

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER
MICHAEL J. COPPS
Dissenting

RE: Lockheed Martin Global Telecommunications, Comsat Corporation, and Comsat General Corporation, Assignor, and Telenor Satellite Mobile Services, Inc., and Telenor Satellite, Inc. Assignee, Order and Authorization, SES-ASG-20010504 00896, et al.; Order on Reconsideration.

I dissented to the assignment of licenses from Comsat to Telenor last year. I did so because the transaction resulted in 79% indirect foreign government ownership of U.S. licenses. This represented the highest level of government control of a U.S. license allowed by the Commission in its history.

I continue to believe that foreign government control represents a serious potential threat to competition. There is a fundamental difference between companies that operate in a free market and state-run industries that may act counter to free market forces. The Commission must only allow transactions that are in the public interest. For me, the benefits of a transaction with such high foreign government ownership must be significant enough to overcome the potential harm to competition for the transaction to be in the public interest.

I find now, as I found last year, that such public interest benefits do not exist here. Telenor's significant market power can be used to cross-subsidize competitive services that their U.S. licensee will provide here. Such cross-subsidization could undermine competition here in the U.S. and present a direct threat to the public interest.

The Commission's unrelenting march toward allowing more and more foreign government control of US licensees runs counter to what should be the U.S. goal of promoting global telecommunications industry privatization. Privatization brings choices for consumers, competition for providers, and incentives for technology development. Because this transaction allows a government-owned telecommunications company to threaten the American free market in satellite services, I must again respectfully dissent.