

“

Imagine what the Chinese will be able to do if they dominate the backbone of 5G networks around the world.

”

KARL ROVE

National security must be a top consideration as we move towards a 5G network. But the proposed T-Mobile/Sprint merger could put development of 5G into the hands of Chinese companies through their equipment suppliers, Huawei and ZTE. At the Hudson Institute's Promoting American Leadership in 5G Technology event, Karl Rove explained the dangers of putting 5G development into the hands of the "New T-Mobile" with significant ties to Huawei despite mounting evidence of cyber espionage.



Karl Rove, former Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush, at the Hudson Institute

I stumbled into this field in the aftermath of 9/11, where equipment interoperability was an issue and the amount of spectrum available for emergency communications was inadequate. I began an effort to identify spectrum that could be set aside for a first-responder network and saw first-hand how difficult clearing spectrum was. I'm interested in how we can use spectrum more efficiently than we currently do.

The rise of China is not just an economic threat but a strategic and geopolitical one that needs to be responded to. There are advantages to their command-and-control economy but also weaknesses. Chinese companies have a reputation for shoddy equipment and shoddy deployment. We can exploit that with better quality products and services. The debt dependencies of the Chinese are now coming into the fore, and people are now beginning to understand what that means. Just look at the recent Brazilian presidential election. Regarding security, I remember being surprised about how much information on Al Qaeda we were able to pluck out of U.S. networks and equipment. Imagine what the Chinese will be able to do if they dominate the backbone of 5G networks around the world.

U.S. carriers have done a great job for our country, but they are stuck in a business model that is not up to this challenge. What we have to do is to flip the model and move to an open access, wholesale wireless market nationwide. Right now, the major carriers have a multi-year plan for 5G rollout, and those plans don't cover much of the country. This is a problem. They have legacy investments in 4G, and carriers are going to be reluctant apologists for this model that is benefitting Chinese companies. Barcelona is coming for 5G and the U.S. has an opportunity to change the script. There is a customer base out there that is amenable to an open access network.