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United States Senate

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ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

August 6, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

I write to continue our dialogue on actions necessary to eliminate the Chinese Communist Party's threat and influence on Department of Defense (DoD) systems and supply chains. I appreciate the ongoing actions you are taking to eliminate Chinese engineers' access to DoD systems, including the efforts to identify other "digital escort" programs.

The language in current DoD policy guidance allows non-U.S. citizens to access DoD systems, which I believe should be addressed immediately. Foreign persons should never be allowed to access DoD systems, regardless of whether a U.S. citizen is supervising. The Department, particularly the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, has the authority to immediately make these policy changes. I urge you to do so now.

While you reform DoD policy, I will work with my colleagues to codify these actions in law to ensure changes made under your leadership are protected. Congress must prohibit non-U.S. citizens from accessing DoD systems under any circumstances and mandate DoD to revise its policies to comply with this prohibition.

Unfortunately, we continue to learn more about Microsoft's business dealings in China. In addition to the information requested in my previous letters on this matter, I request a briefing from DoD about any vulnerabilities that have been discovered in the Department's cloud contracts and software services and any mitigating actions by September 5.

I look forward to continuing our work together on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

cc: Mr. Bradley Hansell, Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security

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