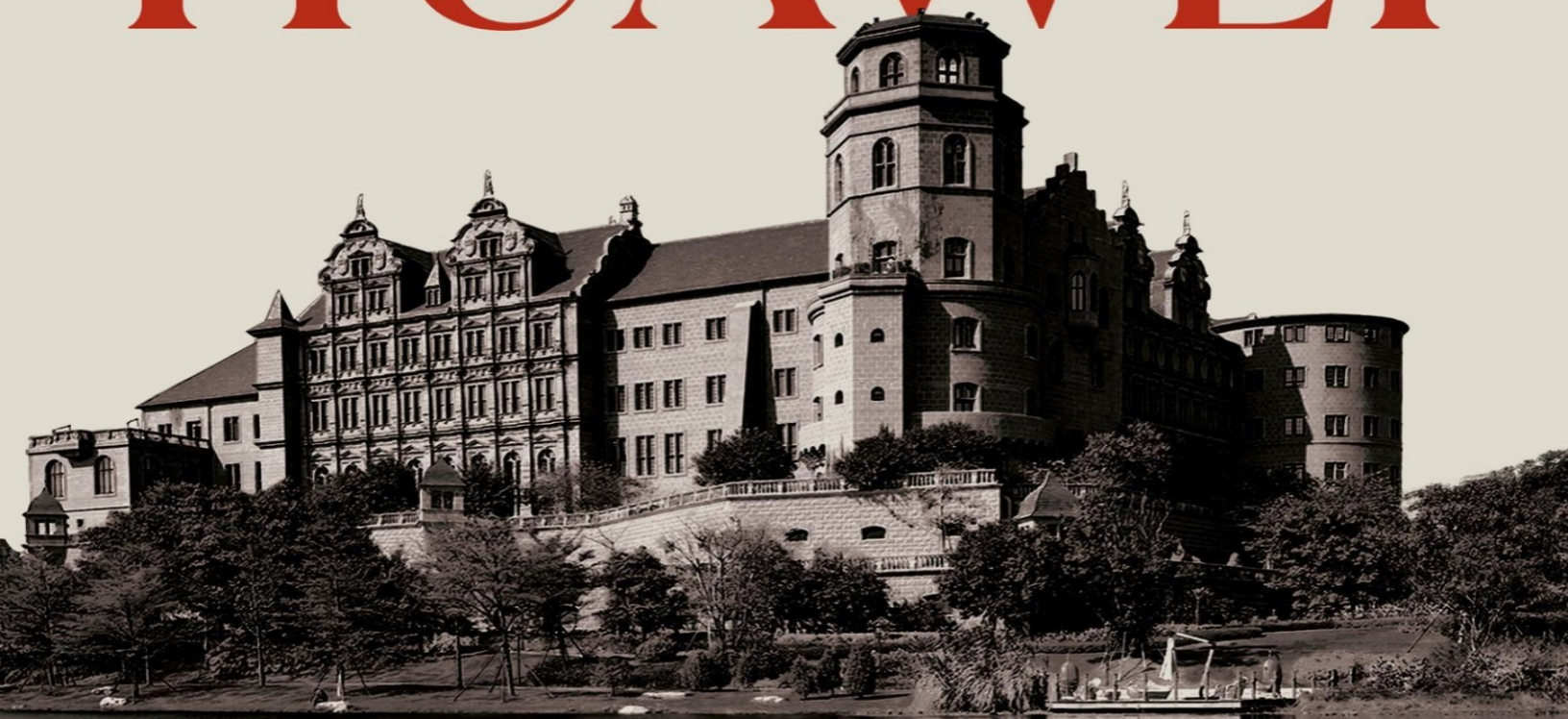


THE SECRET HISTORY  
OF CHINA'S MOST  
POWERFUL COMPANY

# HOUSE OF HUAWEI



EVA DOU

WASHINGTON POST TECHNOLOGY POLICY REPORTER

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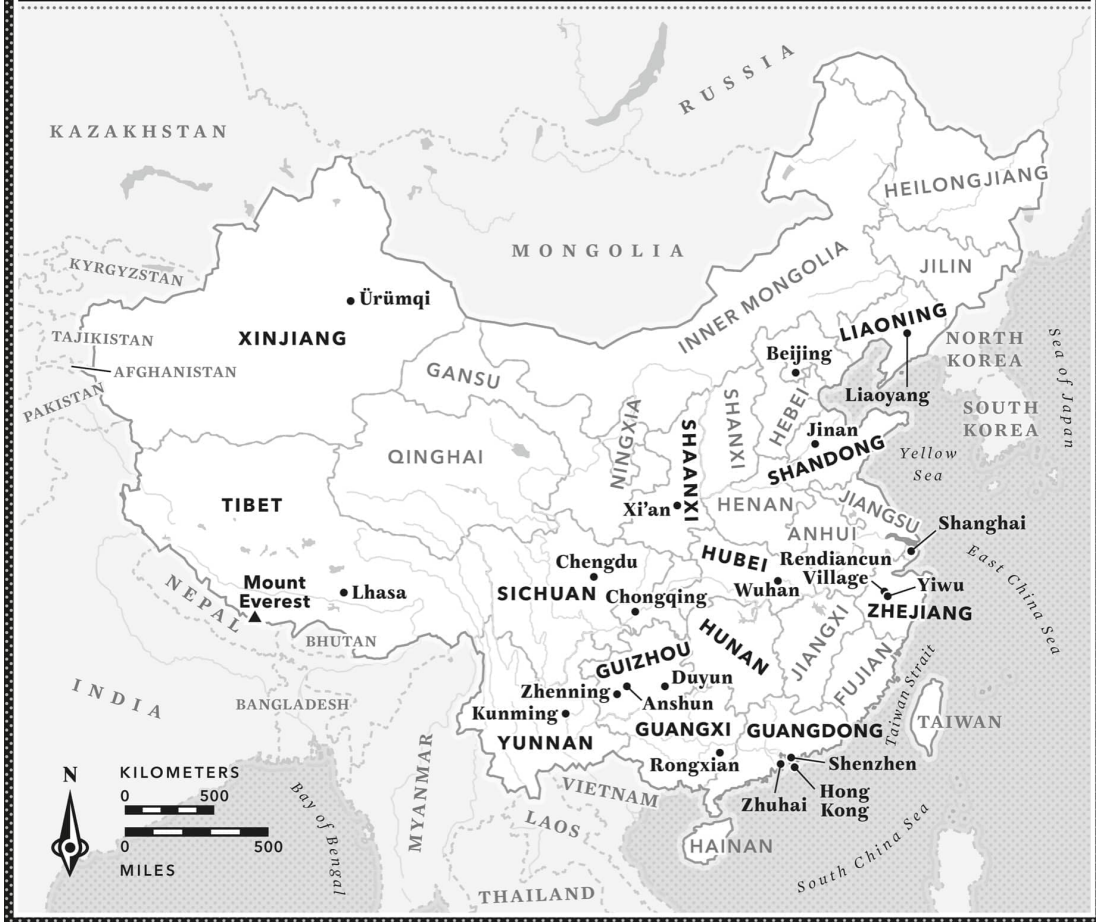


*To Ma Ding*

As a military man I have known many clever and truly outstanding strategists. I have rarely come across an individual more strategically oriented than Ren.<sup>[1]</sup>

*—Admiral William A. Owens,  
former vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

# THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



## A NOTE ON NAMES

The Chinese names in the text are transliterated in the pinyin system, which has been used in China since the 1950s. In pronunciation, a *zh* can be approximated by the English *j* (Ren Zhengfei = “Rin Jung-fay”), an *x* by the English *sh* (Ren Moxun = “Rin Moh-shyun”), and a *q* by the English *ch* (Zhou Daiqi = “Joe Dye-chi”).

Surnames precede given names in Chinese, and this often remains the case in anglicized versions. Some Chinese individuals who move abroad choose to adopt the Westernized convention of putting surnames second.

Many Huawei executives have adopted English names for their professional work, and this text frequently uses English names for broader accessibility.

The Cast of Characters lists executives by prominent titles they have held that figure into this story. Huawei’s executives tend to rotate roles and responsibilities every few years, and some have since progressed to other titles.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### The Ren Family

**Ren Zhengfei** / 任正非: Founder of Huawei Technologies Co., the world's largest supplier of telecommunications equipment.

**Meng Wanzhou** / 孟晚舟 (a.k.a. Cathy Meng and Sabrina Meng): Daughter of Ren Zhengfei and Meng Jun; Huawei's chief financial officer.

**Ren Moxun** / 任摩逊: Ren Zhengfei's father; dean of Duyun Normal College for Nationalities and principal of Duyun No. 1 Middle School.

**Cheng Yuanzhao** / 程远昭: Ren Zhengfei's mother; math teacher at Duyun No. 1 Middle School.

**Steven Ren** (a.k.a. **Ren Shulu** / 任树录): Ren Zhengfei's younger brother; Huawei's chief logistics officer.

**Zheng Li** / 郑黎: Ren Zhengfei's younger sister; a finance executive at Huawei.

**Meng Jun** / 孟军: Ren Zhengfei's first wife.

**Meng Dongbo** / 孟东波: Meng Jun's father and Ren Zhengfei's first father-in-law; Sichuan Province's vice-governor.

**Ren Ping** / 任平 (a.k.a. Meng Ping / 孟平): Son of Ren Zhengfei and Meng Jun.

**Yao Ling** / 姚凌: Ren Zhengfei's second wife; mother of Annabel Yao.

**Annabel Yao** (a.k.a. **Yao Anna** / 姚安娜 and Yao Siwei / 姚思为): Daughter of Ren Zhengfei and Yao Ling.

**Carlos Liu** (a.k.a. **Liu Xiaozong** / 刘晓棕): Meng Wanzhou's husband.

## Key Huawei Executives

**Sun Yafang** / 孙亚芳: Huawei's chairwoman from 1999 to 2018.

**Guo Ping** / 郭平: One of Huawei's three rotating chairpersons; member of the company's early engineering team; oversaw Huawei's international M&As and legal cases.

**Ken Hu** (a.k.a. **Hu Houkun** / 胡厚崑): One of Huawei's three rotating chairpersons; oversaw Huawei's international cybersecurity.

**Eric Xu** (a.k.a. **Xu Zhijun** / 徐直军): One of Huawei's three rotating chairpersons; led Huawei's wireless division during its early internationalization.

**Zheng Baoyong** / 郑宝用: Huawei's chief engineer in early years and later an executive vice president; also president of Huawei's US division in the late 1990s.

**Li Yinan** / 李一男: Huawei's "boy genius" engineer in the early years; founder of the rival router maker Harbour Networks.

**William Xu** (a.k.a. **Xu Wenwei** / 徐文伟): Senior Huawei executive and board member who did chip engineering for the company's early telephone switches.

**Chen Zhufang** / 陈珠芳: Huawei's party secretary from the late 1990s through around 2007.

**Zhou Daiqi** / 周代期: Huawei's party secretary starting around 2008.

**Jiang Xisheng** / 江西生: Early Huawei executive who negotiated the exit of the company's five original investors.

**James Yan** (a.k.a. **Yan Jingli** / 阎景立): Huawei's first US representative in the 1990s.

**Matt Bross**: British Telecom CTO who selected Huawei for its first major contract in the West in 2005; later joined Huawei as global CTO.

**Teresa He** (a.k.a. **He Tingbo** / 何庭波): Head of Huawei's chip unit, HiSilicon.

**Wen Tong** / 童文: Huawei's lead 5G scientist; former head of Nortel's Network Technology Labs.

**Charles Ding** (a.k.a. **Ding Shaohua** / 丁少华): Huawei's chief US representative during the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's 2012 hearing on Huawei and ZTE.

**Richard Yu** (a.k.a. **Yu Chengdong** / 余承东): Huawei's smartphone head.



**Catherine Chen** (a.k.a. **Chen Lifang** / 陈黎芳): Head of Huawei's public affairs during the US-China trade war; her husband, Cao Yi'an, was one of Huawei's early engineers.

## Domestic Rivals

**Shen Dingxing** / 沈定兴: Founder of Zhuhai Telecom; one of Huawei's original five investors.

**Wan Runnan** / 万润南: Founder of the Stone Group Corporation, China's most promising early private tech company, dubbed "China's IBM"; he went into exile in France after supporting pro-democracy student protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

**Wu Jiangxing** / 邬江兴: Military engineer who developed the "04 switch," China's first homegrown advanced digital telephone switch, in 1991; founder of the switching company Great Dragon; he was a director of the Information Engineering Academy of the PLA's General Staff Department, a title that Ren Zhengfei has been mistakenly cited as holding.

**Hou Weigui** / 侯为贵: Founder of ZTE.

**Liu Chuanzhi** / 柳传志: Founder of Lenovo.

## International Industry Executives

**John Chambers**: CEO of Cisco when the company filed an intellectual-property lawsuit against Huawei.

**Bruce Claflin:** 3Com CEO; set up a joint-venture company with Huawei to help it defend itself against the Cisco lawsuit.

**Mike Zafirovski:** Motorola COO who tried to negotiate a merger with Huawei in 2003.

**William A. “Bill” Owens:** Former vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; former Nortel CEO; represented Huawei in its 2010 bid for a place in a Sprint contract.

**Daniel “Dan” Hesse:** Sprint Nextel CEO.

## Chinese Government Officials

**Note:** *The title of China’s top leader fluctuated before 1997. Mao Zedong led China under the title “chairman of the Communist Party of China” from 1949 until his death in 1976. After a brief interregnum, Deng Xiaoping took over the helm under a range of titles, including “paramount leader,” then just “comrade” in the years before his death in 1997. Since then, starting with Jiang Zemin, the nation’s top leader has ruled as “general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party” while also doubling as the nation’s “president” on a staggered schedule. For instance, Xi Jinping became China’s leader in November 2012, when he assumed the post of general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, then gained the additional title “president of China” in March 2013. The premier is the nation’s number-two official.*

**Mao Zedong / 毛泽东:** Founder of the People’s Republic of China, chairman of the Communist Party of China (CCP), and the nation’s leader from 1949 until his death in 1976.

**Deng Xiaoping / 邓小平:** China's leader from 1978 to 1997. He retired his formal government titles in the late 1980s but continued to be regarded as the nation's de facto leader until his death. He is credited with engineering China's economic renaissance through market reforms following Mao's Cultural Revolution.

**Zhao Ziyang / 赵紫阳:** China's premier from 1980 to 1987 and general secretary of the CCP from 1987 to 1989. He was deposed after sympathizing with the pro-democracy student protesters of Tiananmen Square in 1989. Earlier in his career, he was the leader of Sichuan Province as it began its experimentation in market reforms.

**Li Peng / 李鹏:** China's premier from 1987 to 1998. A security hard-liner who backed the use of force against the Tiananmen Square protesters in 1989.

**Hu Yaobang / 胡耀邦:** General secretary of the CCP from 1982 to 1987. His death in April 1989 sparked student protests in Beijing that escalated into the Tiananmen Square protests.

**Jiang Zemin / 江泽民:** General secretary of the CCP from 1989 to 2002. He oversaw China's freewheeling boom in private business, as well as the nation's 2001 entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Outranked by Deng Xiaoping during the first part of his tenure as general secretary, he became China's top leader following Deng's death in 1997. Ren's meeting with Jiang in 1994 is often cited as an early highlight for Huawei.

**Zhu Rongji / 朱镕基:** China's premier from 1998 to 2003. He was a leading proponent of China's economic liberalization and negotiated the country's entry into the WTO. Following Zhu's visit to Huawei in 1996, the company gained easier access to financing from the state-owned banking system.

**Hu Jintao** / 胡锦涛: China's leader from 2002 to 2012, he presided over a period of rapid globalization. Ren Zhengfei accompanied him on a state visit to Iran in 2001.

**Wu Bangguo** / 吴邦国: China's vice-premier from 1995 to 2003 and chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress from 2003 to 2013. He was one of Huawei's supporters in Beijing and the official whom the company sought out for help when it came under scrutiny from national auditors in the early 2000s.

**Wen Jiabao** / 温家宝: China's premier from 2003 to 2013.

**Zhang Gaoli** / 张高丽: China's vice-premier from 2013 to 2018. He visited Huawei in 1998 during his tenure as Shenzhen's party secretary.

**Xi Jinping** / 习近平: China's current leader and general secretary of the CCP since 2012.