

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

February 10, 2021

Mr. Jeffrey P. Bezos  
Chief Executive Officer  
Amazon.com, Inc.  
410 Terry Avenue North  
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos:

We write regarding the concerning reports that Dahua Technology Company, a Chinese business that is designated on the United States Department of Commerce Entity List, and with which Amazon has entered into several troubling contracts. Dahua Technology specifically developed software to provide instant detection of Uyghurs to Chinese authorities using facial recognition programs.

Since 2014, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has instituted an Orwellian system of surveillance, intimidation, and mass internment of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and members of other Muslim minority groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Reports suggest that more than 1 million Uyghurs, and other Turkic Muslims, have been arbitrarily detained and forced into so-called “political re-education” camps, where they are denied civil and political rights, such as the freedoms of expression, religion, movement, and a fair trial. Mounting evidence points to gross and systemic human rights violations occurring in these camps, including forced political indoctrination, torture, beatings, food deprivations, sexual violence, forced sterilizations, and other egregious abuses. Additionally, the CCP has forced many Uyghurs, and other Turkic Muslims, into labor at nearby factories, either while in detention, or after release, under threat of being sent back into the camps. Recently, the State Department determined that the People’s Republic of China is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the Uyghur population in Xinjiang.

According to a joint report released this week by the *Los Angeles Times* and IPVM, Dahua Technology inadvertently revealed the source code for the Uyghur facial detection software on its product support portal, allowing researchers to investigate the software’s code, where they reportedly found many troubling features.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the code for Dahua’s “Smart Police Heart of City” program – which is advertised as having early warning capabilities – contained several features referencing “Real-time Uyghur Warnings,” an option that when enabled would instantly report a person whose face was identified as having Uyghur traits to Chinese security forces. Dahua’s “Sharp Eyes” project also had a category listed as “Uyghurs with hidden terrorist inclinations.” Further, it was revealed in November 2020 that Dahua’s publicly available Software Development Kit (SDK) had the ability to filter a code for “EM\_NATION\_TYPE\_UYGUR = 1.” These reports are extremely disturbing, and show that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/business/technology/story/2021-02-09/dahua-facial-recognition-china-surveillance-uyghur>

the comprehensive surveillance system that Chinese authorities have deployed against the Uyghurs is just as bad as we had feared, if not worse.

Last year, Amazon entered into a deal reportedly worth \$10 million to buy 1,500 cameras from Dahua Technology, even though the U.S. Department of Commerce had already labeled the company as being “involved, or to pose a significant risk of being or becoming involved, in activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States.”<sup>2</sup> If these allegations against Dahua are true, it would mean that Amazon willfully ignored guidance from the United States government and purchased equipment from an entity-listed company that is complicit in China’s atrocities against the Uyghurs.

While buying equipment from Dahua Technology is not illegal, it does raise several questions for you, as the Chief Executive, of Amazon. Specifically:

1. Were you aware that Dahua Technology was on the Commerce Department’s Entity List when your company entered into negotiations with, and subsequently agreed to, a \$10 million contract with them? If so, when were you made aware of the Entity List designation? Was it a factor in your deliberations about sourcing such equipment?
2. When did you become aware of the reports of Dahua Technology’s participation in China’s state surveillance system against the Uyghurs and other groups targeted by the party-state?
3. After the November 2020 reports that source code was found specifically related to surveilling Uyghurs in Dahua’s SDK, did Amazon have any pending contracts with Dahua? Were any contracts completed after this information came to light?
4. What criteria does Amazon use to determine when to terminate a business relationship with an entity that engages in human rights violations? If Amazon does not have such a criteria, will it develop one in light of the recent Dahua related reports?

We look forward to your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-amazon-com-cameras/exclusive-amazon-turns-to-chinese-firm-on-u-s-blacklist-to-meet-thermal-camera-needs-idUSKBN22B1AL>,  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/10/09/2019-22210/addition-of-certain-entities-to-the-entity-list#:~:text=The%20following%20eight%20entities%20are,Yixin%20Science%20and%20Technology%20Co.>