

September 26, 2016

Hon. Ashton B. Carter
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Carter and Chairman Dunford:

As individuals with extensive, first-hand experience with protecting our national security, we write to urge you to intervene in opposition to an imminent action that would, in our judgment, cause profound and irreversible damage to the United States' vital interests.

On October 1st, the contract between the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) will expire. Upon expiration, the President will allow the Government's remaining control over the Internet to transfer to ICANN. This includes the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) function and NTIA's review of all Internet Protocol addresses and authorization for them to be placed on the authoritative root server (the A Server). In simple terms, nothing now is accessible on the Internet until it has undergone an IP address assignment and NTIA review and NTIA has authorized Verisign to post the address to the A server.

The IANA function is critical to our nation's ability to effectively defend our national assets and civilian population and ensure integrity in our cyberwarfare capabilities. As Congress has considered this transfer of authority, it has stated that ICANN should ensure that .mil and .gov remain exclusive to DoD and that all IP addresses assigned to DoD are used exclusively by the Government. That ignores the fact that DoD is reliant upon private sector critical infrastructure for its operations, and the integrity and security of the IP addresses associated with these assets are equally important to the protection of the American people.

In the absence of U.S. Government involvement in IANA, it seems possible that, over time, foreign powers – including potentially or actually hostile ones – will be able to influence the IANA process. Even coercing the delay in approving IP addresses could impact military capabilities. From a broader view, given the well-documented ambition of these actors to restrict freedom of expression and/or entrepreneurial activity on the Internet, such a transfer of authority to ICANN could have far-reaching and undesirable consequences for untold numbers of people worldwide.

Of more immediate concern to us, however, is the prospect that the United States might be transferring to future adversaries a capability that could facilitate, particularly in time of conflict, cyberwarfare against us. In the absence of NTIA's stewardship, we would be unable to be certain about the legitimacy of all IP addresses or whether they have been, in some form or fashion, manipulated, or compromised. Given the reliance of the U.S. military and critical infrastructure on the Internet, we must not allow it to be put needlessly at risk.

Indeed, there is, to our knowledge, no compelling reason for exposing the national security to such a risk by transferring our remaining control of the Internet in this way at this time.

In light of the looming deadline, we feel compelled to urge you to impress upon President Obama that the contract between NTIA and ICANN cannot be safely terminated at this point. At a minimum, given the irreversible character of this decision and its potential for grave and enduring harm to our national security and other vital interests, the decision should be delayed.

Sincerely,

J.P. "Jack" London Executive Chairman CACI International, Inc.	Michael A. Daniels Former Chairman, Network Solutions
Jody R. Westby CEO, Global Cyber Risk LLC and Former Chief Administrative Officer & Counsel, In-Q-Tel	Adm. James A. "Ace" Lyons, USN (Ret.) Former Commander-in-Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet
Frank J. Gaffney, Jr. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense (Acting)	Lt. Gen. William "Jerry" Boykin, USA (Ret.) Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence
Hon. Pete Hoekstra Former Chairman, House Intelligence Committee	Oliver "Buck" Revell Associate Deputy Director (Ret.) Federal Bureau of Investigation
Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney, USAF (Ret.) Former Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Air Force	Hon. Michelle Van Cleave Former Counter-Intelligence Executive
Rep. Brian Babin (TX-36) Chairman, House of Representatives' Committee on Science Space and Technology Subcommittee	Hon. Jon Kyl Former Senate Minority Whip
Dr. Lani Kass Former Director, Air Force Chief of Staff's Cyber Task Force	Hon. Charles E. Allen Former Under Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security for Intelligence and Analysis
Lt. Gen. C. E. McKnight, Jr., USA (Ret.) Former Director, Command and Control Systems for Nuclear Forces, Joint Chiefs of Staff	Hon. John G. Grimes Former Assistant Secretary, Networks & Information Integration and DoD, Chief Information Officer
Lt. Gen. Robert J. Elder, USAF (Ret.) Former Commander, U.S. Air Force Network Operations	Rep. Dave Brat (VA-7)
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Maj. Gen. Kenneth R. Israel, USAF (Ret.) Former Director of Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Office	Andrew McCarthy Former Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney Southern District of New York
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Rear Adm. Pierce J. Johnson, USN (Ret.) Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Regional Headquarters, Lisbon (Portugal)	Lt. Gen. C. Norman Wood, USAF (Ret.) Former Director, Intelligence Community Staff
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