

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

January 22, 2020

Jeff Bezos
Chief Executive Officer
Amazon, Inc.
410 Terry Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos:

I write to seek information about the alleged hacking of your phone by the Saudi government.

In March 2019, your security consultant Gavin de Becker published an op-ed in BuzzFeed News alleging the Saudi government hacked your phone to access private text messages and photographs. Mr. de Becker wrote you directed him to “‘spend whatever is needed’ to learn who may have been complicit in the scheme, and why they did it,” and that your “‘investigators and several experts concluded with high confidence that the Saudis had access to Bezos’ phone, and gained private information.” More recently, The Guardian, citing anonymous sources, alleged that the source of infection was a WhatsApp message sent to you from the personal account of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia.

Unfortunately, the breach of your device appears to be part of a growing trend. The Saudi government has reportedly purchased hacking software from several providers of commercial surveillance technology. Documents published in 2015, for example, indicate that the Saudi government bought malware from Hacking Team, an Italian surveillance company. In 2018, researchers at the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab concluded that the Saudi government used software from the NSO Group, an Israeli surveillance company, to hack the phone of a Canada-based Saudi dissident and associate of Jamal Khashoggi.

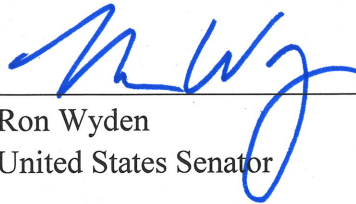
Donald Trump’s nominee to be Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence told Congress in 2017 that “the threat posed to individuals, businesses, and U.S. government targets by foreign governments using cyber intrusion software capabilities is quite significant.” To help Congress better understand what happened — and to help protect Americans against similar attacks — I encourage you to provide my office with information regarding your case. I am particularly interested in the technical details, including indicators of compromise from the hack, which could help the United States Government, businesses and independent researchers discover who else may have been targeted and take steps to protect themselves. Accordingly, please provide me with answers to the following questions by February 14, 2020:

1. Do you have any reason to believe that a WhatsApp message from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was used to hack your phone? If yes, please detail your basis for this belief.

2. Did the cybersecurity experts that you retained who forensically examined your phone produce any reports on their findings? If yes, please provide me with a copy of their reports.
3. Have your cybersecurity experts determined whether malware installed on your phone "called home?" If yes, please identify the IP addresses of the servers.
4. Have your cybersecurity experts determined whether the Saudi government used commercial, off-the-shelf surveillance software to hack your phone? If yes, please identify the software that they believe was used.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator