

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 7, 2019

Mr. Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Google LLC
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

Three weeks ago, a representative from your company denied, under oath, that Google has been conducting any substantial business in China. Yet recent reports revealed that, until the President placed Huawei on a trade blacklist because of that company's problematic association with the Chinese Communist Party, you were working closely with Huawei to develop "smart speakers" for use in the United States, revealing that you and Huawei "were even closer than previously understood."¹ These devices can enable untrustworthy companies to listen in on Americans' conversations. Your attempts three weeks ago to downplay your involvement in China, plus new revelations about your close relationship with Huawei, raise serious questions.

What due diligence did Google perform before agreeing to help Huawei put a listening device into millions of American living rooms? As we have discovered, Huawei poses serious concerns about national security. The oppressive Chinese Communist Party exercises enormous influence over the company. Huawei has even admitted that it hosts a branch of the party within the company itself. To what extent did you consider the national security implications of helping Huawei? And why did your partnership continue for months after the federal government unsealed an indictment that, in the words of the Washington Post, showed that Huawei "is determined to succeed by using theft and duplicity"?²

We wish we were shocked, but your record around China reveals a string of acts that appear designed to gain favor with the Communist Chinese Party, often at the expense of Americans.

- You have accelerated work in China that provides "a direct benefit to the Chinese

¹ <https://www.theinformation.com/articles/huawei-and-google-were-working-on-new-smart-speaker-before-trumps-ban>.

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/the-huawei-indictment-tells-a-story-of-deceit-and-corporate-espionage/2019/01/29/c2035abe-23f4-11e9-90cd-dedb0c92dc17_story.html.

- military” even as you refuse to work with the U.S. military.³
- Until 2010, you operated a search engine in China, Google.cn, that censored results for political purposes. You were happy to censor; you stopped that project only after you were targeted in a hacking attack.
 - As recently as this year, you were developing a new search engine for China, Project Dragonfly, that was even worse than Google.cn. Unlike the first censorship engine, your new engine would have been even more clandestine about what it censored. Like the Huawei project, you worked on that project secretly. And it appears you scuttled the project only because you faced an internal backlash among members of your own company.⁴
 - Last month, during democratic protests by citizens of Hong Kong, your company “mis”translated the phrase “I am *sad* to see Hong Kong become part of China,” to, “I am *happy* to see Hong Kong become part of China.” That mistranslation parroted the Chinese Communist Party line.
 - You opened an artificial intelligence center in Beijing and are trying to entrench your relationship with companies controlled by the Chinese Communist Party at a time when that regime is using artificial intelligence to oppress racial and religious minorities.

Given this background, it is hard to interpret your decision to help Huawei place listening devices into millions of American homes as anything other than putting profits before country.

This pattern demands an explanation. Kindly respond to this letter with answers to the following questions by August 30.

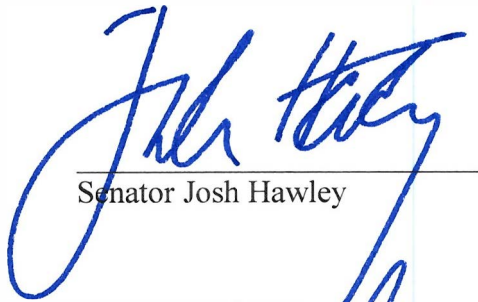
1. Why did you partner with Huawei to develop listening devices for use in the United States?
2. Why did you continue that partnership even after the Department of Justice released an indictment charging that Huawei, as the Washington Post put it, “is determined to succeed by using theft and duplicity”?
3. What did you learn about national security vulnerabilities with listening devices while working with Huawei, and what steps, if any, did you take to eliminate national security risks from these devices?
4. What consideration, if any, did you give to the national security risk posed by Huawei before agreeing to work with them on this sensitive project?
5. The reports about this project state that you “suspended” the project because Huawei was placed on a trade blacklist. Do you plan to resume helping Huawei install listening devices into American homes if the blacklist is lifted?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-google/googles-work-in-china-benefiting-chinas-military-us-general-idUSKCN1QV296>.

⁴ <https://www.theverge.com/2019/3/4/18250285/google-dragonfly-censored-search-engine-code-dead-employees-doubt>.

Sincerely,

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Senator Josh Hawley

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cotton", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Senator Tom Cotton

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marco Rubio", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Senator Marco Rubio