

# Huawei lashes out at ex-CIA chief over spying claims

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Chinese telecoms giant Huawei has hit back at allegations by a former CIA chief that the company spies for Beijing, labelling them "defamatory" and "baseless".

Michael Hayden, who headed the Central Intelligence Agency in 2006-09, was quoted two weeks ago as saying China was engaged in unrestricted espionage against the West and that Huawei would have shared information with state agencies.

Asked by the Australian Financial Review if Huawei posed an unambiguous national security threat to the United States and Australia, Hayden said: "Yes, I believe it does."

Eric Xu, Huawei's deputy chairman and one of its three rotating CEOs, riposted that Hayden had no evidence for his allegations.

"Mr Hayden's proactive comments on Huawei in his recent interview with the AFR are defamatory," Xu said in a statement sent to AFP Friday.

"The fact is that his allegation against Huawei is baseless and he is trying to cover the fact that he doesn't have any proof."

Hayden, a retired general, said he believed Western intelligence networks had hard evidence that Huawei had spied on behalf of Beijing.

"That's my professional judgement," he told the paper.

Washington, Canberra and London, among others, have raised concerns that Huawei's alleged ties to the Chinese state could see telecoms equipment supplied by the company used for spying and cyber-attacks.

One writer on ForeignPolicy.com characterised the accusations as "allegations that it's basically an intelligence agency masquerading as a tech business".

Huawei denies it has any direct links to the Chinese state, but the US Congress last year called for its exclusion from US [government contracts](#) . It was also barred from bidding for contracts to build Australia's [national broadband network](#).

Hayden also claimed that Huawei had approached him several years ago to be on its US board, but that it had failed to convince him it should be involved in critical [communications infrastructure](#).

Xu also took issue with that statement, saying the company did not contact Hayden for a possible board position.

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