



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation Subcommittee Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-LA)

Preparing for the Future: An Assessment of Emerging Cyber Threats

October 22, 2019

The rapid proliferation of new technology is changing the world. Advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum computing will equip us with new tools to defend ourselves and break down barriers to new research that could improve the way we live and save lives. Unfortunately, one man's tool is another man's weapon. Sophisticated nation-state actors like Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea have already weaponized new technologies to disrupt our democracy, compromise our national security, and undermine our economy. As technology improves, so will their ability to use it against us.

I am particularly concerned about the impact of new technologies on our elections. In the lead up to the 2016 Presidential election, Russia mounted an unprecedented influence and disinformation campaign that used bots to automatically tweet divisive messages from fake accounts. As we move into the heart of the 2020 election cycle, we must be prepared for our adversaries to use AI-generated "deep fakes" to create a false history, sow discord, and inject skepticism into our national elections. To start, online platforms must learn to identify "deep fakes" and publish policies about how they will handle them. At the same time, we need to educate the public to ensure that they are informed consumers of information. More broadly, ensuring that emerging technologies are developed and deployed responsibly requires U.S. leadership, and I am concerned that we are not demonstrating that now.

For years, the Federal government has cut research and development dollars to meet budget caps, and I am worried that countries like China are outpacing our investment. Our failure to put money into R&D may cost us not only our strategic advantage as the world's leader in technology development, but the global influence that stems from it. What is most alarming, however, is the lack of attention that this administration is giving to this important national security issue. Despite the fact that our intelligence agencies have confirmed that nation state actors are utilizing the emerging technology for their strategic advantage, the Administration annually slashes R&D funding under the false promise that the private sector will make up the difference. Maintaining U.S. leadership in this space will require direction, coordination, and money from the Federal government. Before I close, I want to address a final issue that is causing concern in my district and others like it: how AI and automation will affect the workforce. Automation has already decreased the availability of jobs in the labor market, and I worry about the national and economic security consequences that could result if we do not adequately plan for this transition. I look forward to our witness' thoughts on this important issue today.

The success of our national and economic security rests on whether the Federal government can effectively partner with its allies, State and local partners, and the private sector to develop policies that both incentivize investment in emerging technology and manage the risks associated with it when it falls into the hands of our adversaries. I look forward to understanding how this Committee can assist in the development of safe, secure, and responsible technologies.

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