



# Leave Our Speech Alone

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Secretary of State Marco Rubio has [announced](#) that foreign officials who act to censor U.S. speech on U.S. soil won't get visas.

They shouldn't "issue or threaten arrest warrants on U.S. citizens or U.S. residents for social media posts on American platforms while physically present on U.S. soil.... [Or] demand that American tech platforms ... engage in censorship activity that reaches beyond their authority and into the United States. We will not tolerate encroachments upon American sovereignty, especially when such encroachments undermine the exercise of our fundamental right to free speech."

The policy is the least the U.S. can do to combat despots of even "friendly" countries who target speech in the U.S. or demand that U.S. firms abet local repression.

It would also be reasonable to tie trade agreements to willingness to abstain from censoring U.S. speech and bullying U.S. companies that protect speech and privacy. But a White House report on a recent agreement with the UK [says nothing](#) about these matters.

American companies have sometimes withdrawn from foreign markets or offered truncated products rather than cooperate with censorship or surveillance. When Britain demanded a global back door to iPhone encryption, Apple [removed](#) an encryption feature from iPhones for users in the UK. Better than rendering the feature useless everywhere in the world.

But it would be better still if a country like the United Kingdom simply agreed to leave us alone. Pretend we're allies and so forth; pretend that they, too, think freedom is a good thing.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.