INFORMATION SECURITY AND PRIVACY ADVISORY BOARD

Established by the Computer Security Act of 1987
[Amended by the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002]

The Honorable Patrick Gallagher
Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Dear Dr. Gallagher,

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Information Security and Privacy Advisory Board (ISPAB). The ISPAB was originally created by the Computer Security Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-35) as the Computer System Security and Privacy Advisory Board, and amended by Public Law 107-347, The E-Government Act of 2002, Title III, The Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002. One of the statutory objectives of the Board is to identify emerging managerial, technical, administrative, and physical safeguard issues relative to information security and privacy.

At our meeting of July 13, 2011, the Board heard a presentation from outgoing member Fred Schneider, Professor of Computer Science at Cornell, about the need to build a shared understanding of cyber security doctrine as a key underpinning of cyber policy and practice going forward. Professor Schneider's work, done in collaboration with Deirdre Mulligan of the University of California, is based on several assumptions:

1. The US is currently proceeding with a potpourri of new proposals, mechanisms, and institutions, in a "bottoms-up" fashion. The likely result will be a set of incompatible, inconsistent, and incomplete policies.

2. Discussions should center on doctrines--not specific mechanisms or policy. Only after agreement on a doctrine to adopt should we mechanisms be contemplated (and that will involve a discussion about trade-offs between social values, other costs, and levels and kinds of security against some specified classes of threats).

3. Public Cybersecurity is a promising new doctrine. It compliments our existing doctrine of deterrence through accountability and, in many ways, is more versatile. It deserves careful consideration.

The Board had an active discussion of this work, which is attached here and which Professor Schneider has already introduced into the public domain <www.cs.cornell.edu/fbs/publications/publicCybersecDaed.pdf>. The Board unanimously voted to support review and consideration of this concept by key Administration leaders.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues raised by the attached paper by Mulligan and Schneider, and appreciate the opportunity provide our views.

Best regards,

Dan Chenok

Attachment – Doctrine for Cybersecurity

cc. Howard Schmidt, The White House
Steve VanRoekel, Office of Management and Budget
Rebecca Blank, Acting Secretary of Commerce
Aneesh Chopra, The White House
Bruce McConnell, US Department of Homeland Security