

# House Foreign Affairs committee and staff in Silicon Valley in wake of Google-China spat

Posted By [Josh Rogin](#) ■ Friday, January 15, 2010 - 12:46 PM

With all the [news about technology theft](#) in China related to Beijing's battle with Google, many forget that the legal mechanisms for deciding what technologies to export there haven't been fundamentally updated since 1979.

That's not to say people aren't working on the problem. The White House has started a review to determine how to update technology export rules and **Howard Berman**, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs committee, is working a bill that would do just that.

Berman and staff are in Silicon Valley today, coincidentally holding a hearing on the issue in the very location where so many of the 34 companies compromised as part of [recent Chinese cyber espionage](#) issues are located. The failure of the government to determine what "dual use" technologies are ok to give to countries like China is not only an economic, but a national security issue as well, he said.

"There is a growing consensus among security experts that due to legal and technological developments in recent years, our current export-control regime, founded during the Cold War and last revised by statute in 1979, is out of date," Berman [wrote](#) in this morning's Silicon Valley Mercury News, "It needs to be modernized in order to continue protecting sensitive technologies while also maintaining U.S. technological leadership."

Testifying at the hearing will be **John Hennessy**, president of Stanford University, **William Potter**, director for Nonproliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and **Karen Murphy**, senior director for trade at Applied Materials, Inc., a leading manufacturer in the semiconductor industry.

You can be sure the Chinese are closely watching the administration review and the formation of Berman's bill, which could come in weeks. After all, the Chinese [did electronically infiltrate](#) the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, which implements dual use technology export rules, in 2006, forcing that whole office to throw all their computers in the garbage and start over.