



## **Dragonfly: Congress Hammers Google CEO On Censorship Plans In China**

Congress does not understand the natural affinity between Technocrats at Google and Technocrats in China, where the object of progressive technology is social engineering. Whatever Google does in China will be done in the U.S. as well. □ TN Editor

Google CEO Sundar Pichai came under fire from lawmakers on Tuesday over the company's secretive plan to launch a censored search engine in China.

During a hearing held by the House Judiciary Committee, Pichai faced sustained questions over the China plan, known as Dragonfly, which would blacklist broad categories of information about democracy, human rights, and peaceful protest.

The hearing began with an opening statement from Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., who said launching a censored search engine in

China would “strengthen China’s system of surveillance and repression.” McCarthy questioned whether it was the role of American companies to be “instruments of freedom or instruments of control.”

Pichai read prepared remarks, stating “even as we expand into new markets, we never forget our American roots.” He added: “I lead this company without political bias and work to ensure that our products continue to operate that way. To do otherwise would go against our core principles and our business interests.”

The lawmakers questioned Pichai on a broad variety of subjects. Several Republicans on the committee complained that Google displayed too many negative stories about them in its search results, and claimed that there was “bias against conservatives” on the platform. They also asked about recent revelations of data leaks affecting millions of Google users, Android location tracking, and Google’s work to combat white supremacist content on YouTube.

It was not until Pichai began to face questions on China that he began to look at times uncomfortable.

Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., told Pichai that the Dragonfly plan seemed to be “completely inconsistent” with Google’s recently launched artificial intelligence principles, which state that the company will not “design or deploy” technologies whose purpose “contravenes widely accepted principles of international law and human rights.”

“It’s hard to imagine you could operate in the Chinese market under the current government framework and maintain a commitment to universal values, such as freedom of expression and personal privacy,” Cicilline said.

Pichai repeatedly insisted that Dragonfly was an “internal effort” and that Google currently had “no plans to launch a search service in China.” Asked to confirm that the company would not launch “a tool for surveillance and censorship in China,” Pichai declined to answer, instead saying that he was committed to “providing users with information, and so we always — we think it’s ideal to explore possibilities. ... We’ll be very thoughtful, and we will engage widely as we make progress.”

Pichai's claim that the company does not have a plan to launch the search engine in China contradicted a leaked transcript from a private meeting inside the company. In the transcript, the company's search chief Ben Gomes discussed an aim to roll out the service between January and April 2019. For Pichai's statement to Congress to be truthful, there is only one possibility: that the company has put the brakes on Dragonfly since The Intercept first exposed the project in August.

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