

BT CEO warns of long road to excise Huawei from UK network

13 July 2020, by Danica Kirka



A man wearing a face mask to protect against the new coronavirus talks on his smartphone as he walks past a Huawei store in Beijing, Wednesday, July 1, 2020. China on Wednesday demanded Washington stop "oppressing Chinese companies" after U.S. regulators declared telecom equipment suppliers Huawei and ZTE to be national security threats. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

The CEO of telecoms company BT has warned it may take a decade to remove Huawei equipment from Britain's wireless infrastructure if the U.K. government follows the U.S. in dumping the telecom provider from its networks.

Philip Jansen told the BBC that the Chinese tech giant has been in the telecoms infrastructure for two decades and has been a big supplier to the industry.

That legacy will complicate things for British officials, who are reportedly reconsidering their decision to give Huawei a limited role supplying new high-speed network equipment to wireless carriers.

"It is all about timing and balance," Jansen told the BBC. "So if you want to have no Huawei in the

whole of the telecoms infrastructure across the whole of the U.K., I think that's impossible to do in under 10 years."

Dumping Huawei from the 5G network could take as long as five to seven years. But the details are critical.

"If we get in a situation where things need to go very fast, then we go into a situation where service for 24 million BT Group mobile customers is put into question - outages would be possible," he said. "Secondly the security and safety in the short-term could be put at risk - this is really critical here. If you are not able to buy or transact with Huawei that would mean you wouldn't be able to get software upgrades if you take it to its specificity."

Britain had decided in January to let Chinese tech giant Huawei have a limited role supplying new high-speed network equipment to wireless carriers, ignoring the U.S. government's warnings that it would sever intelligence sharing if the company was not banned.

But the move set up a diplomatic clash with the Americans, who claim that British sovereignty was at risk because the company could give the Chinese government access to data - an allegation Huawei denies.

Amid continued pressure to remove Huawei from [communication networks](#) entirely, the U.S. imposed new sanctions aimed at the firm's supply chain, sparking the U.K. government review.

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