

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

Re: *International Settlements Policy Reform*, IB Docket No. 11-80; *Joint Petition for Rulemaking of AT&T Inc., Sprint Nextel Corporation and Verizon*, RM-11322; *IConnect Wholesale, Inc. d/b/a TeleCuba: Petition for Waiver of the International Settlements Policy and Benchmark Rate for Facilities-Based Telecommunications Services with Cuba*, IB Docket No. 10-95; *Modifying the Commission's Process to Avert Harm to U.S. Competition and U.S. Customers Caused by Anticompetitive Conduct*, IB Docket No. 05-254

This proceeding marks yet another strike against command-and-control regulation, as the Commission explores retiring the international tariffing system—a system that does not fit digital-age communications networks.

But let's be clear: Ending this policy will not give Cuba's people any measure of the freedom we enjoy in the United States. The Castro regime remains in power. It is that regime that suppresses Internet access, censors information, and restricts any medium that could serve as a platform for democracy. It is that regime that arbitrarily arrests and sentences to lengthy prison terms individuals who do nothing more than say what they think.<sup>1</sup> There is no rule the FCC could repeal that would affect Cuba's rulers.

A communications network is a bare cupboard if there is no freedom of expression. A way to say something means little if there is little you are allowed to say. Much more will have to happen before digital liberty finds Cuba's shores.

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., "Cuba detains dissidents ahead of Pope Francis' visit," Reuters (Sept. 13, 2015) (regime arrested dozens of members of Ladies in White, a group founded by the wives and female relatives of Cuban dissidents jailed after the 2003 Black Spring), available at <http://reut.rs/1Kcrw7R>; "Estados Unidos critica prision para dos opositores en Cuba," Martí (Nov. 24, 2015) (regime sentenced Vladimir Morera Bacallao to four and a half years in prison for hanging a sign in front of his house and Jorge Ramirez Calderón to two and a half years for peacefully protesting the sanitary conditions in his community), available at <http://bit.ly/1T8EWmK>; see also Press Statement, U.S. Department of State, "Cubans Sentenced for Peaceful Protest," (Nov. 24, 2015) ("Respect for human rights is a cornerstone of our foreign policy, and we call on the Cuban Government to respect its citizens' rights to free expression and peaceful protest."), available at <http://1.usa.gov/1QshXhE>.