring countries, the US and Japan [signed](#) the US-Japan Framework Agreement outlining commitments to strengthening the US critical minerals supply chain. Under the framework, the US will invest in Japanese data center power systems to support AI infrastructure development.

These arrangements and frameworks align with the Trump administration’s AI Action Plan and Executive Order 14320, which aim to promote the export of full-stack American AI technologies and diversify supply chains away from adversarial nations. They are intended to advance the global adoption of US AI systems and secure access to rare earths and critical minerals, laying the groundwork for an American-oriented AI supply chain. However, many of these understandings are nonbinding, and formal contracts or enforceable investment commitments have not yet occurred.

Operationalizing the White House AI Action Plan

The July White House AI Action Plan outlines policy recommendations for federal agencies and government institutes. Pillar III on *Leading in International AI Diplomacy and Security* occupies an important role in the 23-page executive outline, focusing on utilizing export controls, trade incentives, and

standards alignment to strengthen US influence in global AI governance.

A central objective of the AI Action Plan is to strengthen US influence by promoting the adoption of American-developed AI technologies. Linking market access and technology support to AI infrastructure development, the administration seeks to align ASEAN nations, Japan, and South Korea on AI standards and export controls defined by the US. The Commerce Department's American AI Exports Program is designed to deploy full-stack AI export packages to indirectly shape American leadership in AI. Collectively these efforts, both domestically and abroad, advance the White House's goal of building a US-led global AI alliance to "counter Chinese influence in international governance bodies" and to coordinate AI export controls among allies. In doing so, the administration intends to lay the groundwork for a US-centered AI ecosystem built on shared technological and economic priorities.

We will continue to monitor, analyze, and issue reports on these developments. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions as to current practices or how to proceed.

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