

David Gross Warns Treaty Changes May Lead to Internet Dangers

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Ambassador David A. Gross, chair of Wiley Rein's International Telecommunications Group, was interviewed in a February 4, 2013 *Washington Times* article about the dangers that changes to a U.N. telecommunications treaty could have in relation to repressive governments.

At December 2012's World Conference on International Telecommunications in Dubai, 89 countries—including Russia, China and Iran—voted to amend the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) International Telecommunications Regulations, a 1988 treaty governing telephone services across national borders. The United States was among 55 nations that refused to sign off on the changes.

Amb. Gross, who was part of the U.S. delegation that rejected the treaty's revisions, was one of several experts called to testify about the perils of the changes during Tuesday's joint hearing of the House Foreign Affairs and the House Energy and Commerce committees. He said, in both prepared testimony and in an interview with *The Times*, that the new regulations could open the door for authoritarian governments to further crack down on dissidents and undermine international sanctions against repressive states.

Regarding the revised treaty's "spam" provision, "China could use that [provision] to do many things to monitor or disrupt communications, for example of dissidents," Amb. Gross told the newspaper.

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The U.S. and the many other countries that did not sign the revised treaty will continue to be governed by the 1988 treaty, which could lead to confusion once the new rules take effect on January 1, 2015, Amb. Gross warned. "This could potentially be a real mess," he said.