

Puzzle 12: October 21, 2019

The US Attorney General, William Barr, has proposed requiring that technology companies develop methods to enable law enforcement can obtain access to any messages or data when subpoenaed. Although he did not say so directly, one of the methods others have discussed is to either ban the use of advanced encryption or require “back doors” be put into any such encryption. He argued this necessary to strike “a balance between the individual citizen’s interest in conducting certain affairs in private and the general public’s interest in subjecting possible criminal activity to investigation.”¹

1. What technical problems might such a wiretap “back door” create?
2. What other problems might it create?

¹Source: Benner, Katie, “Barr Wants Tech Companies To Stop Blocking Out Police,” *TheNew York Times* p. A15 (July 24, 2019). Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/23/us/politics/william-barr-encryption-security.html>.