

## U.S. Opposes Expanding UN Agency's Remit to Regulate the Web

By Amy Thomson - Dec 11, 2012 12:18 PM ET

The U.S. government said today it will oppose any proposals that would expand the United Nations telecommunications agency's remit to make rules governing the Internet.

The World Conference on International Telecommunications is working in Dubai this month to update the 24-year-old framework that governs telecommunications networks.

In a blog post, the White House also said that in addition to rejecting new powers for the International Telecommunication Union, the country would oppose any rules that might lead to more state control over online content. The statement comes as a proposal backed by China and Russia that would give individual countries sovereignty over Internet addresses and domains was scrapped.

The administration "will not support a treaty that sets that kind of precedent," Michael Daniel, cybersecurity coordinator; David Edelman, a senior adviser for Internet policy; and Tom Power, the U.S. deputy chief technology officer for telecommunications, said on the website. "The WCIT should be about updating a public telecommunications treaty to reflect today's market-based realities -- not a new venue to create regulations on the Internet, private networks or the data flowing across them."

The ITU members are meeting in Dubai from Dec. 3 through Dec. 14 to discuss changes to the 1988 International Telecommunication Regulations, which don't regulate the Internet. The ITU has said the WCIT conference won't address expanding its powers.

'Document 50'

The withdrawn proposal, from nations led by China and Russia, was understood to decentralize power over Web addresses, though it was never made public, said Sarah Parkes, an ITU spokeswoman. The national representatives, who have gathered in Dubai to update the framework that governs telecommunications networks, will meet again tonight to draw up "Document 50," a compromise, she said.

Web addresses are now controlled by two non-governmental organizations, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and the Internet

Assigned Numbers Authority. Critics of the Sino-Russian proposal, including the U.S., said it would increase the powers of the United Nations telecommunications body to regulate the Web.

“While this is a welcome development, these issues will continue to be on the table for discussion in other forms during the remainder of the conference,” U.S. Ambassador Terry Kramer said in a statement.

The U.S. delegation will continue to make the case that the ITU’s powers should not be increased during the summit and the members should “resist the proposals to extend that scope into Internet governance or content.”

To contact the reporter on this story: Amy Thomson in Dubai via [athomson6@bloomberg.net](mailto:athomson6@bloomberg.net)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Kenneth Wong at [kwong11@bloomberg.net](mailto:kwong11@bloomberg.net)