

Huawei loses out in Singapore 5G bid

June 25 2020, by Martin Abbugao



Singapore's information minister insisted no company had been excluded in the selection process

Nokia and Ericsson have been chosen as Singapore's main 5G network providers, telecom operators said, leaving Huawei with only a minor role as the Chinese tech giant faces growing US pressure.

Huawei has been dogged by allegations of stealing American trade secrets and aiding China's espionage efforts, with Washington pushing countries to bar the company from involvement in their next-generation networks.

Huawei has denied ties with the Chinese government.

Singtel, one of the city-state's main telecom operators, said Wednesday it had chosen Sweden's Ericsson to build its 5G network after the government gave final approval.

A joint venture that includes the country's two other major telecom operators, M1 and StarHub, announced it had opted for Nokia to build its main 5G infrastructure.

However, both M1 and Starhub said that other firms, including Huawei, could have some involvement in the project.

Huawei only won the contract to be a provider for a smaller, local network system, operated by TPG Telecom, a more minor player.

The Southeast Asian city-state tries to maintain good relations with both the US and China, and Information Minister S. Iswaran insisted that no company had been excluded in the selection process.

"We have run a robust process spelling out our requirements in terms of performance, security and resilience," he said, adding that mobile network operators also had their own criteria.

"There is a diversity of vendors participating in different parts of the 5G ecosystem, and... there remain prospects for greater involvement in our 5G system going forward."

Iswaran said the 5G investments will run into "billions of dollars".



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'Knowing your supplier'

Singapore is aiming to have ultra high-speed internet coverage for half of the country by the end of 2022, and expand it to cover the entire island by the end of 2025.

The US government launched a worldwide campaign against Huawei, the world's largest supplier of telecom network equipment and the planet's number two smartphone maker, about 18 months ago.

Washington essentially banned Huawei from the US market last year, although earlier this month it let the firm back into the fold when it comes to companies working together to set standards for 5G networks.

The Pentagon has published a list of 20 Chinese companies it says are backed by the military, in the latest instance of a running tit-for-tat economic battle between Washington and Beijing, and Bloomberg reported Huawei is one of them.

"As the People's Republic of China attempts to blur the lines between civil and military sectors, 'knowing your supplier' is critical," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman said in Washington.

The list covers firms "owned by, controlled by, or affiliated with China's government, military, or defense industry," Hoffman said in a statement.

"We envision this list will be a useful tool for the U.S. Government, companies, investors, academic institutions, and likeminded partners to conduct due diligence with regard to partnerships with these entities."

Huawei did not immediately respond on the publication of the list.

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