Biden Administration Proposes a Ban on Chinese Software in Vehicles

Under the contemporary political climate these days, one of the most notable things U.S. elected officials appear to agree on across party lines is cracking down on China. In a recent bipartisan action aimed at strengthening national security, President Biden announced a proposed ban on Chinese-developed software in American vehicles. This would not affect cars currently in the United States, but would rather go into effect in 2027 – and in 2030, so would a ban on Chinese and Russian hardware used in vehicles. Coming months after new 100% tariffs on Chinese electric cars, President Biden's newest measure in encouraging "American-made" is all in an effort to protect us citizens – but it is important to delve into whether this is truly the sole motivation behind the proposed plan, and how it might evolve following the outcome of the upcoming 2024 U.S. presidential election.

Hypothetically, the security threat implied here is that a foreign adversary could possess the ability to "shut down or take simultaneous control of multiple vehicles," according to White House officials. If initiated, this would be potentially catastrophic and result in road blockages and car crashes. Proponents of the ban have also argued that Chinese, Russian, or other foreign officials can utilize the existing software technology in the cars to access a user's WiFi and Bluetooth, leaving them vulnerable to their personal information ending up in the wrong hands. At the moment, the more pressing issue seems to be with Chinese software specifically, since Russian software is much fewer and farther between in American cars. White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan expressed that "We've already seen ample evidence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) pre-positioning malware on our critical infrastructure for the purpose of disruption and sabotage," allegations that the Chinese government has denied. Presently, the proposed ban is still in its early stages, awaiting approval to be enacted.

Given that these possible bans will not go into effect for another three years, and that no action is being taken to prevent these cyber-attacks against cars already on U.S. soil, it is hard not to view them as punitive measures towards a top trade competitor rather than merely an act in defense of American citizens. In tandem with Congress' sweeping effort to encourage TikTok to cut ties with China, it can certainly be argued that the government is trying to protect us from our vulnerabilities being shown to potential bad actors. However, in consideration with Biden's new tariffs, it seems like nothing short of a game of chess with a longtime competitor. In any case, it will only accelerate, no matter who wins the election in November. The question that lingers, for both candidates, is: what American products will fill the void, and how will we get there? We do not have access to the same technology as China, the world's largest market for cars and electric car batteries. Half the cars in China are electric – the United States' 6.8% pales in comparison. As such, our car manufacturers cannot adapt to the ever-evolving market and advancements in technology as quickly, nor do we have the resources to, which is why we have been relying on China for the products. Consider these possible negative repercussions for Americans, and the fact that we have three years to catch up to where China is *now.* It may certainly be largely about safety and security, and while that is commendable, there may be collateral damage that either Former President Donald Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris will inherit and have to deal with.

As outlined in a recent article on the subject, "Nonetheless, whether Former President Donald J. Trump is returned to the Oval Office or Vice President Kamala Harris is elected, experts believe that the expanding list of banned Chinese imports – and the restrictions on what kinds of chips and software can be exported to Beijing – will most

likely only accelerate." So far, U.S. banned imports from China have specifically targeted companies [accused of using forced labor](#), and while Biden argues that increased tariffs and restrictions on Chinese imports are for the sake of security and safety, it also seems like a move to assert the United States as an aggressive trading competitor. With respect to what is anticipated to transpire next, [experts say](#) that it could result in growing tensions between the world's two largest economies, divided by the very thing that they said would unite them: technological advances regarding the Internet.