



Foreign Affairs Committee

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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

27 March 2019


Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to you on the subject of the potential involvement of Huawei in the UK's 5G telecommunications infrastructure. I understand that a cross-Government review into the telecoms supply chain is underway, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

I am concerned that the right questions on this vitally important matter are yet to be asked, and that the Government may be on a path towards inviting a long-term risk to become embedded in our critical national infrastructure, and that this path of risk is unnecessary given the availability of viable, competitive alternatives. In that regard I would be grateful for your answers to the following:

- What evaluation has been made of the implications for trust among the Five Eyes intelligence alliance of permitting Huawei's involvement in the UK's 5G network? Have other vital national security partners expressed concern?
- Why should the risks posed by Huawei's involvement be accepted, given there are alternatives? On what basis would the Government ask the public to accept the increased threat to the nation's essential infrastructure and their sensitive data?
- What are the anticipated costs of mitigating the potential security risks from Huawei's involvement in 5G? Will these costs be larger or smaller than the cost of pursuing alternative providers? Will any mitigation costs be carried by the public, or will the providers be expected to subsidise the security required to mitigate accepting Huawei as a provider?
- What are the implications for existing 4G technology of refusing Huawei's potential involvement in 5G? What cost implications are there for existing providers?
- The Government should not be chasing sunk costs when the technological shift between 4G and 5G is so great, so what thought has been given to ensuring this decision is separate from previous decisions? Are individuals involved in the previous decision separate from those informing the decision today?
- Would a decision to permit Huawei be viewed in ten years' time as the moment trust in the UK's information infrastructure was reinforced or undermined? Will this be a major strategic fork in the road for the United Kingdom?

Because of the urgency of this matter, I would appreciate a reply to this letter by Tuesday 2 April.


Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair



2 April 2019

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
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Secretary of State

Der Tom

Thank you for your letter about the potential involvement of Huawei in the UK's 5G telecommunications infrastructure. There is indeed a cross-Government review into the telecoms supply chain, led by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). I have copied him to this response.

The responsibility for assuring the security and resilience of the UK telecoms network sits with DCMS, but the international nature of the market and the sector's role in underpinning other critical national infrastructure sectors makes this a cross-government priority. DCMS works closely with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, Ofcom and industry to understand, respond to, and mitigate the security and resilience risks faced by the sector. Given the global nature of the telecoms supply chain and the different actions of our international partners, they also work closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to ensure international aspects and our international relationships are taken into account in that work.

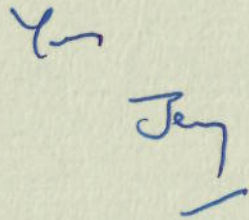
The government takes the security (including national security) and resilience of the UK telecommunications network seriously and it is important we remain confident in it. We have engaged with Huawei on the security of their products since 2003 when they entered the UK market, and have had a formal risk mitigation strategy in place since 2010. This strategy is multi-faceted, the Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre (HCSEC) is part of that strategy and the HCSEC Oversight Board 2019 annual report, published on 28 March, identified serious cyber security and engineering flaws in Huawei products currently deployed in the UK. The report sets out how we have been managing the security risk and the improvements we expect Huawei to make. It is important to note that Huawei is not present in any of the UK's national security networks and I do not expect this to change.

The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review of July 2018 set out the UK's long term digital connectivity ambitions for 5G and full fibre. The NCSC has set out three pre-conditions for 5G rollout: stronger cyber security practices over the entire telecommunications sector, greater resilience in telecommunications networks; and greater market diversity. The DCMS Review into the telecoms supply chain is in that

context - working closely with the NCSC and key departments across government, including the FCO. It launched in October 2018 and is due to report shortly. It is providing a strong evidence base to allow the government to establish a robust supply chain policy framework and will allow us to balance the fundamental requirement for security and resilience in our critical national infrastructure with growth, productivity and inward investment opportunities in the telecoms market and associated supply chains.

The DCMS Review will answer a domestic policy question, but there are, as you rightly point out, important international questions that are also being taken into account. Ministers will be discussing the outcome of the review and making decisions on the long term policy framework in that international context. As I am sure you will understand, I am not able to pre-judge the outcome of those discussions here.

These are complex issues and the global nature of the market, and potential decisions of our partners, only reinforce the need for the Review. Inward investment is crucial for our prosperity and the UK welcomes it. Where national security concerns arise, for any foreign investment the Government will assess the risks and consider possible mitigation. So it is right that we should take stock now so that we can make decisions to secure the long term security and resilience of our telecommunications infrastructure in a way that provides for the long term benefit and prosperity of the UK.

Handwritten signature of Jeremy Hunt in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'H' followed by a horizontal line.

THE RT HON JEREMY HUNT MP