

US vows to fight new effort for UN control of Internet

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A 2012 meeting in Dubai saw 89 countries endorse a global treaty on telecom regulations over the objections of the United States, who said it opened the door to regulating the Internet

US officials are pledging to fight a fresh effort to give a UN agency authority to regulate the Internet, two years after a huge diplomatic battle over the issue.

Top US officials in charge of the matter said this week they expect

another contentious debate at next month's gathering in South Korea of the International Telecommunications Union, the UN agency that deals with global telecom issues.

"There are some actors who want to radically change the existing multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance by centralizing control over the Internet under an intergovernmental organization, effectively giving governments sole authority over the choices that affect the Internet's design and operation," said a blog post Thursday by three key State Department officials spearheading US policy on the issue, Daniel Sepulveda, Christopher Painter and Scott Busby.

"When the world's governments get together to discuss Internet-related issues, questions about the current model of governance will arise. One critical moment for those discussions will be in Busan, Korea at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference in October of this year."

The officials said the ITU "does valuable work in a number of areas related to global telecommunications," including technical issues involving international connections.

"But there are some who want to manipulate or change the mandate of the ITU in ways that would purport to give governments the sole authority over the Internet's content, technologies, or services. The US government categorically rejects this proposal."

The statement said such a move "would diminish the dynamism of the Internet" and "would inevitably encourage [repressive regimes](#) to attempt to introduce censorship or content controls."

"The US government believes that the Internet belongs to everyone, at home and abroad, and that we all have a right and responsibility to

participate in its governance," the US statement said.

The meeting in Busan, South Korea set for October 20 to November 7 comes two years after 89 countries endorsed a global treaty on telecom regulations over the objections of the United States and dozens of others which said it opened the door to regulating the Internet.

The 2012 Dubai meeting outcome underscored a deep divide between a US-led group of countries which seek to keep the Internet open and unregulated, and authoritarian regimes that want to impose controls over online use and content.

Russia, China and Saudi Arabia have been among countries seeking such changes.

US officials said the document adopted in Dubai would have little practical impact.

Countries can exercise control of online activity within their borders, but Washington and others objected to a treaty that would legitimize new Internet controls under UN auspices.

The head of the US delegation, Terry Kramer, walked out of the Dubai gather as the signing started after protesting that the treaty was "seeking to insert governmental control over Internet governance."

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