BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

IN RE: Request for arbitration concerning complaint of MCImetro Access Transmission Services LLC for enforcement of interconnection agreement with BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. (Deferred from the 3/30/99 Commission Conference.)

DOCKET NO. 981121-TP

BEFORE: CHAIRMAN JOE GARCIA

> COMMISSIONER J. TERRY DEASON COMMISSIONER SUSAN F. CLARK COMMISSIONER JULIA A. JOHNSON COMMISSIONER E. LEON JACOBS

PROCEEDING: AGENDA CONFERENCE

ITEM NUMBER: 24

May 4, 1999 DATE:

PLACE: 4075 Esplanade Way, Room 148 Tallahassee, Florida

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

<u>Issue 1:</u> Does the combination of unbundled network elements consisting of 4-wire DS1 loops and DS1 dedicated transport recreate an existing BellSouth retail service known as Megalink? If not, what action, if any, should the Commission take?

<u>Primary Recommendation:</u> Yes. The combination of unbundled network elements consisting of 4-wire DS1 loops and DS1 dedicated transport recreates an existing BellSouth retail service known as Megalink. Staff recommends that the Commission order BellSouth and MCIm to negotiate a price for this combination.

Alternative Recommendation: No. The combination of unbundled network elements consisting or 4-wire DS1 loops and DS1 dedicated transport does not recreate an existing BellSouth retail service known as Megalink, and MCIm should be able to order these UNEs as a combination. Staff recommends that the Commission order BellSouth to refund the difference in price between this UNE combination and the T-1 Circuits that MCIm has been ordering since November 1997.

Issue 2: Should this docket be closed?

Recommendation: Yes, this docket should be closed.

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CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Item Number 24.

MS. SIMMONS: Commissioners, Item Number 24 deals with a case involving BellSouth and MCImetro. And basically it deals with whether or not a particular combination of unbundled network elements, specifically a 4-wire DS1 loop and DS1 dedicated transport, whether that recreates an existing BellSouth retail service call Megalink.

And I would like to mention that we have both a primary and alternative. Really there are two different bases on which you can reach a conclusion. The primary is based on an interpretation that a network element combination recreates an existing BellSouth retail service if the combination of the retail service are functionally equivalent. That is the primary.

The alternative is based on an interpretation that a network element combination recreates a BellSouth retail service if the combination and the intended application are equivalent to BellSouth's retail service.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Who is defending primary?

MS. SIMMONS: We are basically all here to try to support both views. Both do have some merits and --

1 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Nobody wanted to take the 2 impossible task? Good, Walter is going to take it.

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MR. D'HAESELEER: (Inaudible, microphone not on.)

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: It sort of -- I understand what staff is trying to do, and I just don't understand how we can do it with a straight face. And it worries me, and perhaps it's my own ignorance and perhaps you can clarify it for me. But it worries me that recreating an existing service almost -- you know, it brings back questions of what isn't recreated in the end. I mean, doesn't the recombination of elements, some yours, some theirs, always to some degree recreate some existing service and won't we end up in an argument where everything becomes resale. And so that is sort of where I fell, and maybe you can help me.

MR. D'HAESELEER: You could take that approach.

Mine was really very simplistic, and I wasn't

concerned about who was going to make money, who was

going to lose money. I did notice that this had

nothing to do with resale or residential service.

What I focused on was this notion of functional

equivalent.

Now, we have been through I don't know how many proceedings, and that's always one of the buzz words, functionally equivalent. And, therefore, to me since

both parties agreed that it was functionally equivalent, that to me meant, well, you need to negotiate a rate for that service. It's really very basic.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: But explain to me how we would do that, let's say, with a basic residential -- single line, residential line with no additional features.

And, let's say, MCI provides, I don't know, a switch.

It rebuys certain -- I don't know what would be included in reselling or rebundling certain other services. But wouldn't that be an existing service that is functionally equivalent and, therefore, not subject to -- will be subject to the way you interpret it?

MR. D'HAESELEER: Yes, there could be a number of situations where by combining UNEs that you would have something that is functionally equivalent to an existing service. You know, I haven't really sat down and analyzed all that and the situations where it would be. You know, my problem with this is just very, very basic.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Well, Walter, how do you respond to what I think the alternative staff says is that then what could happen is simply by having BellSouth and other ILECs would have the ability to

avoid its bundling and on network -- having to provide UNEs by simply always having services that equal the network elements. I mean, in this case they are not selling Megalink to the end user customer, they are inserting their switch and selling a different service to them. They are using piece parts of a service that is equivalent to Megalink, but it's not the same service they are selling to their customers.

MR. D'HAESELEER: Well, then I could take the other option and say, well, there will never be under these interpretations, then, an equivalent service.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Sure there will be. If you used BellSouth's switch to do that, it would be equivalent. It's just like what Joe says, that BellSouth was arguing that it's the same thing as electric service because you plug it into the wall. Well, if you don't have the service coming from the other end providing the electricity into the house, you don't have electric service.

And that was sort of to me a good analogy for what they were arguing. You had to put something else with it. MCI has to put something else with it to provide an end product to their end user.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Right. It's not rebundling of all the same things to imitate precisely. Buying

separate parts from BellSouth and rebundling those separate parts without any part of their own to produce the service, then I would understand the argument.

But I can see BellSouth saying any time the phone rings you are recreating some service we offer. We will figure it out, but trust me, we offer it in some piece part some way. When the phone rings you are recreating our service, thereby we end up at this definition. And I just wanted to see if I was missing something, because what worries me about this is if we were to take that interpretation, first of all, we don't -- we then do not encourage the companies to put in their own equipment, their own switches, because in the end it all ends up being resale. No matter how you piece part it, BellSouth has the equipment and is providing it, so it's functionally -- what isn't functionally equivalent?

What service -- I want to try to understand the definition. If I have basic service, and the phone rings, all right, and MCI offers the same thing using all BellSouth parts except for one, they use one of theirs. Would that be then functionally equivalent and, therefore, that has to be resale?

MR. D'HAESELEER: No. Because my look of it was

that MCI were buying these unbundled network elements, 1 putting them together, most of the time I guess they 2 would have some of their facilities of their own and 3 they wouldn't have to bundle a complete service. 4 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Then it's not resale. 5 MR. D'HAESELEER: No. 6 7 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: How do you decide what is functionally equivalent, too? Because this has been 8 in end-to-end T-1, I mean, how do you decide once you 9 have determined --10 MR. D'HAESELEER: They perform the same function. 11 You know, do they have to be identical? I don't think 12 But for providing the service, the mere fact that 13 functionally it did the same things or maybe some 14 nuances that may be different, but -- and both of 15 them, I think both parties would agree that 16 functionally it was equivalent and that's what I 17 zeroed in on. 18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Is it functionally 19 equivalent to an end-to-end T-1 service? 20 MR. D'HAESELEER: I think in combination, it was 21 a combination of two things. It was the --22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Because it's like 23 functionally equivalent to several different tariff 24 offerings, so how do you decide which? 25

1 MS. SIMMONS: Right. Let me mention something, 2 too, and maybe I'm kind of somewhere in between here actually in terms of my point of view. I personally 3 don't think the ultimate service that MCI offers is 4 5 that critical. But I do think when MCI is purchasing 6 in the way of UNEs and how they are going to be using 7 those, there intended application, I think to me is 8 very critical. And MCI wants to use this in a way 9 that is counter to what the Megalink tariff 10 prescribes. 11 COMMISSIONER CLARK: It is switched service as 12 opposed to private line, is that what you're saying? 13 MS. SIMMONS: Say again, please? 14 COMMISSIONER CLARK: It's a switched service as opposed to private line. 15 16 MS. SIMMONS: Well, I quess what I would say is 17 MCImetro is going to connect this combination to a switch. And the mere fact that they are doing that 18 19 appears to me to be counter to the conditions in the 20 Megalink tariff. 21 COMMISSIONER CLARK: I guess you are trying to draw a fine distinction so that we are not looking at 22 23 the end service that is provided by MCI. 24 MS. SIMMONS: That is my belief, yes. 25 COMMISSIONER CLARK: You are concerned that if we

do that we would have situations where UNEs are 1 2 combined and really it is a rebundling and it is 3 resale. 4 MS. SIMMONS: It could be. 5 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Are you suggesting that 6 because they are combining it with their switch, 7 regardless of how they ultimately offer it --8 MS. SIMMONS: Yes. 9 COMMISSIONER CLARK: -- the addition of the switch takes it out of being a simple resale of an 10 11 existing service because they add an element. 12 MS. SIMMONS: Right. Well, to me the key thing 13 is the application is not consistent with the 14 restrictions in the Megalink tariff. 15 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Well, let me just -- the 16 Megalink tariff doesn't -- has the restriction that it be private line, is that what you are saying? 17 18 MS. SIMMONS: Yes. So I guess what I'm trying to 19 say is if --20 COMMISSIONER CLARK: And there are no 21 restrictions in -- and they don't intend to use it as 22 a private line? MS. SIMMONS: That is correct. Let me say 23 24 something in the reverse that may help. It seems to me if the combo together with the intended application 25

was consistent with the Megalink tariff, then I would 1 argue it is Megalink. But the intended application is 2 not in keeping with the Megalink tariff. 3 COMMISSIONER CLARK: I think what you are saying is that you are not relying on the intended 5 application as being dispositive. But you would look 6

at what they are combining and use that as sort of 7 further evidence that it's not a resold service 8

because of how they intend to use it. But that isn't 9 in and of itself the reason for your decision.

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MS. SIMMONS: We are getting into such nuances I'm struggling a little bit.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: I think what you are concerned with here is the notion of you don't want us to look at the end service to determine, that MCI is offering to determine whether or not it's resale.

MS. SIMMONS: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Because they could simply call it something else.

MS. SIMMONS: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: And you are concerned about that. But what you are saying is you can look at that as corroborative evidence of your conclusion that it's not simply resale of an existing service because in this case they did introduce the switch.

MS. SIMMONS: Yes. And attaching the service to a switch would be counter to the conditions in the Megalink tariff, yes.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Got you.

MR. D'HAESELEER: And we are talking about combining two elements. And, you know, they need to do something with those two elements. By themselves they can't do a whole lot.

COMMISSIONER JACOBS: That ties me directly into the point made by Chairman Garcia. You can't do anything without those two, and if you narrow the definition down to something as straightforward as these two, who would come in and offer UNEs without duplicating something that BellSouth offers, I mean, it occurs to me that this will be one of the most narrowest configurations that you could come up with as a CLEC that you would want to buy UNEs for. Is that a fair statement?

MR. D'HAESELEER: This has to do, I think, with commercial large customers.

COMMISSIONER JACOBS: I understand. But wouldn't this be -- I mean, normally wouldn't this be about the narrowest configuration that a CLEC would want to pick up on?

MS. SIMMONS: I'm not sure we have any basis for

judging, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: But I remember when we had Mr. Varner here, who said that if they use our loop, it's resale. If they use our loop, it's resale. So, in essence, everything was resale. Because if you use our loop, it's resale. It doesn't matter what you add on the front, what you add on the back, what you put in the middle, if our loop is involved, it's called resale.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: The fact that you have to add something to get anything --

and that is the problem that I have with primary, is that it almost drives us back to Mr. Varner's position, which I think was difficult for Mr. Varner to even argue when he sat there. Which is if it uses us -- it almost said if you use any part of our system, it's resale. Because, I mean, you can have a loop, you don't have phone service. You've got a loop, but you don't have phone service. And Mr. Varner said if you've got a loop, you are reselling. It's resale, and you've got to pay for it. It doesn't matter what you add on the front end, back end, middle, in between, on the side. And so the problem I have with this one is it sort of ends up there. And I

understand -- I sort of understand where you are 1 2 trying to take us, but I need you to distill it a 3 little bit, because maybe that is what I'm missing. 4 And it could be Walter's technical prowess that is 5 overwhelming my simple understanding. So if you could 6 walk me through this and what it is that you are 7 trying -- what distinction you are trying to make, 8 because I didn't understand the distinction you made 9 to Susan. Is it because this service offers more than 10 Megalink, it isn't duplicating Megalink and, 11 therefore, the functional equivalent, while you 12 understand that as a concept, it doesn't apply here? 13 MS. SIMMONS: Let me try this. What I was trying to say is I don't think the ultimate service that 14 MCImetro offers is the critical point. To me it is 15 16 MCImetro is taking these UNEs and the question is how are they applying them. And is the application 17 consistent with the conditions in the Megalink tariff. 18 That's what it is turning on. 19 20 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Tell me what you are protecting 21 on Megalink. Megalink is a service only offered by 22 BellSouth, it's sort of a trademarked name of a 23 service that they offer, right? 24 MS. SIMMONS: Yes. And it is a private line type 25 service.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: And you are saying if they take a series -- because BellSouth thought up this series of combinations, is that what you're saying, and MCI takes some of BellSouth's stuff, some of their own stuff, and offers something -- let's say they offered the exact same thing, using some BellSouth stuff, some of theirs. Let's move away from the private line concept. And they offered the exact same thing. Some of their stuff, some of BellSouth's stuff. In that case you would think that this is resale, is that what you are saying?

MS. SIMMONS: No. I'm trying to figure out if there is a way I can distinguish this better.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Just for a second, let me see if I understand what you are saying. And I'm going to look at it from a different perspective. If MCI -- if the economics of this were such that MCI wanted to purchase this as Megalink and apply a resale rate to that, they would be -- for their intended purpose that they wanted to use it, they would be prohibited from the tariff, BellSouth's own tariff, from doing that because there are restrictions in the tariff which says you can only use Megalink for these type services, which are basically private line.

So, from that perspective, MCI would not even be

allowed to purchase Megalink as a resale and use it for the application they want to use it.

MS. SIMMONS: I would agree with one caveat, and that is it's possible that in your scenario that MCI might be able to somehow argue that the resale conditions are unreasonable. But if they could not make that argument, then what you just said is exactly the case.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: So if that is true, how could it be reselling something if they couldn't -- they couldn't resell it according to the terms of the tariff.

MS. SIMMONS: Right. What they want to do is counter to the tariff, the Megalink tariff, yes.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: It may be functionally equivalent, but the tariff prohibits them to subscribe to that service on a resale basis and apply it the way MCI wants to apply it, or to provide the end use -- you keep saying that the end use service is not relevant, but to me it is. What MCI wants to do with these unbundled elements, how they want to configure them to provide service is contrary to the tariff, the Megalink service.

MS. SIMMONS: The end use service that MCI offers is helpful in terms of understanding the intended

application. And I would argue the intended application is counter to the tariff. I do think it is important, you know, there is no question all the parties agree that this combo is functionally equivalent to Megalink. The question is should there be more considerations beyond that, that is really the question.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: But they also state that it is functionally equivalent to some other tariff services, also. So which one do you select and which row would you go down.

I have a question with respect to the contract that we are interpreting here. What is the effective date or how many more years will we would be dealing with trying to interpret this standard that we stated that the parties intended? And I say that for several reasons, because I think we do -- to the extent that we have determined, and we did under our contract determination order, that the parties intended that when unbundled elements constitute a retail service that they should negotiate the price. That was our determination with respect to one of their provisions.

My concern is we need to provide some guidance if this is going to be an issue for the next several years as to what was or was not intended, Sally. So

the dialogue you had with Commission Deason was very important, too, because we have got to give the parties some parameters. Or I think we need to, so that we won't end up in this instance in every case in dealing with the secondary issue if we get there to refunds, what should have been paid and those kinds of things. We need to add some certainty to the process. And that it is if this contract is the contract under which the parties are still operating and if it will be operable next year and the year after.

MS. SIMMONS: I'm looking here, and it does have an effective date of July 1, 1998. I'm trying to see if I can find the expiration date.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: So it's to govern the conduct of the parties for the next several years going forward?

MS. SIMMONS: Yes, I apologize.

MS. BEDELL: I believe it is a three-year duration.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Then I think at a minimum we need to be really clear as to what test we are going to apply. I know Walter wanted us to apply a functional equivalency test. And, Sally, you are articulating something a little different. But we do need to have some standards.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Is there a standard in the alternative?

MS. BEDELL: I don't know that I would call it a standard, but -- and I hate to take this big right turn from where we have been, but in terms of looking forward, I think that it's important for us to also look at the changes in the law related to the Supreme Court decision, which Ms. Brown is prepared to speak on if you all would like to -- the decision was made very close to the time that we had the hearing. And I think that the recommendation probably doesn't provide you with complete information on the possible effects of the Supreme Court decision, and how we might be looking at this going down the road.

So if you all would like to take that brief detour and put this other layer on here, which I think is important to your decision, because we have to remain consistent with the Supreme Court decision. I think it may be useful.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I think there is two issues, however. The case that we were deciding turned on the provisions of the contract. So that even if the law stated -- which I'm sure Ms. Brown will discuss -- that CLECs can recombine elements in any way, even if they recreate a retail service and

they still get the sum of the unbundled network prices, even if the law says that, what we turned our decision on was so the law says that but the parties negotiated something else. And the parties themselves, as we interpreted the contract, we are saying that the parties intended for if there is a reconfiguration, and that reconfiguration leads to a retail service, then they have to negotiate the price. So I think the law is relevant, but not dispositive in this case.

MS. BEDELL: I think you could --

MS. BROWN: Well, I agree with that. I think you all have tried from the very beginning going through this issue to stick to the terms of what the contract said.

If I can just bring you back to some of that discussion in the combinations docket 1140 when you were originally trying to interpret these provisions of that contract, staff had brought a recommendation to you that the parties had intended that MCI would be able to purchase UNE combinations at the simple sum of the UNE prices. And you didn't agree with that.

Commissioner Clark said something like she felt she was in a parallel universe, because from the very beginning the parties had been arguing over this very issue. Can you purchase UNE combinations and in doing

so recreate a retail service and thus undermine the resale provisions of the act and the Commission's prices that you set. So what you eventually said was, well, the parties couldn't have intended this, they have been arguing about it from day one.

So, we are going to say that what the contract says is they intended to purchase -- that MCI would be able to purchase combinations of network elements that did not recreate a service at the simple sum of the UNE prices, but when it came down to purchasing UNEs that did recreate a service, they had to go back and, number one, negotiate what that was, what UNEs would recreate a retail service, and, number two, what would the price be.

So, in fact, you have not taken yourself an actual step in determining that you have a policy against this, although it's sort of underlying a lot of what you have been thinking. You have been worried about this from the very beginning. Purchasing UNE combinations to recreate a retail service that undercuts the resale provisions. You have been worried about it. But you have never actually said it's bad or it's wrong. You have just used it in the back of your mind in interpreting the contract. So that's where we are on that.

Where you go from the future in interpreting again the implementation of this contract, as Commissioner Johnson was talking about, keep in mind that the law has changed a little in recent days, and this question of whether you can combine UNEs to recreate a retail service of an ILEC is pretty much, at least from my own opinion looking at it, a dead issue.

The FCC has said you can do it. It said it from the very beginning, and you acknowledged that in your original arbitration order. And you then told the FCC you were concerned about that, because it would violate the joint marketing provisions of the act, that it would undercut the retail prices.

Nonetheless, you went along with what the FCC had said at that point. Then the FCC's rules were stayed, the Eighth Circuit then rejected a lot of those rules. So all of this was going on while you were trying to cope with these provisions and deal with this. Now the Supreme Court has really basically reaffirmed the FCC rules as well as the rationale in implementing those rules.

And with respect to UNE combinations, the FCC's rationale has always been that it doesn't matter.

That the risks are different between purchasing UNE

combos and resale of retail services. That if there is an arbitrage problem, the Supreme Court recognized this specifically in its recent order, created because of the universal service subsidies, that is going to go away. And the risks of putting the ILEC in the position of being able to sandbag the use of UNEs by throwing up these obstacles in the way, you have to take them apart, it's going to recreate, was overriding in the FCC's determination that they should be provided as combinations and at the simple sum of the prices.

So, that to me is where the law stands now. And that was not clear at the time this contract was entered into at the time you arbitrated these matters, and at the time you were dealing with some of these things, so I think you need to keep that in mind when you are interpreting these provisions of the contract going forward, as well. But also keep in mind the current state of the law.

And my suggestion, practically speaking, I guess, would be to try to interpret this retail service exception to the general UNE combinations rule. I hate to even put it in those terms, it doesn't rise to that, but that's what I'm trying to get at, as narrowly as you can. Sorry for that long speech.

1 COMMISSIONER CLARK: I can move alternate staff 2 on Item 24. 3 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: There is a motion. Is there a 4 second? COMMISSIONER DEASON: 5 Second. 6 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: All those in favor signify by 7 saying aye. (Unanimous affirmative vote.) 8 9 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Opposed. Very good. 10 alternate approved on 24. 11 Julia, did ask you that they sort of craft this 12 very specifically because of the implications on the 13 contract, and would you like us to walk it by the Commissioners? 14 15 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes. And I think the dialogue between Commissioner Deason and Sally kind of 16 17 captured -- the one thing you were saying that Commissioner Deason had some concerns with it first 18 19 was that you kind of ignore the application, and the dialog that you all had with respect to, no, the end 20 use application may be very, very important. 21 22 he is right. And so I didn't take good enough notes 23 with respect to the criteria that you were laying out, 24 but I think that was a proper analysis. It may need 25 to come back before us all, but I think --

| 1 | COMMISSIONER CLARK: Well, I think what they |
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| 2 | if you look on their conclusion, I think that is |
| 3 | exactly what should be in it, is that the notion that |
| 4 | you shouldn't just look at the functionality, you have |
| 5 | to look and see if the intended use is consistent with |
| 6 | the tariff. And in this case it was not. |
| 7 | Functionality alone is not a determining factor. |
| 8 | MS. BEDELL: We will bring the order by. We will |
| 9 | circulate it before we issue it. |
| 10 | CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Great. Thank you. |
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| 5 | CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER |
| 6 | STATE OF FLORIDA) |
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| 8 | I, JANE FAUROT, RPR, do hereby certify that the |
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| 15 | interested in the foregoing action. |
| 16 | DATED THIS 1944 day of May, 1999. |
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