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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “International Proposals to Regulate the Internet”
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
May 31, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. It’s an important hearing as we look down the road to an international conference where some of the proposals, if adopted, could fundamentally alter the way the Internet operates today, undermining the de-centralized, multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance that has allowed the Internet to flourish and become such a powerful engine for social and economic progress.

As we will hear from our witnesses today, there is a strong, bipartisan consensus throughout the Administration and Congress that we must resist efforts by some countries to impose a top-down, command-and-control management regime on the Internet. This bipartisan consensus is reflected in H. Con. Res. 127, a resolution introduced yesterday by Chair Bono Mack and cosponsored by Chairman Upton, myself, Chairman Walden, and Ranking Member Eshoo. Simply put, this resolution affirms that Democrats and Republicans both want the Administration to continue advancing our national commitment to the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance and a global open Internet.

We have two distinguished panels of witnesses who have a long history working on this issue. I want to welcome Ambassador Phil Verveer, who will be one of the Administration’s lead negotiators on a treaty known as the International Telecommunication Regulations at the World Conference on International Telecommunications in December. I believe that Ambassador Verveer’s experience in communications and antitrust law will serve the U.S. position well. We’re pleased to have Commissioner Rob McDowell back to our Subcommittee. He has been focused on this issue for some time, been expressing a strong leadership position, and we’re pleased to have him with us.

Our second panel is also highly experienced. Former Ambassador David Gross and Sally Wentworth both served the previous Administration with distinction and have significant experience with the information and communications technology sectors. I also would like to welcome Vint Cerf. As one of the “fathers of the Internet,” Dr. Cerf will be able to provide us

with a unique perspective about how some of the proposals before the international meeting threaten the security and stability of the Internet.

We all agree that the current and past Administrations deserve credit for their efforts to ensure that the Internet remains a tool for the global dissemination of ideas, information, and commerce. There is no daylight between House Democrats, House Republicans, or the Administration on this issue.

While we're largely focused on the upcoming World Conference on International Telecommunications, we should not lose sight of the fact that the push for more centralized control over the Internet is occurring through other international venues as well.