



---

## GS-II: Techno-Politics: Focus on China's facial recognition technologies.

### Context

The new round of US sanctions against China have turned the light on surveillance technologies including facial recognition that gained much traction in recent years.

### US sanctions on Chinese tech companies:

- US announced measures against around two-dozen entities.
- Some of them are leading companies in China's artificial intelligence industry.
- They manufacture surveillance cameras as well as work on facial recognition.
- The rest are public security agencies in China.
- These entities will no longer be able to access US technology products without a license.

### New centers of tensions:

- There is an additional dimension to the trade war human rights and the treatment of China's Muslim minorities.
- So far the US administration has been criticised for downplaying human rights considerations in America's external relations. But, now, bringing human rights into the arguments on technology could mark a decisive moment in the unfolding conflict.

### The misuse of technology by China – outside China

- A growing facial recognition industry has also created the basis for China's export of surveillance systems around the world.
- According to a recent report of Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Chinese companies have exported surveillance technologies based on AI to 63 countries. 36 of these countries are participants in China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- China's exports come with soft loans and the promise of better law and order. When Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena visited Beijing, weeks after the Easter bombings, China reportedly offered to share surveillance technologies to strengthen Colombo's war on terror.

### Two sides of technology:

- It can be deployed to prevent terrorism or curb political protest.
- Many technology companies already use facial recognition for commercial use. Some brands of smart phones and laptops now use facial recognition technology for logging you in.

### Way ahead

The challenge in democracies is about defining appropriate norms for their use and finding a balance between multiple imperatives.

China's expansive use of surveillance technologies and the US challenge to it mark the beginning a wider global debate on the use of facial recognition as a political, security and commercial tool.

Easy to PICK UPSC "PT" DNA



**ASPIRE IAS**

*The Name Associated with Excellence*

---

---

**Aspire IAS** *The name associated with excellence*

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,  
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

[WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM](http://WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM)

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Feb-March 2020  
Feb-PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.