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Public Safety Sécurité publique
Canada Canada

Deputy Minister Sous-ministre

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0P8

For your meeting with: Steve de Eyre
SUBJECT: TikTok
DATE: August 13, 2020
LOCATION: TBC
TIME: TBC

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File No.:

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE MINISTER

**MEETING WITH STEVE DE EYRE,
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS FOR TIKTOK**

(Information only)

ISSUE

On August 13, 2020, you will have a discussion with Steve de Eyre, Director of Government Affairs for TikTok. The meeting was initiated by Mr. de Eyre, who would like to provide an overview of TikTok's data security and privacy practices.

Officials from Public Safety, Global Affairs Canada, the Communications Security Establishment, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), and the Privy Council Office will have a similar meeting with Roland Cloutier, Global Chief Security Officer for TikTok, on August 20, 2020.

BACKGROUND

TikTok is a Chinese video-sharing social networking service owned by ByteDance, a Beijing-based Internet technology company founded in 2012. It is used to create short music, lip-sync, dance, comedy and talent videos of 3 to 15 seconds, and short looping videos of 3 to 60 seconds. TikTok was launched in 2017 for iOS and Android in most markets outside of mainland China; however, it only became available worldwide, including the United States, after merging with Musical.ly on August 2, 2018.

Very popular with younger users, the app has been downloaded over a billion times and is available in over 140 markets and 75 languages, including in Canada. By the end of 2019, media reports state that TikTok was the sixth most popular mobile app downloaded in Canada, although only 9% of Canadians aged 16 to 64 were using TikTok by the end of the year.

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Recently, many media outlets have reported on data privacy concerns related to the app. According to the Huffington Post, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has stated that “Americans should download TikTok “only if you want your private information in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party”. Pompeo went on to say “With respect to Chinese apps on people’s cell phones, I can assure you the United States will get this one right”.

The Huffington Post article further noted that “according to The Sydney Morning Herald, Sen. Jenny McAllister, chair of Australia’s Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference Through Social Media, believes concerns about the platform are well founded.”

CONSIDERATIONS*US Position*

Due to the alleged data privacy concerns, on August 7th, 2020, US President Donald Trump announced, through Executive Orders, sweeping bans on U.S. transactions with China's ByteDance, the owner of the TikTok, and Tencent, the operator of another Chinese app called WeChat. CBC has reported that the executive orders will go into effect in 45 days (mid-September, 2020). CBC further reported that the Executive Orders “come after the Trump administration said this week it was stepping up efforts to purge “untrusted” Chinese apps from U.S. digital networks and called TikTok and WeChat “significant threats”.”

The 45-day window before the ban comes into effect provides the American company Microsoft time to finalize a potential deal to acquire TikTok.

Canadian Position

Now more than ever, information technology plays an incredibly important role in all of our lives. Our government continues to work in close collaboration with agencies and leaders in the technology sector to ensure Canadians follow best practices to be safe online and that our systems are secure.

Canadians can be confident in the work performed by our security agencies, who will not hesitate to act in order to keep our country safe.

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Investment Canada Act

According to open sources, TikTok established a Canadian office in Toronto, Ontario in 2019. The company did not notify ISED of this establishment as required under the *Investment Canada Act* (ICA). ISED has the authority under the Act to require TikTok to file a notification and conduct a national security review in consultation with the Minister of Public Safety. Any future sale of TikTok to a foreign entity is also subject to a national security review.

NEXT STEPS

The meeting with Mr. de Eyre will provide an opportunity to better understand TikTok's data security and privacy practices. Proposed messages for the meeting can be found at **TAB A**.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dominic Rochon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, National and Cyber Security Branch, at 613-990-4976.

Rob Stewart

Enclosure: (1)