

Wide-ranging changes might be sought for cybersecurity

By Andrew Noyes with Chris Strohm contributing, [CongressDaily](#) 06/26/09

The Obama administration could ask Congress for regulatory changes to create "far-reaching incentives" for prioritizing cybersecurity in the private sector, which controls much of the nation's critical IT infrastructure, a high-ranking Department of Homeland Security official said Thursday.

Acting Assistant Secretary for Cybersecurity and Communications Michael Brown said a range of proposals are being considered by the White House and the department as their cybersecurity plan unfolds.

The department is moving quickly to streamline its cyber processes, Brown told an Armed Forces Communication & Electronics Association conference. The agency is on track to collocate its U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team and other key components of the National Cyber Security Division by November. Officials hope the synergies of sharing a physical space will enhance their operational capabilities. NCSA's primary base of operations is in Arlington, Va., but it has staff in Pensacola, Fla., and employees detailed to other agencies.

Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano's selection of under secretary Philip Reitingger to head the National Cybersecurity Center this month, was another step forward, he said. The center's first director, Rod Beckstrom, resigned abruptly in March. The Silicon Valley entrepreneur was tapped today by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers to become the organization's president at a meeting in Sydney, Australia.

At the same conference, National Security Agency Director Keith Alexander emphasized the importance of having a unified U.S. Cyber Command to oversee the protection of military networks against high-tech threats. Defense Secretary Gates approved the body to be known as Cybercom this week, and announced he will recommend to the president that Alexander lead the command.

Meanwhile, Napolitano on Thursday reiterated the NSA will provide technical assistance as Obama's cyber initiative moves forward but they will have to answer to DHS. She said two areas of concern are the potential infiltration of sensitive networks that contain classified types of data and susceptibility in the private sector to interfere with infrastructure. The Pentagon is setting up Cybercom to address those vulnerabilities while Reitingger is leading DHS efforts to guard civilian and private sector networks, she said.

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