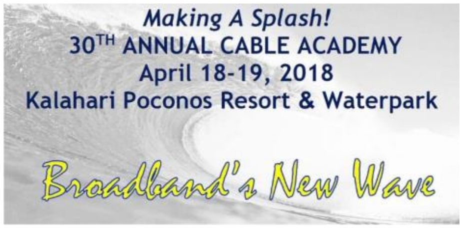

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The Walt Disney Company **offered to buy Sky News** on Tuesday — but not because the British news channel is core to Disney's business. Instead, the offer is meant to help Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox buy full control of Sky News's parent company, the broadcaster Sky, a deal that has languished amid concern here in Britain that Mr. Murdoch could assume too much control over the country's media.

Disney has a stake in the outcome of that transaction. It agreed late last year to **buy the bulk of Fox's assets** — including Mr. Murdoch's international broadcasting operations, of which Sky is a part — for $52.4 billion. And it is competing against Comcast, the American cable giant that **plans to make its own bid** for control of Sky. Since unveiling the 21st Century Fox bid in 2016 for the 61 percent of Sky that it did not already own, Mr. Murdoch has faced sharp questions over whether he would oversee too much of the media in Britain. His existing properties, including the newspapers The Sun and The Times of London, reach a third of British consumers. And he took fire for the phone-hacking scandal that led to the closing of The News of the World, the first newspaper that he acquired in Britain. (That controversy forced him to back off an earlier bid for full control of Sky.)

Britain's competition regulator, known as the C.M.A., **provisionally rejected Fox's bid** this year as "not in the public interest." Enter Disney, which has a smaller presence in British media and carries no such historical baggage. Much of its decision to propose buying Sky News lies in a desire to eventually own Sky, which has 23 million customers and holds lucrative broadcast rights to the English Premier League and other professional soccer leagues. Robert A. Iger, the American

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media giant's chief executive, has called the broadcaster "**a real crown jewel**."

Disney said that it would hold on to Sky News even if Fox's bid for Sky fell apart and that it would "sustain the operating capital of Sky News and maintain its editorial independence." Fox unveiled an alternative proposal as well: completely separating Sky News from its parent company, giving the news provider its own board of directors and agreeing to fund it for 15 years. "We believe that the enhanced firewall remedies we proposed to safeguard the editorial independence of Sky News addressed comprehensively and constructively the C.M.A.'s provisional concerns," Fox said in a statement.

And Sky added in its own statement, "Sky believes that both of these remedy proposals comprehensively address any plurality concerns the C.M.A. may have, and would guarantee the long-term future of Sky News and its ongoing editorial independence." Shares in Sky were up 2 percent, at 1,320 pence, on Tuesday's news. The competition regulator is expected to offer its recommendation on Fox's bid for Sky by May 1. A final decision on the transaction by Matt Hancock, Britain's culture secretary, is expected on June 13. – ***New York Times***

The Justice Department kicked off its antitrust case against AT&T T by **calling a string of media executives** to the witness stand, including an executive from Time Warner itself. Their presence, meant to expose the dangers of mega media mergers, is a warning from the government that it will look hard at future deals.

These star witnesses are part of Justice's attempt to **prove its theory** of competitive harm—that when you combine content assets like Time Warner's programming with distribution assets like AT&T's DirecTV—the company can force distributors to pay higher rates and favor its own operations over rivals. "DOJ is bringing in all these people from the industry to show real examples of episodes in which they've used, or contemplated using, content as a weapon," says Ketan Jhaveri, a former antitrust attorney for the Justice's Telecommunications Task Force and current co-CEO of Bodhala, a legal tech platform.

The prime example in the industry is sports programming, which is must-have content for distributors. Time Warner can threaten to cut off its Turner Sports programming unless distribution companies agree to its terms. Its other major weapon is HBO. Warren Schlichting, Dish Network's executive vice president of marketing, programming, and media sales, acknowledged this problem in his testimony. Turner networks are important to Dish, he said, and AT&T could use that programming to raise carriage fees for distributors like Dish and Sling. That risk grows because AT&T owns Dish competitor DirecTV. By withholding Turner content, AT&T could even try to win Dish's subscribers over to DirecTV.

But the government's real coup was testimony from John Martin, chief executive of Turner. His testimony included a cache of emails detailing negotiations in which Turner threatened to cut off its programming in an attempt to get higher rates. For the DOJ, that evidence is "like a dream," says Mr. Jhaveri. While AT&T's lawyers can attack the motivation of witnesses from Dish and Comcast , who are AT&T's rivals, it's much more awkward to attack their own witness. (Turner, as a division of Time Warner, is part of the defense.) Their cross-examination has tried instead to show that Time Warner has no incentive to black out distributors. For instance, Coleman Breland, another Turner executive, said that cutting off Dish cost the company more than $30 million.

If the government's argument succeeds, it will be bad news for a lot of media companies seeking to do deals. Comcast has particular reason to worry. Mr. Jhaveri expects that the DOJ will use upcoming Comcast witnesses to expose the flaws of the company's consent decree, in which it agreed to certain conditions in its 2011 takeover of NBC. The point is to show that structural separation is the only viable option for AT&T and Time Warner. Next in the government's crosshairs could be Comcast-NBC. – ***Wall Street Journal***

Marty Cooper stepped out of his office and onto a New York street corner, pulled out his phone, and made a call. It happens millions of times a day—but it didn't then. It was April 3, 1973, and Mr. Cooper, now 89, was making the first call ever from a hand-held cellphone.

Forty-five years later, governmental obstacles threaten to block a new wave of wireless innovation, known as fifth generation or "5G." It will multiply download speeds by at least 10 times, allowing wireless carriers to compete with cable companies for high-speed internet access. With superfast speeds and low lag times, 5G will enable advances in everything from driverless cars to the "tactile internet," in which surgeons can perform operations and builders operate construction equipment remotely, and entertainment can include sensations beyond the audiovisual.

A 5G-enabled Internet of Things will connect people, data and new devices, creating a surge of economic growth. IHS Markit estimates that in the U.S. alone 5G will yield $719 billion in growth and 3.4 million new jobs by 2035. The world-wide figures could be as high as $3.5 trillion and 22 million jobs. But to prepare for 5G, wireless carriers need to deploy thousands of “small cell” antennas, the size of pizza boxes. Even though small cells can fit invisibly on rooftops and lampposts, some state and local governments are acting as if they’re 100-foot towers.

In some places, outdated local requirements prohibit carriers from placing small cells in local rights-of-way and on government-owned utility poles. Zoning ordinances designed for much larger towers often require local zoning boards to approve small cells. Some localities refuse altogether to negotiate right-of-way access, while others impose prohibitive fees and other unreasonable conditions.

One Georgia municipality is considering an annual fee of $6,000 to attach a small cell to city-owned structures. Three cities in California demand annual payments between $2,600 and $8,000 for each cell attached to a city-owned utility pole. Newport Beach, Calif., is charging $10,800. More than a dozen states have approved laws to streamline regulations for small-cell installations. By capping municipal fees at reasonable levels—usually a few hundred dollars a cell—limiting review time, and allowing small cells in most public rights-of-way, these states are saying they want the benefits of the 5G revolution. Most states, however, have declined to take constructive action, imperiling U.S. 5G leadership.

But the Federal Communications Commission is showing a way out. On a party-line 3-2 vote in March, the FCC took its first step by exempting small cells from federal environmental and historic preservation reviews, streamlining small cell reviews on tribal lands, and setting a time-frame for FCC action. But the FCC hasn’t yet acted to curb state and local 5G internet “taxes” and needless delays. The commission may take these steps later this year, and it should act fast so the U.S. ensures its leadership and makes the visionary Marty Cooper proud. – ***Wall Street Journal* op-ed by Robert McDowell, former Republican FCC commissioner (2006-13) and currently a partner at Cooley LLP and chief public policy adviser to Mobile Future**