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Homeland Security: Don't take away our cybersecurity responsibility

Posted by [Stephanie Condon](#)

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After a week of dealing with critics arguing that some agency other than the U.S. Department of Homeland Security should handle the nation's cybersecurity efforts, Homeland Security has come to its own defense.

DHS Undersecretary Robert Jamison said in a new blog post that "we must stay the course" and cybersecurity responsibility should not be reshuffled.

At multiple [hearings](#) last week, members of a cybersecurity commission told Congress that the DHS is incapable of handling cybersecurity, and the responsibility should be moved to the White House. In addition, the commission specifically criticized the lack of leadership from the DHS, which amounts to a direct criticism of [Jamison himself](#).

"The conclusion we reached is only the White House has the authority and oversight for cybersecurity," James Lewis of the Center for Strategic and International Studies [told Congress](#).

On Saturday, Jamison responded to those criticisms on the department's online "Leadership Journal."

"A reorganization of roles and responsibilities is the worst thing that could be done to improve our nation's security posture against very real and increasingly sophisticated cyberthreats," Jamison said. "We have moved beyond words on paper and debate, and are now driving real improvements to our security. We cannot afford to lose that momentum and interagency unity of effort."



DHS Undersecretary Robert Jamison
(Credit: U.S. Department of Homeland Security)

Jamison emphasized the progress the DHS has made, which he [pointed out](#) to members of the technology industry last week. The DHS has been developing its new intrusion detection system "Einstein 2," which the CSIS cybersecurity commission has acknowledged as a positive step, and the department is continuing to work with the private sector.

"Without question, it is a monumental task--one that requires interagency coordination and focus," he said. "As a nation, we cannot afford to be distracted from this mission."

The CSIS cybersecurity commission has criticized Jamison himself for not providing clear leadership: "There really is no one in charge right now at DHS," said commission member Paul Kurtz.

When asked whether the DHS is satisfied with Jamison's leadership, DHS spokeswoman Amy Kudwa suggested the commission take the advice Jamison offers on the Leadership Journal:

"I encourage them to actually spend some time with DHS discussing our plan before they finalize their conclusions and go public with their recommendations," he wrote.

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by [Michichael](#) September 22, 2008 4:40 PM PDT

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