

From the Vice-Chancellor

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Mr Tom Tugendhat MP  
Chair  
Foreign Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA  
(sent by email)

13 April 2021

Dear Mr Tugendhat

Thank you for your letter dated 30 March, in which you asked about research we have delivered in partnership with China Academy of Space Technology (CAST).

Our joint research agreement with CAST was for research into the role of satellites in maximising the potential of 5G service roll-out. The research was conducted by the University of Surrey's world-leading 5G Innovation Centre, and was led by Professor Barry Evans, who is a leading authority on satellite-based technologies in telecommunications. We partner with many different companies, government agencies and other bodies to drive this work to ensure the full potential of 5G technologies is realised. Telecommunications technologies are global in nature and scope, and our work contributes to defining and developing 5G standards and protocols internationally. Our work forms part of a large body of knowledge on this topic that is publicly available worldwide.

We were not aware of any alleged link between CAST's parent company and human rights abuses in Xinjiang when we contracted with CAST, and would dispute any link between our work with CAST on internationally applicable standards and protocols in 5G technologies and any technology developed for wholly different applications by its parent company.

The only concerns I am aware of having been raised with us in regards to this work have come externally, in the form of a Civitas think-tank report and a related enquiry from the Mail on Sunday newspaper in February 2021.

Pre-contract scrutiny in January 2017, prior to the signing of our agreement with CAST, came in the form of due diligence completed internally at the University of Surrey. We conduct due diligence checks on all new research collaborations to ensure we always operate in full compliance with all UK Government guidance and legislation. Our due diligence in this case did not reveal any export controls or other constraints on the 5G standards and protocols work we have undertaken with CAST.



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The University of Surrey is dedicated to world-class research and innovation. By advancing research in multiple fields through collaboration and international partnership with universities, businesses, governments and communities, and in compliance with all relevant guidance and legislation, we are playing our part in both advancing the sum of human knowledge and delivering a global Britain.

I hope this letter answers your questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G Q Lu', written in a cursive style.

Professor G Q Max Lu AO DL FREng FAA FTSE  
President and Vice-Chancellor



## Foreign Affairs Committee

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**From the Chair**  
Tom Tugendhat MP

Professor G Q Max Lu  
University of Surrey  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
Letter by email: [j.telford@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:j.telford@surrey.ac.uk)

30 March 2021

Dear Professor Lu,

I am writing regarding the University of Surrey's partnership with China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) for conducting research into the role of satellites in maximising the potential of 5G service roll-out.

According to credible reports from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, CAST's parent company, the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), is considered very high risk for its research, development and production of military technologies for the People's Liberation Army of China. Furthermore, reports suggest that drones developed by CASC were deployed in the autonomous region of Xinjiang following unrest in 2014. As you will be aware, Xinjiang is the location of the identity-based persecution of more than one million people, predominantly Uyghur Muslims.

As part of our inquiry into the Xinjiang detention camps, the Foreign Affairs Committee is attempting to determine the extent of British involvement with organisations who may be implicated in facilitating the persecution of Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang. In this context, we would be grateful for responses to the following questions:

- What is the nature of the University of Surrey's agreement with CAST?
- Have any members of staff or students at the University raised concerns about the partnership?
- Were you aware of the extent of the atrocities being committed in Xinjiang – and CAST's reported link to them – when this collaboration was agreed?
- Prior to its agreement, was this collaboration subjected to scrutiny by an academic ethics board or other oversight body?

It would be helpful to have a response to this letter by 13 April. I intend to place your response in the public domain.

Best wishes,

**TOM TUGENDHAT**