

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 1, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to urge the State Department to issue travel advisories to U.S. citizens traveling to countries that use Chinese surveillance and monitoring systems, including so-called “smart city” and “safe city” systems. Doing so would make Americans aware that these technologies could expose their personal data to foreign governments, including potentially China.

The Chinese government is exporting advanced surveillance and monitoring systems as part of a broad effort to spread its authoritarian model abroad and influence foreign countries. Chinese companies like Huawei and China National Electronics Import & Export Corporation are selling, loaning, or transferring to foreign governments so-called “smart city” and “safe city” systems—a broad array of surveillance and monitoring technologies, including cameras, facial recognition along with artificial intelligence and cloud systems, that can be used to track and monitor individuals.

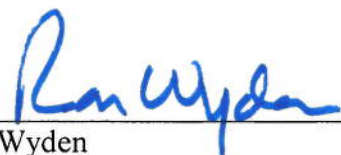
According to *The New York Times*, more than 18 countries now use Chinese intelligent monitoring systems. These include Germany, which has strong privacy and human rights protections, but also Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, which do not. Freedom House’s *2018 Freedom on the Net* report indicates that supplying technology to countries with poor rights records might not only benefit local authoritarians; it might also benefit China. “As more of the world’s critical telecommunications infrastructure is built by China,” writes Freedom House, “global data may become more accessible to Chinese intelligence agencies through both legal and extralegal methods.”

The State Department has a core responsibility to make American citizens aware of threats as they travel—including, in the 21st century, the threats to privacy and personal information. Indeed, Americans need to know that repressive regimes may use Chinese-made technology to gain access to sensitive data—or that Chinese intelligence may gain access to data, even if Americans never set foot in China. We therefore urge you to update State Department travel advisories and alert Americans to the presence of Chinese-supplied technologies like “smart city” and “safe city” systems in foreign countries.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator