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J. Randy Forbes
United States Congress
4th District, Virginia

2135 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6365

9401 COURTHOUSE ROAD, SUITE 201
CHESTERFIELD, VA 23832
(804) 318-1363

505 INDEPENDENCE PARKWAY
LAKE CENTER II—SUITE 104
CHESAPEAKE, VA 23320
(757) 382-0080

June 2, 2014

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20227

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

I am writing with regard to the recent proposal by the Department of Commerce to start the process of transferring the remaining Department of Commerce-managed Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global multi-stakeholder community.

The United States has played an important role in overseeing the stability of the Internet, and in 2012, the House and Senate unanimously passed resolutions expressing the sense of Congress that the Administration should work to preserve and advance the multi-stakeholder model that currently governs the Internet, rather than ceding to control to another governing body.

Since 1998, the Commerce Department, through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has maintained “oversight of the technical management of DNS functions.” While the NTIA has overseen this role, under what authority is the NTIA able to allow the United States’ current contract with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers for the management of the IANA function to expire without an express statutory authorization from Congress?

Further, due to the United States’ equities in a secure and transparent Internet governance system, it is essential that any new Internet governance construct includes protections for the .gov and .mil domains, and maintains the associated Internet protocol numbers.

In April of this year, Lawrence Strickling, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information, testified before the House Energy and Commerce Committee that he had consulted with the agencies responsible for our national security, and that none are concerned that your plan could harm the United States. Specifically, were the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security consulted before the Administration made its decision? What were their positions? If not, please provide all names and titles of those within the intelligence community that were consulted prior to the announced transition proposal.

Under the proposed transition, what steps is the Department taking to ensure that the .gov and .mil domains are not placed at risk? How will the Department ensure that the integrity of neither domain is compromised?

I urge the Department to use caution in order to understand the full ramifications of any transition of responsibility, to ensure that the current management of the Internet is not harmed and that United States' equities are protected. Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Randy Forbes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress