



*CAIDP Update 2.27 (July 14, 2021) – US Leaders Back Democratic Values for AI, But Next Steps Remain Unclear*

Speaking at a [US conference on AI policy](#) this week, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said, “It’s important that AI is developed in a way and regulated in a way that is consistent with our democratic values of freedom and openness, protection for intellectual property, respect for human rights and respect for privacy.” National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan went further, [saying](#) that the world would need to decide between “a democratic technological ecosystem” and “a vision of the future that says you have absolutely no privacy, no trust, no security; it’s simply big data owned by the government.” Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and [Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin](#) expressed similar views.

The Biden administration is seeking to ensure allies that the US will work with other democratic nations on emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, to advance a common agenda. And joining the conversation at the Global Emerging Technologies Summit were leaders from Australia, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, the UK, the European Commission, and [NATO](#).

But even as the US leaders underscored the need to advance democratic values, key challenges were evident. Civil society and labor perspectives were notably absent from the event agenda. The [National Security Commission on AI](#), which hosted the event, was notoriously secretive until a lawsuit forced the agency to operate in the open. And Commission chair Eric Schmidt continued to press to make the personal data in federal data agencies available to tech companies even as Biden officials called for strong privacy safeguards.

Earlier this year CAIDP made [several commendations](#) to the Commission about US AI policy. ([CAIDP Update 2.09](#)) CAIDP acknowledged the substantial work of the Commission and the support for “Democratic values.” But CAIDP also noted the reluctance to meaningfully engage the US public, to recommend updates to US privacy law, or even to assess AI policy commitments the US had already made. CAIDP repeated these recommendations in a [statement](#) to the US Congress in mid-March, but there has been little progress.

Earlier, the CAIDP report [AI and Democratic Values warned](#) that “the US policy process has been opaque, the National Security Commission on AI has resisted public participation, and the Federal Trade Commission has failed to act on several pending complaints concerning the deployment of AI techniques in the commercial sector. Concerns have been raised about the export of facial surveillance technology by such US companies as Clearview AI. The absence of a legal framework to implement AI safeguards and a federal agency to safeguard privacy also raises concerns about the ability of the US to monitor AI practices.”

Meanwhile, Europe moves forward a comprehensive regulation for AI ([CAIDP Update 2.15](#)), UNESCO has finalized an Ethics Recommendation ([CAIDP Update 2.25](#)), and China has adopted a privacy law, modeled on the GDPR.