

US wades into BlackBerry disputes overseas

August 5 2010, By MATTHEW LEE , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- The Obama administration waded into the growing international dispute over the banning of BlackBerry services on Thursday, saying it is seeking to broker compromises between the company that makes the popular devices and foreign governments that say they pose a security risk.

Worried that the ban will hurt the work of American diplomats and businessmen overseas, the State Department said it had been in touch with the manufacturer, Research in Motion Ltd.

Officials from several nations, including the [United Arab Emirates](#), India, [Saudi Arabia](#) and Indonesia, have announced or are contemplating bans on [BlackBerry](#) features.

U.S. officials said they were hoping to broker a compromise between the legitimate security concerns of some governments and ensure that the free flow of information is not compromised.

"We are taking time to consult and analyze the full range of interests and issues at stake because we know that there is a legitimate security concern, but there's also a legitimate right of free use and access," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said. She said the U.S. was pursuing technical discussions with all parties.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said later that U.S. officials from a number of agencies were working with other countries interested in the issue and with Research in Motion "to understand the security

concerns and see if we can't work collaboratively to find solutions."

A growing number of governments have cited security concerns in pushing for greater access to encrypted information sent using the phones. Because BlackBerry data are automatically shipped to company computers abroad, it is difficult for local authorities to monitor illegal activity or abuse.

Crowley stressed that the administration's involvement was not intended as a commercial endorsement of [Research in Motion](#) or its products but acknowledged that "many of us in government do have BlackBerrys."

And he said that bans on BlackBerry services, such as its encrypted messaging feature, would affect the conduct of U.S. diplomacy and business.

"If some of these countries follow through on what they've announced it would have an impact on the U.S. government and our diplomats operating in different countries," Crowley said. "So we are directly affected by what has been suggested. But, obviously, we know that both American businessmen, American citizens traveling abroad, the citizens of other countries would be affected as well."

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: US wades into BlackBerry disputes overseas (2010, August 5) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-wades-blackberry-disputes-overseas.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.