

Criticism of Huawei's funding program with US universities 'ignorant'

A top executive of Huawei has struck back at criticism from several members of the US Congress on the company's funding program for US universities which he said displays "an ignorance of how contemporary science and innovation work."

"Academic freedom is the cornerstone of higher learning. This freedom from political and other interference allows the US consistently to attract the world's brightest minds to study and conduct research within its borders. It also supports the US' continued status as a global technology leader," Eric Xu, Huawei's current rotating chairman, said in an article published by Financial Times on Thursday.

The remarks were made after several US Congress members asked the government to investigate whether Huawei's Innovation Research Program (HIRP) and other programs through which Huawei works with institutes of higher education across the country, might threaten US national security.

"It has come to our attention that Huawei Technologies, a 'national champion' of the People's Republic of China, has formed a series of research partnerships with over 50 universities in the US that threaten national security," these Congress members said in a letter addressed to the secretary of education in June.

Li Yong, a senior research fellow at the China Association of International Trade, told the Global Times on Sunday that the US criticism of Huawei's cooperation with US universities in the name of threatening national security is just a tool of "defaming" Chinese tech company.

"The academies should be a pure land without borders... What the US did is affronting the holy science, showing the recession of US politics," Li stressed.

According to an introduction on its official website, HIRP provides funding opportunities to leading universities and research institutes conducting innovative research in communication technology, computer science, engineering, and related fields.

"Huawei does not gain exclusive ownership of, or access to, the findings of the research we support and we do not dictate what is published," Xu said in the article.

Experts also stressed that the areas where Huawei works with US universities are centered on basic research, yielding basic technologies and theories as a result. "The findings will be public good, rather than what the US politicians claim is a threat," Li noted.

Besides, it has become an international rule for companies and universities to cooperate in basic research, as the funds provided by private companies could accelerate research cycles, Li noted. "This is a two-way selection, and some universities might also actively approach enterprises for

cooperation."

(People's Daily/Global Times)