

The Cyber curtain coming down across the world

Mr Trump's policy of banning Huawei and drawing attention to possible security issues with Chinese technology products and services may create a digital divide in the world. China claims to be the advocate of a more open approach, wanting access to western technology as imports, and seeking to sell her product into complex western systems. The President points out that any Chinese company can act as an agent of the Chinese state.

When I last wrote about this a majority of comments took the view that Mr Trump was right and the UK should back the USA up over the issue of Huawei access to western networks and systems. There is the question of limited western access to Chinese technology markets, and the way China enforces her own censorship and disciplines on the use of the internet in China to consider as well.

It looks as if both the USA and China, for different reasons, will conclude there has to be two different systems in the world, a Chinese one and a US one. China will want to block access to western material on domestic phones and computers, and the west will want secure channels and systems for its own security – as doubtless so will China.

There is already a protective cloak around Chinese internet use. As this dispute develops we will see a more obvious cyber curtain come down between east and west. Countries within the Sino-Russian orbit may gravitate to Chinese systems, whilst all the countries in the US orbit will be on a US standard. The digital divide will be made of electronic firewalls, and extended by a refusal to connect each others components and equipment for fear of contagion.