

Taiwan Blacklists China's Huawei, SMIC Amid Escalating US-China Semiconductor Race

The move aligns with the United States' strategy to deny China's access to semiconductor technology, tools, and materials.



A pedestrian talks on the phone while walking past a Huawei Technologies Co. store in Beijing, China, on Jan. 29, 2019. Kevin Frayer/Getty Images



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Taiwan is imposing new export restrictions on Huawei Technologies and Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. (SMIC), dealing a major blow to communist China's ambition to advance its domestic chipmaking industry and challenge global leaders like Nvidia.

On June 15, Taiwan's International Trade Administration [said](#) it has updated its Strategic High-Tech Commodities Entity List to include Huawei and SMIC, the two companies spearheading the Chinese regime's efforts to develop high-end chips needed for artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

“To combat arms proliferation and address other national security concerns, a total of 601 entities involved in arms proliferation activities were added to the list released on June 10, including Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Myanmar, and mainland China, including Chinese companies such as Huawei and SMIC,” the administration said in a statement.

Taiwanese companies must get government approval before they can ship anything to entities on the list, according to the administration.

The move aligns Taiwan more closely with the United States’ strategy of tightening restrictions on the transfer of semiconductor technology, tools, and materials to China. The U.S. Commerce Department placed Huawei on its own entity list in 2019, and SMIC in 2020, cutting both companies off from U.S. suppliers in almost all circumstances.

In the years that followed, both the Biden and Trump administrations urged U.S. allies to adopt similar export controls to deny China’s access to advanced chips produced by firms such as Taiwan’s TSMC and South Korea’s Samsung. TSMC currently makes cutting-edge AI chips for companies like Nvidia, which Huawei and SMIC are attempting to rival.

Most recently, in March, the Trump administration [imposed](#) additional restrictions, blacklisting 11 Chinese firms and one Taiwanese firm for engaging in the development of advanced AI, supercomputers, and high-performance AI chips for China-based end-users with “close ties” to China’s military-industrial complex.

Headquartered in Shenzhen and Shanghai, respectively, Huawei and SMIC are widely seen as China’s strongest contenders in the semiconductor race against the United States, the outcome of which could be vital to determine which country leads in the development and application of AI, with profound economic and national security implications.

In response to mounting export controls, the Chinese regime has launched a sweeping, state-backed initiative aimed at accelerating domestic chip innovation and circumventing foreign blockades. In 2023, Huawei and SMIC [unveiled](#) a homegrown 7-nanometer chip powering Huawei’s Mate 60 Pro smartphone, a milestone hailed by the regime as a symbol of defiance and evidence of the failure of Western sanctions.

The phone’s release prompted the Biden administration to [reflect](#) on whether its sanctions were compromised. A Bloomberg [report](#) that year, citing the Semiconductor Industry Association, suggested that Huawei had built the chip in Mate 60 using its own secret supply chain, enlisting support from existing foundries to sidestep restrictions.

The report triggered an investigation by Taiwanese authorities into four local tech firms allegedly involved in helping Huawei construct chip fabrication

plants across southern China.

Representatives for Huawei and SMIC did not immediately respond to requests for comment outside regular business hours.

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