

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 7, 2019

The Honorable Ryan McCarthy
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Secretary McCarthy:

I write to express my concern about the use of China-owned social media platforms, such as TikTok, by U.S. Army personnel in both their personal and official capacities.

Recently, the Army unveiled its plans for a new advertising campaign that would harness digital analytics and social media platforms to target and recruit teenagers that show an interest in skills relevant to military service. While I recognize that the Army must adapt its recruiting techniques in order to attract young Americans to serve, I urge you to assess the potential national security risks posed by China-owned technology companies before choosing to utilize certain platforms.

On October 23, 2019, I sent a letter to the Acting Director of National Intelligence requesting that the Intelligence Community conduct an assessment of the national security risks posed by TikTok and other China-owned content platforms operating in the United States. National security experts have raised concerns about TikTok's collection and handling of user data, including user content and communications, IP addresses, location-related data, metadata, and other sensitive personal information, particularly when viewed in light of laws that compel Chinese companies to support and cooperate with intelligence work controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. Further, due to a lack of transparency and without an independent judiciary to review requests made by the Chinese government for user data or other actions, there is no legal mechanism for Chinese companies to appeal if they disagree with a request.

Consequently, I respectfully ask that you provide answers to the following questions by December 6, 2019:

1. Has the Army consulted with the Intelligence Community and the Department of Homeland Security with regard to TikTok and other China-owned social media platforms, and whether they pose security risks as platforms for recruitment? If not, does the Army have future plans for such consultations?
2. Has the Army conducted an analysis of alternative recruiting platforms prior to its decision to leverage TikTok?

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator