



The Hill's

**Global Affairs**

## Antigua 'shocked and saddened' by US threats in gambling dispute

By Julian Pecquet - 01/30/13 11:20 AM ET

The war of words between the United States and the tiny Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda escalated Wednesday with the islands' economy minister blasting the U.S. trade agency for threatening retaliation in a trade dispute.

The country is threatening to ignore U.S. copyrights in retaliation for an online gaming ban that it says has “devastated” its economy. It received authorization from the World Trade Organization on Monday to set up a website to sell materials that infringe on U.S. copyrights without paying the American copyright holders.

“The United States will not tolerate theft of intellectual property and will take whatever steps are most efficient and effective to prevent this from happening,” Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Nkenge Harmon [told](#) The Hill on Monday.

Antigua's Minister of Finance and the Economy, Harold Lovell, said Wednesday he was “shocked and saddened” by the Obama administration's decision to “resort to such intemperate and unfortunate language.”

“From our perspective,” Lovell said in a statement, “it appears the United States is threatening our country with unspecified retaliation for simply following the rules and regulations provided for by the very WTO agreements that the United States in large part devised and certainly endorsed during the development of the WTO almost 20 years ago.”

“Our very real differences in this dispute need to be respected, and Antigua deserves to be treated with the

fairness and propriety that the United States accords to its other trading partners. The ongoing misinformation by the USTR that Antigua and Barbuda has refused reasonable settlement offers from the American government is, as the USTR clearly knows, simply untrue. It is time for the United States to drop its dismissive and frequently condescending attitude to another equally sovereign nation, regardless of our tiny size and economy.”

Antigua says the U.S. ban costs the island's economy \$3 billion a year. The WTO ruled in 2004 that the ban violates the 1994 General Agreement on Trade in Services, and allowed Antigua to seek retaliation against U.S. property right owners in 2007.

Monday's decision by a dispute settlement body gives Antigua final approval to retaliate against U.S. copyrights and trademarks worth \$21 million a year, far short of the \$3.4 billion the country had asked for. It could have broad repercussions, however, because it allows Antigua to “cross-retaliate” against a different aspect of trade — the 1994 Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) — creating a precedent for small countries to find ways to harm much larger trading partners.

Source:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/global-affairs/trade/280097-antigua-shocked-and-saddened-by-us-threats-in-gambling-dispute>

The contents of this site are © 2013 Capitol Hill Publishing Corp., a subsidiary of News Communications, Inc.