

Opening Statement of the Honorable Ted Poe (R-TX)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and Int'l Organizations
Hearing on "Fighting for Internet Freedom: Dubai and Beyond"
February 5, 2013

(As Delivered)

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The idea that the UN ought to be controlling the Internet, to me, is like putting the Taliban in charge of women's rights. It doesn't make any sense at all. Oppressive countries want the United Nations to control the Internet, they want to control the content, they want to control the operations of the Internet, and they are led by none other than our fellow countries Putin's Russia and our good buddies the Chinese.

They want to use the UN as a shield, to protect against the threat of free speech, and they want to use it as a spear, a weapon against democratic opposition. This is a threat to liberty, American liberty, free speech, human rights, economic freedom, competence and innovation. It does hurt the developing world. The best thing for developing countries is an unfiltered Internet.

We should consider the consequences for countries who want to, as my friend Mr. Smith has said, want to limit free speech through the Internet. We must remember that the United States does give several of these countries aid, and we should reexamine that, if need be.

In November of 2014, the ITU's constitution will be re-written. We know what the UN is like and we don't need them governing the Internet. Some say what happened in Dubai could have been worse. That is like saying you weren't hung but drawn and quartered. I'm glad that we are having this hearing and I thank the Chairman for leading in this effort to find out exactly what the motivations are of these countries that want UN control of speech.