

Huawei: Friend or Foe?

By Ernesto Rojas, J.D. Candidate 2021, March 2, 2019

In 2013, the U.S. used [surveillance beacons](#) in network devices and shipped them around the world. Now, the U.S. is accusing Huawei, a Chinese telecommunications equipment and consumer electronics manufacturer, for posing the same threat to the U.S.

As the demand for 5G networks grows, tensions between Huawei and the U.S. has intensified. The issue with 5G signals is that it raises [two privacy concerns](#): first, 5G requires more cell towers, which will be able to see where you are more precisely; secondly, more user data will be collected. The U.S. takes issue with Huawei given its possible ties to China. Currently, Huawei is the [world leader](#) in manufacturing 5G equipment, and it sells this equipment cheaper. Additionally, Huawei's [founder and CEO](#) once held a high rank in the engineer corps of China's People Liberation Army; whereas, other Chinese companies, such as Lenovo, have not drawn the same scrutiny given their lack of clear governmental ties.

The U.S. has pressured both its allies and carriers within the U.S. The U.S. provides many carriers with government contracts, and, as a result, many U.S. telecom firms have decided not to sell Huawei mobile devices rather than [jeopardizing](#) their contracts.

On February 28, Huawei took a full page ad in the Wall Street Journal inviting U.S. media to visit its firm to “clear up ‘[misunderstandings](#)’ created by the U.S. Government.” And, it seems as if Huawei's approach may be working as the United Arab Emirates have stated that it would use Huawei in its networks. However, some European allies are [hesitating](#) at the idea of banning Huawei completely. Nevertheless, the U.S. is not without allies; Orange, the largest telecom operator in France, has “[ruled out](#)” using Huawei equipment in its core 5G network, as well as [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#).

Ultimately, experts are split as to whether Huawei is a security threat. However, many argue that given the trade relationship between the U.S. and its best customer, China, both the Chinese government and Huawei are [unlikely](#) to risk losing their business relationship to a bug or piece of hardware that would likely be [found](#).

