



Glenn Greenwald on TikTok: The Real Reason Behind the Ban

Govornik: Tucker Carlson

Izvor: <https://minbarlive.com/videos/glenn-greenwald-tells-tucker-carlson-the-ban-of-tiktok-was-not-remotely-about-ch>

Glenn Greenwald argues that the TikTok ban was not driven by concerns about Chinese government control, but rather by the US government's desire to eliminate a platform it could not censor—particularly after young people used TikTok to share content critical of the war in Gaza and Israeli policy.

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Glenn Greenwald presents a contrarian analysis of the TikTok ban, arguing that geopolitical concerns about China were a pretext rather than the genuine motive. He contends that the ban gained political traction only after the ADL highlighted that TikTok users were consuming content critical of Israel and the Gaza war. According to Greenwald, the US government intervened because TikTok remained one of the few large platforms it could not fully control or censor. He contrasts this with ByteDance's lack of dependence on US government contracts and security relationships—dependencies that bind American tech companies to government censorship priorities. Greenwald further illustrates this point by referencing COVID-era censorship, when the US government successfully suppressed debate about pandemic origins, mask efficacy, and lockdowns across US-controlled platforms. He concludes that the real issue was not protecting Americans from Chinese repression, but removing a platform that operated outside government censorship authority.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

The TikTok ban gained political momentum not over long-standing China concerns, but after the ADL reported that TikTok users were consuming content critical of Israel and the Gaza war.

TikTok represented one of the few major platforms the US government could not fully censor, making it uniquely threatening to official information control.

American tech platforms depend on US government defense contracts and relationships with the CIA and Pentagon, creating structural incentives for them to comply with government censorship requests.

ByteDance, unlike US tech companies, did not have vested interests in the US government and therefore did not feel compelled to obey US censorship directives.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US government successfully censored debates about pandemic origins, mask efficacy, social distancing, and lockdowns across US-controlled platforms.

The stated rationale—protecting Americans from Chinese government control—masks the actual motive: eliminating the only major platform beyond US government censorship authority.

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The True Driver of the TikTok Ban

The ban of TikTok was ultimately not about fear of China, a concern that had existed for a long time without leading to action. The idea that TikTok had to be banned because China held too much power went nowhere politically. The TikTok ban only picked up enough momentum to gain votes across both parties and support from the Biden White House when the ADL came out and said that young people were being turned against Israel and against the war in Gaza because too many videos circulating on TikTok were addressing those topics. That was the catalyst. It was at that point the government intervened, stating that it could not allow TikTok to remain an uncontrolled realm of **free speech** because it contaminated youth with information the government did not want them to know.

Transfer of Control and Platform Oversight

As a result of this intervention, the government took TikTok out of the hands of ByteDance and placed it essentially into the hands of Marc Andreessen, Larry Ellison, and people like them. The irony is stark: it was a Chinese-owned company that was bringing too much free speech into the United States. While it is true that no one considers China a beacon of free speech, especially regarding its own people, ByteDance represented something unique in the American information ecosystem: an outlet that the US government could not fully control.

Censorship and Government Control During COVID

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US government had no problem whatsoever cracking down on any debates about the origins of COVID, the efficacy of masks,

social distancing, school lockdowns, and their advisability. They were easily able to censor these discussions because they had basic control over all the major American big tech platforms. Those platforms depend on the US government for defense contracts and other agreements with the CIA and the Pentagon, which means they are never going to be adversarial to the US government. ByteDance, however, did not have that vested interest in the United States government and did not need to obey the US government's censorship orders.

Why TikTok Had to Be Removed

Ironically, TikTok became one of the only vestiges of a large platform that the American government could not censor. That is precisely why it had to be taken out of ByteDance's hands—not because Americans wanted to ensure they were free from Chinese repression, but because the platform represented a space beyond government control.

#TikTok ban

#government censorship

#platform control

#free speech

#US foreign policy

#Gaza and Israel

#tech regulation