

China says TikTok ban reflects US insecurities

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The TikTok app logo appears in Tokyo on Sept. 28, 2020. U.S. government bans on Chinese-owned video sharing app TikTok reveal Washington's own insecurities and are an abuse of state power, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato, File

U.S. government bans on Chinese-owned video sharing app TikTok

reveal Washington's own insecurities and are an abuse of state power, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Tuesday.

The U.S. government "has been overstretching the concept of national security and abusing state power to suppress other countries' companies," Mao Ning said at a daily briefing. "How unsure of itself can the U.S., the world's top superpower, be to fear a young person's favorite app to such a degree?"

The White House is giving all federal agencies, in guidance issued Monday, 30 days to [wipe TikTok off](#) all government devices. The White House already did not allow TikTok on its devices.

TikTok is used by two-thirds of American teens, but there's concern in Washington that China could use its legal and regulatory powers to obtain private user data or to try to push misinformation or narratives favoring China.

Congress and more than half of U.S. states have so-far banned TikTok from government-issued mobile devices.

Some have also moved to apply the ban to any app or website owned by ByteDance Ltd., the private Chinese company that owns TikTok and moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020.

China has long blocked a long list of foreign social media platforms and messaging apps, including YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Washington and Beijing are at odds over myriad issues including trade, computer chips and other technology, national security and Taiwan, along with the discovery of a suspected Chinese spy balloon over the U.S. and its shooting down earlier this month.

On Monday, Canada announced it was joining the U.S. in banning TikTok from all government-issued mobile devices.

"I suspect that as government takes the significant step of telling all federal employees that they can no longer use TikTok on their work phones many Canadians from business to private individuals will reflect on the security of their own data and perhaps make choices," Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters after the announcement.

Canadian Treasury Board President Mona Fortier said the Chief Information Officer of Canada had determined that TikTok "presents an unacceptable level of risk to privacy and security."

"On a mobile device, TikTok's data collection methods provide considerable access to the contents of the phone," Fortier said.

The app will be removed from Canadian government issued phones on Tuesday.

The European Union's executive branch said last week it has [temporarily banned TikTok](#) from phones used by employees as a cybersecurity measure.

TikTok has questioned the bans, saying it has not been given an opportunity to answer questions and governments were cutting themselves off from a platform beloved by millions.

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