

International Bureau Presentation to Commissioners

January 2021 Commission Meeting

Thomas Sullivan, Bureau Chief

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to highlight the significant accomplishments of the talented and hard-working staff of the International Bureau in support of the Commission's mission.

Over the past four years, the Bureau has taken many actions to bridge the digital divide, promote innovation and investment, and enhance public safety and national security. We have done this through rulemakings, licensing actions, international leadership, and the commitment of our dedicated civil servants.

Recognizing that time will not permit a thorough review, I will highlight today our most consequential achievements

Slide 1: Bridging the Digital Divide - Promoting Satellite Broadband Connectivity

One of the most significant developments in communications over the last four years has been the emergence of next-generation satellite technologies involving advanced high-throughput geostationary satellites as well as constellations of satellites in non-geostationary orbit capable of delivering advanced services including Internet access to every corner of the earth. These networks could be a game changer for efforts to bridge the digital divide in unserved or poorly served remote areas of the United States, as well as globally.

We paved the way for the private sector to invest and innovate in these new technologies, reviewing and acting on eleven market access requests and space station applications for these new NGSO systems - each involving challenging technical and regulatory issues - since June 2017. Several of these entities have already started deploying satellites in their constellations and offering services to end users.

Slide 2: Promoting Innovation and Investment - Streamlining and Updating Regulations

These NGSO systems are only one of the many promising innovations in a new era of space communications. Reflecting the FCC's focus on encouraging American leadership in this sector, we have taken several actions over the past four years to streamline our processes and update our regulations so that the domestic space industry can flourish.

We created a new, optional streamlined application process for small satellites with short duration missions in order to encourage space-based startups to innovate in the United States. As you famously - or perhaps infamously - noted at the time, Mr. Chairman, "There is no reason why a satellite the size of a shoebox, with the life expectancy of a guinea pig, should be regulated the same way as a satellite the size of a school bus that will stay in orbit for centuries."

Recognizing the growing market for satellite mobility connectivity, we also updated FCC rules and expanded the frequencies available for earth stations in motion, or ESIMs, communicating with geostationary satellite orbit networks and established rules for ESIMs communicating with non-geostationary orbit networks. These actions will make it easier for consumers to obtain broadband connections in planes, trains, automobiles, and ships.

Our focus on promoting space-based innovation continued through the November 2020 Commission Meeting, with adoption of an order streamlining our part 25 satellite rules. The rule revisions harmonize the licensing process for many classes of satellite space stations and earth stations, reduce burdens placed on applicants, and eliminate regulatory red tape standing in the way of the deployment of satellite-based services.

While we have done much to facilitate the deployment of satellite technologies, we have also recognized the need to protect against the potential hazards posed by the increasingly populated orbital environment, especially the low-Earth orbit environment. To that end, we developed robust rules to mitigate orbital debris and sought comment on additional ways to ensure that we are being responsible stewards in the new space age.

It isn't all space services all the time in IB - though I would note that IB staff still have not fully recovered from "space month" in November 2018 when we presented eight items at the Commission Meeting!

Slide 3: Promoting Innovation and Investment - Streamlining and Updating Regulations

But I digress . . . As I was saying, IB's focus on encouraging innovation and investment in new technologies extends beyond the space services sphere. Working closely with our federal partners and following an important Executive Order issued last spring, we substantially re-tooled the procedures that govern FCC coordination of applications involving foreign ownership with the Executive Branch, including Team Telecom. These process reforms will provide for a more efficient and effective review of the national security, law enforcement, and trade and foreign policy implications of foreign investment in our radio, television and telecommunications industries.

Slide 4: Enhancing Public Safety - National Security

The Team Telecom process reform is also an integral part of the Bureau's work to enhance public safety by protecting the national security of our communications ecosystem.

That work included scrutiny of several applications and authorizations to provide service in the United States by companies controlled by the Chinese government. Our scrutiny resulted in a denial of China Mobile USA's application to provide international telecommunications services in the United States because it is vulnerable to the exploitation, influence, and control of the Chinese government.

It also resulted in the issuance of three IB/EB/WCB Orders to Show Cause directing four additional Chinese government-controlled companies to demonstrate why the Commission should not start the process of revoking their domestic and international section 214 authorizations. And, last month it resulted in the launch of a proceeding to determine whether to end China Telecom Americas' authority to provide these services within the United States.

Finally, we worked with PSHSB to improve the outage reporting obligations of submarine cable licensees to promote national security while streamlining the process for reporting submarine cable capacity.

Slide 5: Enhancing Public Safety - 5G Security

In addition to these regulatory actions, the FCC has been an integral part of the USG's efforts to promote 5G security. IB was pleased to support your leadership in that effort, Mr. Chairman, as you visited senior

government officials in eleven countries and met with many more of your counterparts at the FCC, on the margins of other international meetings and, during the past nine months, through virtual meetings. These efforts yielded tangible results, with the adoption of the Prague Proposals in 2019, and concrete actions by countries all over the world to prohibit high-risk vendors from their networks and make their networks secure.

Slide 6: International Advocacy and Leadership

As important as the FCC's regulatory and spectrum actions are, we can't achieve these successes in a bubble (we aren't the NBA, after all). For many of the issues we address, like access to spectrum for both terrestrial and space-based services and - as just mentioned in the last slide - securing our 5G networks, we cannot do it alone.

Though not as easy to quantify as orders and regulatory decisions, the Commission's international engagement is critical to advancing U.S. leadership and priorities. That happens at the international level in multilateral organizations like the ITU, the OECD, ICAO and the IMO, at the regional level - most importantly through CITELE in the Americas - and bilaterally with key countries, including our neighbors Mexico, Canada, and our Caribbean partners. It also happens at international conferences and seminars and through IB's International Visitors Program and USTTI courses.

One of the most visible manifestations of U.S. leadership in the international telecom arena over the last four years was the election in 2018 of an American - Doreen Bogdan Martin - as the Director of the ITU's Development Sector. The outreach efforts of FCC leadership were critical to the successful campaign for Doreen's election. We are especially pleased that Ms. Bogdan Martin's election made her the first woman to hold an elected position at the ITU - long overdue, and much deserved.

Slide 7: International Advocacy and Leadership

On the multilateral front, the FCC's strategic engagement in the three years leading up to the 2019 World Radio Conference, along with the intensive efforts of our WRC Advisory Committee, or WAC, was crucial to ensuring successful outcomes for the United States. On most WRC Agenda items, the WAC's recommendations became the foundation for U.S. proposals to CITELE and in turn, the U.S. proposals became the foundation for CITELE Inter-American Proposals to the WRC. This regional leadership set us up for success at the WRC and enabled the United States to bring home an international regulatory framework enabling international harmonization and encouraging investments in next-generation services globally.

With the WRC-19 outcomes, there is now 17.25 gigahertz of spectrum identified for International Mobile Telecommunications; that identification gives governments the flexibility to use those bands for 5G. Of the 17.25 GHz of IMT spectrum, 14.75 GHz has been harmonized worldwide. To mention a few other important results, the WRC also adopted a number of regulatory improvements to permit expanded use by NGSO systems in several frequency bands, agreed to a new resolution that will boost the deployment of Earth stations in motion (ESIM), and expanded the provision of a truly global maritime distress and safety system.

On the bilateral front, we concluded or significantly advanced negotiations with Mexico and Canada on several new and amended arrangements for coordinating services along the borders, including a new framework agreement called the General Coordination Agreement governing 81 distinct frequency sharing instruments between the U.S. and Canada. The GCA, which will be going through the formal

signing procedure just this week after almost two decades of negotiations, will make it much easier to implement changes to border protocols as technologies and spectrum use evolve.

Slide 8: IB By the Numbers

I stated at the outset that the Bureau's accomplishments over the past four years are reflected in rulemakings, licensing actions, international leadership and the commitment of our staff. I want to finish with some statistics that I believe demonstrate that commitment to serve the public interest.

I won't read out all the statistics in this chart but do want to highlight the Bureau's C-Band efforts, in particular, the work to facilitate the transition of earth station antennas out of the lower portion of the C-Band to enable the auction of that spectrum for critical 5G services. Those efforts included our review of nearly 23,000 C-band earth station antenna registrations filed during a six-month application filing window in 2018, as well as our review of 1,500 lump sum elections in only six weeks last fall, resulting in the acceptance of elections for more than 12,500 incumbent earth station antennas.

Perhaps keeping staff hopped up on sugar with weekly "Thursday cake day" gatherings helped, but really, the statistics on this last slide and all the accomplishments I highlighted today reflect the dedication and professionalism of IB staff. I'd like to close by thanking them for their commitment to the public interest, especially over the past nine months in the midst of a global pandemic, and for making IB look good at home and the FCC look good abroad.