

# Zuckerberg helped China develop advanced AI to 'outcompete American companies': bombshell testimony

By

[Thomas Barrabi](#)

[Meta actively helped China in the race to develop artificial intelligence](#) as part of its failed effort to cozy up to Beijing, a former executive-turned-whistleblower said during a bombshell Senate hearing on Wednesday.

Sarah Wynn-Williams, who detailed her experience at Meta [in the scathing memoir "Careless People,"](#) testified that she witnessed Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and other executives lie to Congress and "repeatedly undermine US national security and betray American values."

During her opening statement, Wynn-William, Facebook's former director of global public policy, told lawmakers that Meta began providing briefings to the Chinese Communist Party "as early as 2015" while pursuing "Project Aldrin" – a top-secret effort to gain access to China's lucrative market.

"These briefings focused on critical emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence – explicit goal being to help China outcompete American companies," said Wynn-Williams, who worked at the social media giant from 2011 to 2017.

"There's a straight line you can draw from these briefings to the recent revelations that China is developing AI models for military use, relying on Meta's Llama model," she added.



Getty Images

The hearing before the Senate Judiciary’s subcommittee on crime and counterterrorism occurred after Meta obtained an emergency order barring Wynn-Williams from promoting or publicly discussing her allegations against the company. Despite that effort, her book “Careless People” surged to the top of best-sellers lists.



Getty Images

Wynn-Williams said Meta’s AI model Llama “has contributed significantly to Chinese advances in AI technologies like DeepSeek” – which sparked a US tech selloff earlier this year after releasing a model on par with American rivals that it claims cost less than \$6 million to train.

“The greatest trick Mark Zuckerberg ever pulled was wrapping the American flag around himself and calling himself a patriot and saying he didn’t offer services in China while he spent the last decade building an \$18 billion business there,” Wynn-Williams said.

“And he continues to wrap the flag around himself as we move into the next era of artificial intelligence.”



Getty Images

Meta saw the tech briefings with top-level Chinese officials as part of the “value proposition” it could offer to get into Beijing’s good graces, according to Wynn-Williams.

The whistleblower also detailed her allegation that the company developed a “censorship system” in 2015 on behalf of the CCP that risked exposing the data of American users and agreed to block accounts in 2017 operated by Guo Wengui, a self-exiled Chinese billionaire and dissident, after facing pressure from China.

Committee chair Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) accused Meta of trying to silence Wynn-Williams – noting that she faces \$50,000 in damages “every time she mentions Facebook in public” as a result of the arbitration ruling.

Meta spokesman Andy Stone said the \$50,000 figure is from the separation agreement that Wynn-Williams signed when she left the company in 2017 and applies to any breach of contract, not just non-disparagement.

The company abandoned its efforts to enter the Chinese market in 2019.

Stone said Wynn-Williams’ “testimony is divorced from reality and riddled with false claims.”

“While Mark Zuckerberg himself was public about our interest in offering our services in China and details were widely reported beginning over a decade ago, the fact is this: we do not operate our services in China today,” the spokesman added.



Getty Images

Hawley, who previously told The Post that he would be looking for instances where Facebook had lied under oath to Congress about its China ties, said he is pursuing a “full-scale investigation into the potential illegal behavior of Facebook.”

At one point during the hearing, Hawley referenced internal conversations in 2017 in which Facebook employees discussed taking down the dissident’s account. Months later, a Facebook executive testified to the Senate that action was taken through regular channels. “Facebook received direct pressure from the Chinese Communist Party and bowed to it and discussed it internally and planned it and then lied about it to Congress,” Hawley said.



Getty Images

Hawley suggested that Zuckerberg misled Congress about the extent of his communication with China — despite Wynn-Williams’ assertion that top executives were in regular contact with Beijing. He also signaled that Meta may have violated a 2012 consent decree with the Federal Trade Commission to protect the privacy of user data.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, who also attended the hearing, said Facebook’s effort to penalize Wynn-Williams for going public “can be easily abused to silence her.”

Elsewhere, Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal said it was “disgusting and the height of hypocrisy for a supposed free speech champion, Mark Zuckerberg and Meta, to use a campaign of threats and intimidation to try to silence you.”



AFP via Getty Images

“The American people are going to be pretty outraged that Mark Zuckerberg sold out America to China. That he imperiled our national security for a buck,” Blumenthal added.

In her memoir, Wynn-Williams detailed examples of what she called a “rotten company culture” reaching as high as Zuckerberg, former COO Sheryl Sandberg and current top policy executive Joel Kaplan.

The memoir alleged that Sandberg once spent \$13,000 on lingerie for herself and a young female assistant and later invited Wynn-Williams to “come to bed” during a long flight home from Europe, among other salacious claims.

As The Post has reported, watchdogs like the Tech Oversight Project have called on Congress to “drop the hammer” on Meta over its China dealings.

