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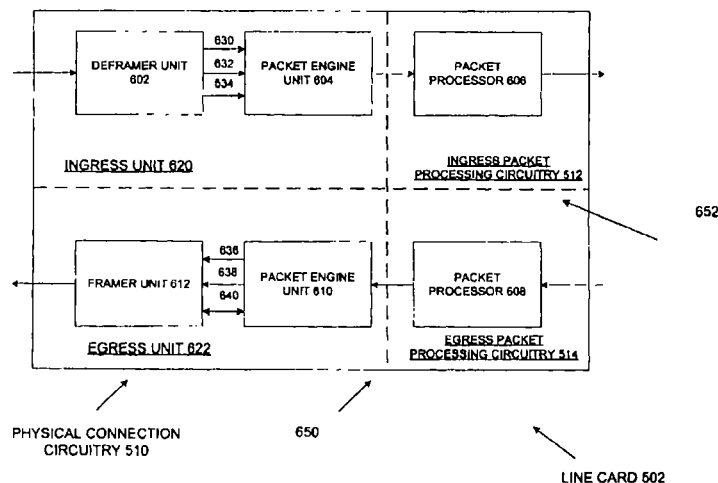
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: ALIGNMENT OF TDM-BASED SIGNALS



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for alignment of TDM-based signals for packet transmission using framed and unframed operations are described. In an embodiment, a line card (502) in a network element includes a deframer (602) unit that receives a Time Division Multiplexing (TDM) signal. The TDM signal includes a payload and overhead data. The deframer (602) generates frame alignment data based on the overhead data. The line card (502) also includes a packet engine (604) unit coupled to the deframer (602). The packet engine (604) receives the payload, the overhead data and the frame alignment data and generates a number of packet engine packets. The packet engine packets represent a frame within the TDM signal such that the packet engine packet include the payload, the overhead data and the frame alignment data. Additionally, the line card (502) includes a packet processor (606) coupled to the deframer (602). The packet processor (606) receives the packet engine packets and generates network packets based on the packet engine packets.

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