

Beat: Politics

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION PROMOTES RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS & INCLUSION

OF U.S FOREIGN POLICY

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USPA NEWS - As part of its commitment to put human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken meaningful action to curb the proliferation of technology that has been misused by governments for repression. Today at the Summit for Democracy, the United States, Australia, Denmark and Norway announced the Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative to help stem the tide of authoritarian government misuse of technology and promote a positive vision for technologies anchored by democratic values.

"We were joined in support by Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Too often, cyber intrusion, surveillance, and other dual-use technologies are misused to stifle dissent; harass human rights defenders; intimidate minority communities; discourage whistle-blowers; chill free expression; target political opponents, journalists, and lawyers; or interfere arbitrarily or unlawfully with privacy.

The Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative will seek to address this challenge by:

- Working to develop a voluntary written code of conduct intended to guide the application of human rights criteria to export licensing policy and practice.
- Building policy alignment with likeminded partners that leads to common action, and concrete and practical outcomes.
- Bringing together policy makers, technical experts, and export control and human rights practitioners to ensure that critical and emerging technologies work for, and not against, democratic societies.
- During the Summit for Democracy's Year of Action, we will shape this Initiative collaboratively with our partners and explore how best to strengthen domestic legal frameworks; share information on threats and risks; share, develop and implement best practices; and improve others' capacity to do the same. Over the coming year, we will also engage in further coordination with other governments, as well as consult with industry and academia.

The United States is also working with allies and partners to reinforce our democratic values and our democratic institutions in key emerging technology areas:

- Quad leaders launched a statement of principles on technology, along with new efforts that together will advance critical and emerging technologies shaped by our shared democratic values and respect for human rights.
- Through the Trade and Technology Council, the United States and European Union determined shared principles and areas for export control cooperation, including capacity building assistance to third countries to support multilateral export control regimes, prior consultations on current and upcoming legislative and regulatory developments, and developing convergent control approaches on sensitive dual-use technologies. An additional working group is addressing the misuse of technology threatening human rights.
- We've launched new bilateral cooperative partnerships on critical and emerging technologies with both Japan and the Republic of Korea.

These efforts build on steps the United States has already taken to stem the misuse of technology to abuse human rights:

- In July, the United States Government added to the Commerce Department's Entity List entities located in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that have been enabling human rights abuses against Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other members of Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang, where the PRC continues to commit genocide. This action prevents the entities from gaining access to U.S. technology.
- Similarly, following the coup in Burma earlier this year, the United States Government added companies and ministries controlled by the Burmese military to the Entity List.
- In mid-October, the United States Government released an interim final rule establishing controls on the export, re-export, or transfer of certain items used for malicious cyber activities. The proposed rule will target custom-made hacking tools, which have legitimate law enforcement and intelligence applications, but which have also been misused.
- In early November, the United States Government added four foreign companies to the Entity List to stem the proliferation and misuse of tools used for repression: NSO Group and Candiru of Israel were designated for their development and supply of spyware to foreign governments that used these tools to maliciously target government officials, journalists, businesspeople, activists, academics, and embassy workers. Additionally, Russia's Positive Technologies and Singapore's Computer Security Initiative Consultancy PTE (COSEINC) were designated for misusing and trafficking cyber tools that were used to gain unauthorized access to information systems in ways that are contrary to the national security or foreign policy of the United States and threatened the privacy and security

of individuals and organizations worldwide." (Source: White House)

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