



# Why The U.S. Is Terrified That Huawei Controls The World's 5G Network

With 29 billion connected devices by 2022, one security expert claims, “Whoever gets to dominate 5G infrastructure will become the owner of the next generation of the world’s telecoms infrastructure.” That company is Huawei. □ TN Editor

US lobbying against Chinese firm Huawei, one of the biggest phone makers and telecommunications kit providers in the world, hit a new level this week during the phone industry’s big annual conference.

Around 100,000 technology vendors, carriers, and device makers head to Mobile World Congress in Barcelona every year both to strike deals and to showcase emerging technologies. This year, the conversation was dominated almost exclusively by 5G, as carriers look to introduce next-generation, superfast mobile networks.

The conference was heavily sponsored by Huawei, as the firm made its big pitch about its 5G capabilities.

But looming in the background were the months of negative press about whether Huawei’s equipment might provide a backdoor that would allow

the Chinese government to spy on people.

The firm's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, is awaiting Canada's decision on [whether to extradite her to the US](#), after [alleged sanctions violations](#). And the company was also indicted by the US for [alleged theft of trade secrets](#).

Rotating chairman Guo Ping [took to the stage on Tuesday morning](#) to talk up Huawei's 5G business to a cavernous auditorium filled with telecoms executives and journalists.

His speech took an unexpected turn about halfway through, when he fired a shot at the US government, turning claims that Huawei spies on behalf of China back on America.

"PRISM, PRISM on the wall, who is the most trustworthy of them all?" Guo said onstage, in reference to the PRISM surveillance system used by America's intelligence agency. "Huawei has a strong track record in security in three decades. Three billion people around the world. The US security accusations of our 5G has no evidence, nothing."

Behind him, a slide appeared in his presentation with the statement: "Huawei has not and will never plant backdoors." There was even some muted laughter from the audience.

Elsewhere around the conference centre, Huawei's logo adorned lanyards of thousands of attendees, while ads for its Mate X foldable phone greeted visitors as they entered the building.

Just five hours after Guo's swipe, US government officials held a small press conference [to make their position on Huawei clear](#). Up until that point, there had been no visible sign of the US government delegation, which had quietly turned up to Mobile World Congress to lobby its European allies not to use Huawei's equipment in their networks.

Reading from a printed statement, with no microphone or slides, top US cyber official Robert Strayer said: "The United States is asking other governments and the private sector to consider the threat posed by Huawei and other Chinese information technology companies."

When pressed by reporters, Strayer refused to say whether the US had proof that Huawei might have built backdoors into its telecommunications equipment.

And asked if the US might simply be worried about leaning too heavily on a foreign tech company, Strayer said: “Really I think the question is this: Do you want to have a system that is potentially compromised by the Chinese government or would you rather go with a more secure alternative?”

The US will be hoping that Strayer’s comments, and its behind-the-scenes lobbying, will land more effectively with its allies than Huawei’s attack on the big stage at MWC.

[Huawei upped the ante in its fight with the US](#) over its telecommunication devices on Thursday local time, announcing that it filed a lawsuit against the US government, which has banned its federal agents from using the equipment, citing privacy concerns.

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