TikTok banned from UK government phones

TikTok will be banned from UK government phones amid security concerns around the Chinese-owned video app, Cabinet Office minister Oliver Dowden has announced.

In a statement to parliament, Mr Dowden said there "could" be a risk to how government data and information is used by the app.

He said that that while TikTok use is "limited", banning it is good cyber "hygiene" – and brings the UK in line with the US, Canada and the EU.

Labour accused the government of being "once again behind the curve with sticking plaster solutions, forced to U-turn at the last minute".

TikTok has been under increasing scrutiny over its **security and data privacy**, with concerns it could be used to promote pro-Beijing views or gather user data – something **TikTok** strongly denies.

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Why is TikTok being banned?

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The EU Commission and more than half of US states and Congress have already introduced a ban over concerns around potential cyber attacks.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has previously hinted at following suit, saying the UK will “look at what our allies are doing”.

China will see move as another swipe as relations deteriorate



Helen-Ann Smith

Asia correspondent

@HelenAnnSmith0

China's response to the spate of countries banning TikTok on government devices has been predictably angry and incredulous, with a dose of mockery thrown in for good measure.

A Foreign Ministry spokesperson said previously of the US decision that it demonstrated insecurity and was an "abuse of state power".

In a notable dig, she added: "How unsure of itself can the US., the world's top superpower, be to fear a young person's favourite app to such a degree?"

But despite attempts to make light, Beijing will certainly see this as yet another swipe in an atmosphere of fast deteriorating relations with the West.

It comes at a time where the distrust runs deeper than ever.

What underpins that distrust from the Chinese perspective is a fundamental belief that Western powers are pursuing a policy of "containment" towards it – in other words, that they are self-consciously seeking to prevent the country from growing and developing because they object to an ascendant China in theory.

Restrictions on one of its most prominent exports will absolutely be seen as part of this policy.

The irony, of course, is that China has entirely blocked the use of multiple western social media apps – the likes of Twitter, Facebook and Google have not been available here for over a decade.

The motivation was different, but it all adds to a worrying picture of increasing polarisation.

Earlier this week, security minister Tom Tugendhat told Sky News he had asked the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to look into the app as it was “absolutely essential” to keep the UK’s “diplomatic processes free and safe”.

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UK minister to look into safety of TikTok

The UK’s parliament shut down its own account last year after MPs raised concerns about the firm’s links to **China**.

But TikTok has called government bans “misguided and based on fundamental misconceptions”.

Responding to Mr Tugendhat’s remarks last week, a spokesman for the app said the company would be “disappointed” if the UK government banned it.

They added: “Similar decisions elsewhere have been based on misplaced fears and seemingly driven by wider geopolitics, but we remain committed to working with the government to address any concerns.”