

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain Through FCC Programs*, WC Docket No. 18-89, Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (February 17, 2021).

When we launched this proceeding nearly three years ago, we did so with a simple and important goal in mind—to protect America’s communications networks and in turn our national security. After all, if our communications networks are threatened, everything we value is threatened.

Back in April 2018, I asked my colleagues to broaden the scope of our initial Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to put additional options on the table. In addition to prohibiting carriers from using USF funds to purchase insecure equipment on a going forward basis, I suggested that we seek comment on removing any insecure gear that may already be in our communications networks. And last December, the FCC unanimously adopted just such a requirement, as well as a reimbursement program to support the efforts of our country’s smaller carriers. But one thing was missing: funding.

Congress provided that a few weeks later when it appropriated \$1.9 billion for our rip and replace program. So today we take steps to incorporate the new provisions passed by Congress, which will help expedite the removal of insecure equipment. I look forward to reviewing the record and moving swiftly to an Order.

But our work to secure U.S. communications networks certainly goes far beyond this supply chain proceeding. And that is because the threats posed by Communist China do not end with Huawei or ZTE or any equipment supplier. There are multiple telecom providers operating in the U.S. today that are owned or controlled by the People’s Republic of China. And their operations within our borders provide opportunity for PRC state-actors to engage in malicious cyber activity, thus enabling economic espionage as well as the disruption and misrouting of U.S. communications. That is why I called on the FCC last April to commence a top to bottom review of every telecom carrier with ties to the communist government.

As a result, we immediately issued Show Cause Orders to four companies that are owned or controlled by the Chinese government: China Telecom Americas, China Unicom Americas, Pacific Networks, and ComNet. Doing so demonstrated the strength and resolve necessary to confront the modern-day threats that Communist China poses to our communications networks. Any backsliding or softening of our approach to China would be a monumental mistake, leaving Americans less safe and our networks less secure. Now is not the time for a return to the weak and timid approach to China of the past.

So as we move forward with this supply chain proceeding, we should also move with dispatch to reach final decisions in these pending matters. I look forward to working with my colleagues to bring these proceedings to a close without delay.