

2002 President Ray Findlay responds to a member letter regarding the OFAC issues

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I thank the many members who have written to express their concerns about this sensitive issue.

In January, the IEEE informed members residing in Burma, Cuba, Iran, Libya and Sudan that they can subscribe to printed publications but cannot receive other IEEE services.

The IEEE acted solely to fulfill a legal requirement of the federal government of the United States -- specifically the trade regulations administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the U.S. Treasury Department. On the advice of legal counsel, an IEEE investigation of this issue was underway prior to the events of 11 Sept. 2001.

As a non-profit organization incorporated in New York State, USA, failure to comply with these U.S. laws could subject the IEEE to substantial monetary penalties that could drastically affect its ability to service members everywhere. In addition, the officers of the corporation could be subject to jail for non-compliance with the law.

Thus, this action is not a matter of IEEE Bylaws or policy; it is a legal necessity.

The IEEE is committed to doing everything possible to find an alternate solution. Our IEEE legal team continues to review this matter with the appropriate officials for this purpose. We are prepared to fully reinstate those affected in the sanctioned countries and restore all services at the earliest possible opportunity as allowed by law.

Ray Findlay
2002 IEEE President