

Facebook stops Huawei from pre-installing apps on phones

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Mika Lauhde, Huawei's vice-president for cybersecurity and privacy attends a panel discussion at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, Thursday, June 6, 2019. A senior executive for Chinese technology giant Huawei said Thursday that he hopes the company's animosity with the United States will be resolved and warned that the U.S. would be shooting itself in the foot if it were to shun Chinese technology. (TASS News Agency Pool Photo via AP)

Facebook said Friday it has stopped letting its apps come pre-installed on smartphones sold by Huawei in order to comply with U.S. restrictions, a move that deals a fresh blow to the Chinese tech giant.

The social network said it has suspended providing software for Huawei to put on its devices while it reviews recently introduced U.S. sanctions.

Owners of existing Huawei smartphones that already have Facebook apps can continue to use them and download updates.

But it's not clear if buyers of new Huawei devices will be able to install Facebook's apps on their own.

Facebook's move is the latest fallout in the escalating U.S.-China tech feud.

The Commerce Department last month effectively barred U.S. companies from selling their technology to Huawei and other Chinese firms without government approval. China's Commerce Ministry responded this week by warning it would release its own list of "unreliable" foreign companies in the near future.

U.S. officials are pressing their global campaign to blacklist Huawei, the world's No. 1 network equipment provider and second-largest smartphone maker. They say Beijing could use the company's products for cyberespionage but without presenting evidence of intentional spying.

"We are reviewing the Commerce Department's final rule and the more recently issued temporary general license and taking steps to ensure compliance," Facebook said, referring to a 90-day grace period allowing continued support of existing Huawei equipment.

Huawei declined to comment.

Google, which makes the Android operating system used by Huawei, has already said that while it would continue to support existing Huawei phones, future devices won't come with its flagship apps and services, including maps, Gmail and search. Only basic services would be available for future versions of Android.

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