

EUROPE

Reports: UK to cut Huawei's involvement in 5G network

Boris Johnson wants to reduce Chinese tech giant's involvement in building network to zero by 2023, according to British media.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. | Pippa Fowles / 10 Downing Street via AP

By **MELISSA HEIKKILÄ**

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British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to reduce the role of Huawei in the U.K.'s 5G network in the wake of the coronavirus crisis, according to reports in [the Guardian](#) and [the Telegraph](#).

Johnson has instructed officials to draft plans that would reduce Huawei's involvement in building the U.K.'s 5G phone network to zero by 2023, the Telegraph reported.

The move marks a departure from the U.K. government's previous position. [In January](#), Johnson said he would allow the Chinese tech giant to build up to 35 percent of its 5G phone network but block access to "sensitive core" parts of the network.

The push for new plans comes amid growing backlash among Conservative MPs against Chinese investment and a lack of transparency around Beijing's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, according to the Telegraph.

The paper also reported Johnson hopes to ramp up trade talks with the United States, which has been one of the most vocal critics of the U.K.'s decision to allow Huawei into its market, citing [security concerns](#).

The reports "simply don't make sense," Huawei Vice President Victor Zhang said in a statement. "As a private company, 100% owned by employees, which has operated in the UK for 20 years, our priority has been to help mobile and broadband companies keep Britain connected, which in this current health crisis has been more vital than ever. This is our proven track-record."

Downing Street did not immediately respond to POLITICO's request for comment.

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