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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): TELEFONAKTIEBOLAGET LM ERICSSON (PUBL) [SE/SE]; S-164 83 Stockholm (SE).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): GUPTA, Anubhav [IN/US]; 410 Riverside Court, Apt. 206, Santa Clara, CA 95054 (US). DESIGAN, Arunkumar [IN/US]; 560 Mill

Creek Ln, Apt. 210, Santa Clara, CA 95054 (US). SHARMA, Arun [IN/US]; 3104 Paseo Robles, Pleasanton, CA 94566 (US). SRINIVASAN, Mukund [IN/US]; 200 E. Dana Street, Apt. 95, Mountain View, CA 94041 (US).

(74) Agents: BURLEIGH, Roger, S. et al.; Ericsson Inc., 6300 Legacy, MS EVR 1-C-11, Plano, TX 75024 (US).

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(54) Title: HIERARCHICAL RATE LIMITING OF CONTROL PACKETS

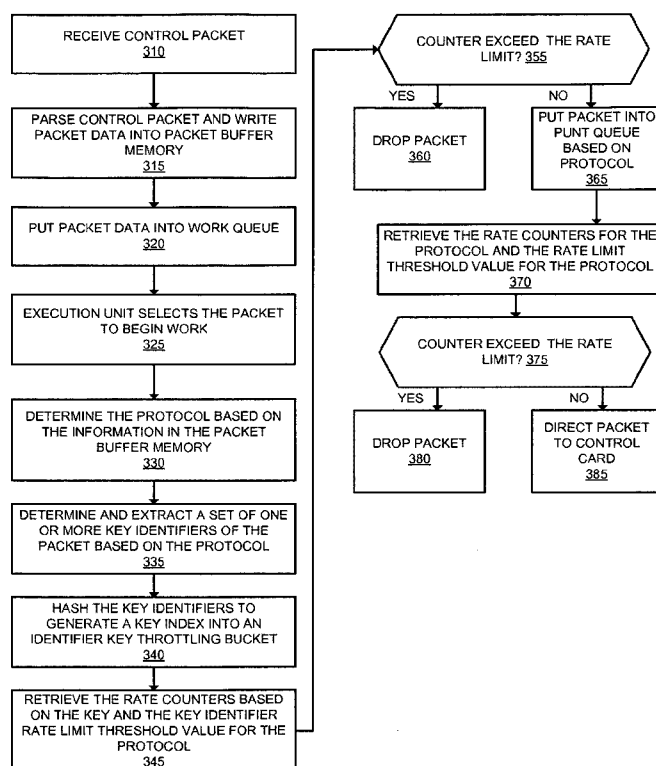


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: Line cards receive control packets and perform a hierarchical rate limiting on those control packets. A set of identifier keys are extracted from the control packets and the protocol of those control packets are determined. At a first level, the control packets are rate limited per unique set of identifier keys per protocol. Those packets which fail the first rate limiting level are dropped. Those packets which pass the first rate limiting level are rate limited at a second level per protocol type. Those packets which fail the second level rate limiting are dropped while those packets which pass the second level rate limiting are sent to the control card for further processing



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