

United States Senate

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Vought,

I write to urge you to immediately prohibit U.S. government departments and agencies from using and accessing DeepSeek and other artificial intelligence tools that were developed in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Federal employees are tasked with researching, developing, and implementing policies critical to America's economic and national security. Allowing those employees the use of PRC origin artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning tools on government devices will almost certainly provide the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with U.S. government data as well as advance information on our nation's policies.

As you are probably aware, the PRC's National Security and Data Laws compel PRC companies to provide any and all data to the CCP's intelligence agencies. This would, of course, include any information entered into the DeepSeek application or other AI tools. Additionally, DeepSeek's developers did not take steps to adequately secure their own databases or implement safety guardrails. A cloud security firm quickly discovered a massive vulnerability in DeepSeek that left data publicly accessible, including users' chat histories and other sensitive information.¹ In fact, several of our allies have already banned the use of DeepSeek for government purposes, including India² and South Korea.³

While AI can be a useful tool for federal agencies seeking to improve efficiency and deliver value to the U.S. taxpayer, tools that provide our adversaries with advance warning of our government's plans and policies should be prohibited. With this in mind, I respectfully ask for the following:

1. Any guidance OMB has circulated regarding the use of foreign adversary origin AI capabilities by federal agencies.
2. Any restrictions on the use of AI tools owned by companies based in China or other foreign adversary countries.

¹ <https://fortune.com/2025/01/31/deepseek-sensitive-information-exposed-wiz-researchers/>

² <https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/indias-finance-ministry-asks-employees-avoid-ai-tools-like-chatgpt-deepseek-2025-02-05/>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-defence-ministry-blocks-access-deepseek-military-use-computers-2025-02-06/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Cotton". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Tom" and the last name "Cotton" written in a cursive-like script. The "C" in "Cotton" is particularly large and loops around the "o".

Tom Cotton
United States Senator