

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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October 25, 2012

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Recent allegations of export control violations at one of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) centers raises concerns about NASA's ability to protect sensitive technology from foreign nationals that may have access to its facilities. NASA relies on new and sophisticated technology to accomplish its mission. For example, the agency employs robotic probes to explore the surface of Mars, satellites equipped with advanced sensors to study the earth, telescopes to explore the universe, and spacecraft to transport humans and cargo beyond low-Earth orbit. Given the sensitivity of these technologies, many are subject to U.S. export controls, which restrict the transfer of military and dual-use (those with both military and civilian applications) technologies. The International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) controls spacecraft systems and associated equipment, requiring a license in most cases before such items and associated technologies can be shared with foreign nationals. In addition, the Commerce Control List (CCL) includes many technologies used in NASA programs that may require a license for export.

Because of the importance of protecting sensitive U.S. technologies, we request that GAO review NASA's export control program. At a minimum, the review should include an evaluation of 1) the implementation of NASA's export control policies and procedures at selected NASA centers, and 2) NASA headquarters' role in overseeing export controls at the centers. I understand there is an ongoing investigation at the Ames Research Center (ARC); however, to the extent possible, please include ARC in your review.

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If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Mr. Tom Hammond, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, at (202) 225-6371.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Broun". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

Rep. Paul Broun, M.D.

Chairman

Subcommittee on Investigations  
and Oversight

cc: Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member

Rep. Paul Tonko  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Investigations  
and Oversight