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# DHS names key cybersecurity staff

No word yet from Obama on White House cybersecurity coordinator

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**June 2, 2009** ([Computerworld](#)) U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano tapped Philip Reitingger as director of the National Cybersecurity Center (NCSC), replacing [Rod Beckstrom](#), who quit the post earlier this year citing turf battles with other agencies.

Reitingger will be responsible for collecting, analyzing, integrating and sharing cybersecurity information among federal agencies, the DHS said in a statement Monday.

Reitingger, a former Microsoft Corp. cybersecurity executive, will also continue in his current role as deputy undersecretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate at the DHS.

His appointment was one of three key personnel announcements made by the DHS on the cybersecurity front. Napolitano also picked Greg Schaffer to be assistant secretary for cybersecurity and communications (CS&C), and Bruce McConnell as counselor to the deputy undersecretary at the NPPD.

McConnell will be a senior adviser to Reitingger on "strategic and policy matters" related to the NPPD, the DHS said. The NPPD includes the CS&C, the office of infrastructure protection and the US-VISIT program, which provides visa-issuing posts with biometric identification technology. He was also part of the Obama-Biden transition team and was involved in information policy and technology-related matters.

Schaffer, meanwhile, will be in charge of coordinating cybersecurity efforts across the NPPD and in ensuring that public and private sector organizations and international partners work together to mitigate threats to U.S. interests in cyberspace. He replaces Gregory Garcia who was the first to be appointed as assistant secretary of the CS&C by former DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff in 2006. Schaffer was previously a cybersecurity executive with Altell Communications and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The DHS appointments come at a time when there are growing questions about what the agency's appropriate role should be on cybersecurity. The DHS continues to be the lead agency on cybersecurity matters, but it has been [criticized](#) for its inability to live up to that role.

When Beckstrom resigned as director of the NCSC in February, he [lifted the lid on an ongoing turf war](#) between the DHS and the National Security Agency over cybersecurity. He cited as reasons for his decision to leave the NSA's growing interference in domestic cybersecurity matters and the DHS' unwillingness to lend the needed financial support and other resources to the NCSC.

Many agree that the DHS needs to be empowered to take an operational role in cybersecurity. But they have also argued that the task of developing and enforcing a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy belongs in the White House. Over the past few months, several groups have lobbied for the creation of a high-level cybersecurity post within the executive offices of the president.

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It was against this backdrop that President Obama last week announced the creation of a White House level [cybersecurity coordinator](#) to oversee governmentwide information security efforts. Obama has yet to make the appointment and it remains unknown how the official will work with the DHS and other government agencies in pulling together a national cybersecurity strategy.