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ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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March 16, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: Members, Energy and Commerce Committee
From: Majority Staff
Re: Communications and Technology Subcommittee Hearing

I. INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 2:00pm, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology will hold a hearing in 2123 Rayburn House Office Building entitled, “Securing U.S. Leadership of Communications Technology” The following witnesses are expected to testify:

II. WITNESSES

- Ambassador Steve Lang, Senior Advisor, Crest Hill Advisors
- Fiona Alexander, Distinguished Policy Strategist-in-Residence, SIS, American University
- George John, Partner, Global Regulatory, Hogan Lovells
- Dave Cavossa, President, Commercial Space Federation

III. BACKGROUND

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations’ agency responsible for international coordination of communications services. The ITU manages a global table of spectrum allocations representing treaty-level agreements where countries agree to define uses for certain spectrum frequencies in different regions across the world. The ITU also allocates geostationary and non-geostationary satellite orbits.¹ The current ITU Secretary-General is an American, Doreen Bogdan-Martin. Elected in 2022, she took office on January 1, 2023.

¹INT’L TELECOMM UNION, ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION, <https://www.itu.int/en/about/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited Mar. 13, 2026).

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference meets every four years to set ITU's strategic and financial planning, and elects the organization's five top officials, the 48-member Council, and 12 Radio Regulations Board members. The next ITU Plenipotentiary Conference is scheduled for November 2026 in Doha, Qatar.²

Additionally, the World Radiocommunication Conference is held every four years to review and update the international treaties governing spectrum and satellite orbits.³ WRC last took place in 2023 in Dubai. On December 1, 2025, the ITU announced that the 2027 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-27) is to be held in Shanghai, China.⁴ Around the world, countries are meeting regularly in their regional working groups to prepare technical and operational studies and establish regional positions and proposals to bring to the WRC. New positions are later adopted or rejected by consensus.

The United States' delegation is typically led by an ambassador appointed for the conference and is comprised of the Department of State diplomatic staff, as well as subject matter experts from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), as well as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The U.S. delegation adopts policy positions after significant interagency coordination as well as feedback from industry stakeholders. The delegation then takes these priorities to the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) regional working group meetings for discussion, and ultimately, works toward adoption of these priorities in the region's slate of proposals for discussion at WRC.

IV. SELECTED ISSUES

A. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Influence

The U.S. and our allies have led technical and industrial standards for decades, solidifying America as a global technology leader and helping to secure our economic security in the digital age.

The CCP has made a concerted effort to chip away at our leadership in recent years, investing heavily in the communications sector and exporting its untrusted vendor equipment around the world. Additionally, China has worked to build its influence in international bodies, like the ITU.⁵ Prior to current Secretary General Bogdan-Martin's tenure at the helm of the ITU, the organization was led by Houlin Zhou, a Chinese national.

² INT'L TELECOMM UNION, ITUPP DOHA 2026, <https://pp.itu.int/2026/en/> (last visited Mar. 13, 2026).

³INT'L TELECOMM UNION, WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCES, <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/conferences/wrc/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited Mar. 13, 2026).

⁴ Press Release, Int'l Telecomm Union, China to host ITU World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 in Shanghai (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/Pages/PR-2025-12-01-WRC27-Shanghai.aspx>.

⁵Valentina Pop, Sha Hua, Daniel Michaels, *From Lightbulbs to 5G, China Battles West for Control of Vital Technology Standards*, WALL ST. J. (Feb. 8, 2021, at 12:37 ET), <https://www.wsj.com/world/china/from-lightbulbs-to-5g-china-battles-west-for-control-of-vital-technology-standards-11612722698>.

As the host for WRC-27, China will serve as the chair of the conference, enabling CCP-aligned entities to steer these critical discussions. It is essential that through the host-party agreement, the ITU ensures access and security for all participants.

B. Mobile Service: 5G and 6G

As 5G deployments roll out globally and 6G planning begins, WRC-27 will consider additional spectrum bands that could be utilized for future mobile deployments. Global harmonization provides equipment manufacturers with global economies of scale and prevents harmful interference. These efficiencies ultimately lower costs for consumers of wireless services.

The U.S. has identified and allocated multiple bands for 5G and 6G use, including a portion of C-band. The U.S. has allocated 6 GHz band for unlicensed use. China, on the other hand, has allocated the 6.425-7.125 GHz band for mobile service.⁶ Europe has also identified the upper portion of the 6GHz band for mobile use.⁷ Additional studies are ongoing in the U.S. to identify other opportunities for mobile service, including 4.4-4.8 GHz, 7.125-7.4 GHz, as directed by the Working Families Tax Cuts law (H.R. 1), as well as the 15 GHz band.⁸

C. Satellites

The bulk of the agenda for WRC-27 will focus on satellites. The satellite industry has been in a period of robust growth and innovation over the last decade. This includes the deployment of new low-earth orbit satellite constellations providing communications services.

Satellite communications services are an inherently global enterprise. The FCC is responsible for authorizing the use of electromagnetic spectrum in the United States.⁹ Satellite operators provide services in markets around the world, so international harmonization of satellite spectrum use is critical. The ITU manages a global table of spectrum allocations. This table represents treaty-level agreements where countries agree to define uses for certain spectrum frequencies in different regions across the world. National regulators, like the FCC in the United States, must update their regulations in accordance with the wireless regulations of the ITU. Additionally, the ITU plays an important role in managing orbital slots for GSO and NGSO systems. The location of satellites in orbit is an important component of determining the spectrum usage of each satellite and therefore are considered in deliberations at the ITU and the FCC when licensing satellite communications systems.

⁶ Doug Brake, *China Commits to 5G Mid-Band Spectrum with 6GHz Allocation: U.S. Needs Clear Response.*, CTIA: BLOG (June 29, 2023), <https://www.ctia.org/news/china-commits-to-5g-mid-band-spectrum-with-6-ghz-allocation-u-s-needs-clear-response>.

⁷ Foo Yun Chee, *Exclusive: Europe's mobile operators set to win key spectrum in fight with wi-fi industry, sources say*, REUTERS (Nov. 13, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/eu-advisory-body-proposes-bulk-key-spectrum-goes-mobile-operators-sources-say-2025-11-12/>.

⁸ FED COMMUNICATIONS COMM'N, *Office Of International Affairs Seeks Comment On Recommendations Approved By The World Radiocommunication Conference Advisory Committee* (Feb. 23, 2026), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-26-182A1.pdf>.

⁹ Communications Act of 1934 §2; 303 at 47 U.S.C. 152; 47 U.S.C. 303(r).

The European Union in July 2025 proposed the European Union Space Act, which would create a new regulatory framework for satellite operators seeking to operate in the EU. It would replace the member state patchwork that currently exists. It would also impose new space safety and environmental burdens on companies, such as rules governing space debris.¹⁰ The Commerce Department outlined several concerns with this proposal.¹¹

Meanwhile, China has pushed an aggressive, state-led expansion of its satellite industry to compete against U.S. and European industry. Currently they are working to deploy mega-constellations of satellites for broadband service. The EU, China, and Russia have also developed and launched their own alternative systems to GPS.

V. KEY QUESTIONS

- Why is it important for the U.S. to lead in the ITU?
- What steps does the U.S. need to take to successfully advance the interests of American industry leaders abroad?
- How important is it for the U.S. delegation, and U.S.-based companies that plan to participate at WRC-27, to advocate consistently for U.S. positions throughout the conference?
- Is the U.S. delegation prepared for WRC? What is the current status and nature of interagency coordination between the FCC, NTIA, and the State Department?
- How can the U.S. curb the influence of China in these international engagements?
- How effective is U.S. engagement with other countries on telecommunications priorities, both in and outside of our region?

VI. STAFF CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding this hearing, please contact Michael Essington or Elaina Murphy of the Committee Staff at (202) 225-3641.

¹⁰ Alden Abbott, *U.S. And EU Clash On Promoting Space Commerce And Innovation*, FORBES (Aug. 27, 2025), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/aldenabbott/2025/08/27/us-and-eu-clash-on-promoting-space-commerce-and-innovation/>.

¹¹ OFFICE OF SPACE COMM., U.S. Gov't Provides Feedback on Draft E.U. SpaceAct (Nov. 20, 2025), <https://space.commerce.gov/u-s-government-provides-feedback-on-draft-e-u-space-act/>.