

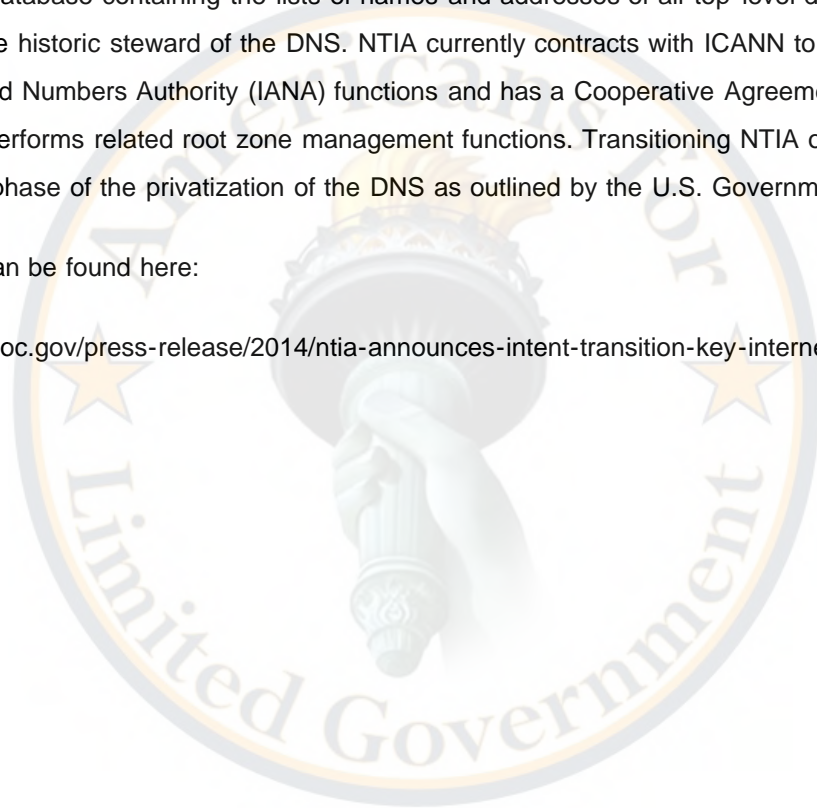
From: [Joelle Tessler](#)
To: [NTIA](#)
Subject: NTIA Announces Intent to Transition Key Internet Domain Name Functions
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 6:09:30 PM

NTIA today announced its intent to transition key Internet domain name functions to the global multistakeholder community, and is asking the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to convene global stakeholders to develop a proposal to transition the current role played by NTIA in the coordination of the Internet's domain name system (DNS).

NTIA's responsibility includes the procedural role of administering changes to the authoritative root zone file – the database containing the lists of names and addresses of all top-level domains – as well as serving as the historic steward of the DNS. NTIA currently contracts with ICANN to carry out the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions and has a Cooperative Agreement with Verisign under which it performs related root zone management functions. Transitioning NTIA out of its role marks the final phase of the privatization of the DNS as outlined by the U.S. Government in 1997.

Press release can be found here:

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press-release/2014/ntia-announces-intent-transition-key-internet-domain-name-functions>



From: [Deborah Goldman](#)
To: [OPAD](#)
Subject: Daily Roundup
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 5:22:38 PM

Hi everyone,

Here's today's roundup! I've included federal register & significant congressional activity going back to my last roundup.


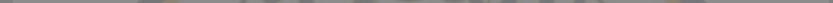
Federal Register:

- [illegible]

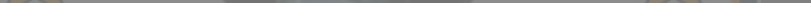
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2022 *Journal of Management Inquiry* 31(12) 1211–1228 1228

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Downloaded from <http://ajph.org/> at University of California, San Diego on June 11, 2015

1. **Identify the main components of the system.**

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On NTIA's plan to transition IANA functions.

▪ Internet Shift Deserves 'Rigorous Scrutiny,' Says Republican Member of FCC.

Ajit Pai, a Republican member of the Federal Communications Commission, is calling on Congress to closely monitor the recently announced change in

Internet governance. <http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/201047-fccs-pai-wants-rigorous-scrutiny-of-internet-shift>

- **Rep. Mary Bono Freaks Out Both About ‘Gov’t Takeover’ AND ‘Gov’t Handover’ of the Internet.** With headlines everywhere screaming about how the US is "giving up control" over the internet, you had to know that it was going to become some sort of political issue. And, indeed, a bunch of politicians are up in arms about this, with the most vocal (by far) critic of this move being Rep. Mary Bono.

<http://www.techdirt.com/articles/20140318/07392426611/rep-mary-bono-freaks-out-both-about-govt-takeover-govt-handover-internet.shtml>

- **US Pledges to Loosen Grip on the Net. Don’t be Fooled.** The US is trying to appease international unease about its stranglehold over the web by relinquishing -- at least nominally -- some responsibility. But don't be fooled, argues Julia Powles. <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2014-03/18/us-internationalise-internet>

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Stacy Cheney

From: Vernita D. Harris
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 1:36 PM
To: Evelyn Remaley
Subject: Accepted: IANA Announcement



Stacy Cheney

From: Suzanne Radell
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 10:35 AM
To: Evelyn Remaley
Subject: Accepted: IANA Announcement



Stacy Cheney

From: Jade Nester
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 2:04 PM
To: Evelyn Remaley
Subject: Accepted: IANA Announcement



Stacy Cheney

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2014 10:42 AM
To: 'Grotto, Andrew'
Subject: Accepted: FW: IANA convo



Stacy Cheney

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2013 2:00 PM
To: Cyril J. Dadd
Subject: Accepted: ICANN Hill Strategy Meeting



From: [Angela Simpson](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Cyril J. Dadd](#); [Jade Nester](#)
Subject: iana
Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 7:58:04 PM

Wanted to collect my thoughts so we could have a good/short call tomorrow – here's what I have if you want to weigh in

Update

Congress:

- April 2 nailed down for House Energy and Commerce
- House Judiciary also getting in game for hearing next week
- Thune
- Pritzker Q&A on way up

Press

- Politico
- PBS
- New Republic
- University of Toronto Global Solution Networks (GSN) project released a report very pro-multistakeholder written by Don Tapscott (author of Wikinomics) and Lynn St.Amor.
- Hudson event solidifying around April 3 (Larry)
- April 3 ITIF is doing a panel on Bully or Bodyguard? Assessing the Proper Role of the United States in Internet Governance with Daniel Castro (ITIF), Phil Corwin (Virtuallaw), Steve DelBianco (NetChoice), and Eli Dourado (Mercatus)
- April 3 New America is doing Internet Governance panel with Gene Kimmelman (Public Knowledge), Dr. Laura DeNardis (American U), Benoni Belli (Brazil embassy), Dick Beard (Wiley Rein former State), Emma Llanso (CDT)

Stakeholders

- WH made sideline ask for ongoing support from FB at the Friday POTUS CEO meeting (ANYTHING FROM SPP?)
- Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group supportive statement
- Internet2 can weigh in on behalf of universities globally with some background help
- We are reaching out to New America re additional support
- Waiting to hear back from other potential validators

Angela M. Simpson

Deputy Assistant Secretary

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce
(202) 482-1830 | asimpson@ntia.doc.gov



Stacy Cheney

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 9:45 PM
To: Jade Nester
Subject: Accepted: Mythbusters doc discussion



From: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#)
Subject: LES statement for briefing(s)
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 12:24:27 PM

On the record statement from LES:

“We have asked ICANN to work with the global Internet multistakeholder community to develop a plan to begin the process of transitioning our unique stewardship role of the IANA functions. This move has long been contemplated and we believe the time is right to continue the transition first launched in 1997 with the White House directive to privatize the domain name system. At the end of this, we are confident that the ICANN community will come up with a proposal that will ensure the stability and security of the Internet, that meets the needs of the Internet stakeholders, and maintains the openness of the Internet.”

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov



From: [Jade Nester](#)
To: [Fiona Alexander](#)
Cc: [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Heather Phillips](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: Pre-hearing outreach
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 7:11:34 PM

Hi Fiona,

Waz and I just joined Margaret Cummisky for a call with WH leg affairs. They suggested that we work on a mythbusters sheet for the Hill, which will help us correct some misinformation in advance of the hearing. They suggested that we work on this in the next day or two. I know you're busy, so I don't want to suggest that you carry the entire load on this, but I suspect that you'd like to take the first crack at it. Please let us know how you'd like to proceed. Waz will fill you in on the other steps, including the usual pre-hearing steps.

Thanks,
Jade



Stacy Cheney

From: Jim Wasilewski
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 10:33 AM
To: Heather Phillips
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review



Here is a pic of me from yesterday thrown under a bus...

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 10:28 AM
To: Jim Wasilewski
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

Yeah, define normal. ☺

From: Jim Wasilewski
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 10:26 AM
To: Heather Phillips
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

Great. Thanks!

PLEASE RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS x 10!

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 10:25 AM
To: Jim Wasilewski; Fiona Alexander; Cyril J. Dadd; Juliana Gruenwald
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

Fiona is circulating for input right now on both the release and Q&A

From: Jim Wasilewski
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 10:23 AM
To: Heather Phillips; Fiona Alexander; Cyril J. Dadd; Juliana Gruenwald
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

Who is finalizing the Q&As, especially the answers?

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 12:13 PM
To: Fiona Alexander
Cc: Angela Simpson; Jade Nester; Kathy Smith; Jim Wasilewski; Cyril J. Dadd; Juliana Gruenwald
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

I've taken Larry off the chain until we have a final version of the documents. I've attached redlined versions of the statement and Q&A, and a clean version of a press release. We approached the Q&A from the standpoint that we need this posted on our website. Some of the Qs should come out and be used for an internal talking point/Q&A document.

Does the WH want to see our internal TP/Q&A document? If so, we'll need to work on finalizing that later today.

From: Fiona Alexander
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 7:36 AM
To: Heather Phillips
Cc: Larry Strickling; Angela Simpson; Jade Nester; Kathy Smith; Jim Wasilewski; Cyril J. Dadd; Juliana Gruenwald
Subject: RE: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

Honestly i have not given it much thought. On these activities we have never done q and a on the website but doesn't mean we can't although for most issues the statement should speak for itself. That said, there are many questions that I image we would not want to advertise. Lastly, I should have made clear that the four principles for the transition were developed thorough a protracted interagency discussion so if at all possible please avoid editing those.

----- Original message -----

From: Heather Phillips
Date: 03/10/2014 6:52 AM (GMT-05:00)
To: Fiona Alexander
Cc: Larry Strickling ,Angela Simpson ,Jade Nester ,Kathy Smith ,Jim Wasilewski ,"Cyril J. Dadd" ,Juliana Gruenwald
Subject: Re: IANA Transition Documents - Priority review

Fiona, are these questions intended to be made public or are they internal? We definitely need some that can be used for the website. I just want to be sure what we are looking at. Thanks

Sent from my iPad

On Mar 9, 2014, at 10:13 PM, "Fiona Alexander" <FAlexander@ntia.doc.gov> wrote:

> Apologies in advance to everyone on this but given the moving up of the possible announcement schedule by two weeks attached are drafts of two documents that NTIA is expected to provide to the White House/IPB by Tuesday. This was decided at Friday afternoon's IPB. OCC (Kathy) in particular needs to review the q and a and of course OPA on the draft statement. I'll also be sending around to OIA at the same time for input so will reconcile any edits Monday afternoon. Interagency input was requested on the questions and answers so this reflects what has been provided so far.

>

> Fiona

> <IANA Q and A.docx>

> <Statement.docx>

From: Heather Phillips
To: [William Severe](#)
Cc: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: add to Q&A
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 4:51:00 PM

Please add this question to the Q&A at the end:

Q: Will the results of this process affect Verisign's agreement to operate the .com registry?

A: No. That is a separate agreement between Verisign and ICANN. For Verisign, the only potential change will be the maintenance and publication of the Root Zone, which Verisign has performed as a community service spanning three decades, and we thank them.

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
(202)482-0147



From: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
To: [Angela Simpson](#)
Cc: [Heather Phillips](#)
Subject: bullets
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 9:37:46 AM

Summary of Reaction to NTIA IANA Announcement

- A wide range of stakeholders support NTIA's decision to transition stewardship of the IANA functions. They include infrastructure firms such as AT&T, Cisco and Verizon; Internet technical experts such as the Internet Engineering Task Force and the Internet Society; companies including Microsoft and Yahoo; and civil society groups such as Public Knowledge. Google, which will be at today's White House meeting, issued a supportive statement through its Internet evangelist Vint Cerf.
- Criticism has largely come from conservatives such as Newt Gingrich, a few members of Congress such as Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., and pundits such as the Wall Street Journal's Gordon Crovitz, who argue that the U.S. is "giving away the Internet" and that the move could open the door for authoritarian-type governments such as China and Russia to exert greater control over the Internet and lead to more censorship.
- While initial media coverage included factual inaccuracies in some outlets, the coverage is now more accurate and is reporting both positive and negative reaction. Positive editorials have run in the Los Angeles Times and New York Times noting this move has long been envisioned and is consistent with the view that governments should not control the Internet and instead it should remain in the hands of the stakeholders largely responsible for the Internet's success.

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov

From: [Horowitz, Sarah](#)
To: [Lucas Magnuson, Laura \(Laura_D_Lucas@nsc.eop.gov\)](#); [Weinstein, Erin](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Heather Phillips](#); [Hock, Jim](#)
Subject: 031814 ICANN Announcement Clips
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 2:42:15 PM
Attachments: [031814 ICANN Announcement Clips.docx](#)

Updated comprehensive ICANN clips attached.



ICANN ANNOUNCEMENT CLIPS

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Agence France Press: [US to relinquish key oversight role for Internet](#)

By Rob Lever

March 15, 2014

The US government announced it was giving up its key role overseeing the Internet's technical operations, handing over those functions to "the global multi-stakeholder community." The move "marks the final phase of the privatization" of the management of the Internet domain name system, said a statement from the US Commerce Department.

The US agency called for "global stakeholders to develop a proposal" for a transition to a new plan with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a non-profit group that took over some of the functions in 1997 under an agreement with the US government. The decision comes with Washington under pressure following revelations about vast surveillance programs operated by the secretive National Security Agency to collect intelligence and other data through a variety of methods.

ICANN leaders said during a conference call that the move by the US was a sign that the organization has matured and that it was in the works long before leaked documents showed massive online snooping by intelligence agents. "Every president, every board of ICANN since its inception has been working toward this day," ICANN president and chief executive Fadi Chehade said during a conference call.

The end of the US oversight role has no immediate impact for Internet users, and ICANN will continue to administer the network's key technical functions. The change affects US government oversight of "root zone" of databases underlying the Internet which makes Washington a steward of that system, even though the functions are contracted out to ICANN and the infrastructure company Verisign. "The

timing is right to start the transition process," said Assistant Commerce Secretary Lawrence Strickling, who added that he looked forward to "an appropriate transition plan."

The statement said the US hopes to "support and enhance the multi-stakeholder model," and "maintain the openness of the Internet" under any new system.

ICANN said its role as administrator of the Internet's unique identifier system remains unchanged. "The Internet's Unique Identifier functions are not apparent to most Internet users, but they play a critical role in maintaining a single, global, unified and interoperable Internet." ICANN said.

But the change leaves some questions unanswered on the future stewardship of the Internet.

Daniel Castro of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation said the United States "was bullied into making the change" due to pressure over the revelations of leaked NSA documents from former contractor Edward Snowden. "The Snowden disclosures are merely a pretext," Castro said in a blog post. "While the NSA revelations have rightly angered many people around the world, they have nothing to do with Internet governance. The US Department of Commerce has not once abused its oversight of ICANN to aid the intelligence community."

Castro said the change opens the door to other governments such as Russia or China modifying the Internet architecture for political reasons. Without US oversight, "ICANN would not be accountable to anyone, and would be motivated only by the interests of those individuals who control the organization," the analyst added.

Greg Shatan, a US lawyer who is a member of an ICANN working group, said the change is "a big deal," but that Washington is not walking away entirely from its role in the Internet. The change affects "the plumbing of the Internet" but ICANN still has obligations to the US under its "Affirmation of Commitments," Shatan added in an email. "By making this announcement, the US is trying to make sure the transition happens on its own terms, and that the US is setting the rules for the transition."

The European Union recently called for these modifications, but some other countries have been seeking deeper changes, such as placing the Internet under UN control -- which came up at a heated 2012 gathering of the UN's International Telecommunications Union.

"The US is making sure that the ITU and the UN do not take this oversight function," Shatan said. "The press release is very clear that the US will not accept any proposal that replaces US government oversight with a government or intergovernmental solution."

Associated Press: [US government ceding control of key Internet body](#)

By Michael Liedtke

March 14, 2014

The U.S. government is relinquishing its control of the Internet's address system in a shift that may raise questions about the future direction of online innovation and communications. The decision announced Friday begins a long-planned transition affecting the stewardship of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN. That's a not-for-profit agency launched in 1998 by the Commerce Department to govern the system that assigns website addresses and directs Internet traffic.

The department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA, hopes to end its oversight of ICANN's Internet Assigned Numbers Authority by the time its contract expires in September 2015. The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority administers the technology that keeps computers connected to the Web and steers Internet traffic.

Proposals for a new ICANN stewardship will be accepted beginning next week at a conference in Singapore. Although it's too early to tell how future oversight will be handled, the U.S. government appears determined to hand over the reins to an entity without political entanglements. "We will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTAI's role with a government-led or intergovernmental solution," Lawrence Strickling, assistant secretary at the Commerce Department, told reporters.

That statement may ease concerns that oversight of ICANN will be turned over to International Telecommunications Union, which is part of the United Nations. Although other countries have had a say in how the Internet works, the U.S. government retained veto power over ICANN. That role has fueled recurring debates about whether the U.S. government exerts too much influence over technology that plays such a pivotal role in society and the economy.

The concerns about the United States' role in ICANN have intensified during the past nine months amid a series of media leaks from former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. The disclosures have revealed that government spy programs have been vacuuming up emails and other personal data off of Internet services for at least the past six years as part of the country's anti-terrorism efforts.

Strickling said the "timing is right" for the Commerce Department to start to phase out of ICANN. Some Internet groups contend the U.S. government should remain in a supervisory position to prevent leaders in other countries with a history of suppressing free speech from trying to manipulate ICANN in a way that censors online communications. "Without the U.S. government providing an effective backstop to ICANN's original operating principles, there would be no mechanism in place to stop foreign governments from interfering with ICANN's operations," Daniel Castro, senior analyst for the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, wrote in a Friday blog post.

The U.S. government appears to be trying to dictate the agenda for the upcoming changing of the guard at ICANN, said Greg Shatan, a New York attorney specializing in Internet issues for the law firm of Reed Smith. In the process, the U.S. could make it more difficult for other countries seizing upon the Snowden revelations to gain greater control over the agency. U.S. leaders "didn't like the way the wind is blowing, so they are trying to move the fan to blow the wind in a different direction," Shatan said.

Fadi Chehade, ICANN's president, took a diplomatic stance to the looming shift in power. "All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and governance of this global resource as equal partners," he said.

Ars Technica: [In sudden announcement, US to give up control of DNS root zone](#)

By Cyrus Farivar

March 14, 2014

In a historic decision on Friday, the United States has [decided](#) to give up control of the authoritative root zone file, which contains all names and addresses of all top-level domain names.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), under the United States Department of Commerce, has retained ultimate control of the domain name system (DNS) since transitioning it from a government project into private hands in 1997. With Commerce's blessing, the International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) acts as the primary essential governing body for Internet policy.

The new change is [in advance](#) of the upcoming ICANN meeting to be held in Brazil in April 2014. Brazil and other nations have [fumed at revelations of American spying](#) on its political leaders and corporations, which were first revealed in September 2013 as the result of documents distributed by whistleblower Edward Snowden. The South American country also [threatened](#) to build its "own cloud," as a consequence of the NSA's spying.

Commerce's contract with ICANN to act as the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority will expire on September 30, 2015—for now, ICANN's role will not change. "The timing is right to start the transition process," wrote Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information Lawrence E. Strickling, in a [statement](#) published late Friday. "We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan."

Stephen D. Crocker, ICANN's Board Chair, wrote in another [statement](#), "Even though ICANN will continue to perform these vital technical functions, the US has long envisioned the day when stewardship over them would be transitioned to the global community. In other words, we have all long known the destination. Now it is up to our global stakeholder community to determine the best route to get us there."

In a late Friday evening conference call, ICANN President and CEO Fadi Chehadé lauded the decision as "historic" and said that ICANN will be moving toward multi-stakeholder control. Chehadé said the US will not permit another country to make an exclusive contract like the US' when 2015 rolls around, however. "The US will not hand their role to a government, a group of governments, or an inter government group... they are not saying that they'd exclude governments—governments are welcome, all governments are welcome as equal partners with all the other members of our community."

Naturally, journalists on the call asked whether the sudden and stunning change was brought about by new pressures after the leaks made by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. But Chehadé and Crocker, who was also on the call, offered evasive answers. "I think what is important to focus on today is the trust in the global community that is displayed in the US' decision here," Chehadé told the press. "There is now full trust in the superiority of the multi-stakeholder model, the open model that enabled the Internet to be what it is today. That's the news today, really."

For his part, Crocker maintained that ICANN's transition out of US hands was a long time coming, and that today's announcement didn't have anything to do with Snowden. "It's equally as possible that we would have gotten here even sooner without him," Crocker said.

On its website, the NTIA cited a [1998 Commerce Department policy](#) (PDF), which states that the US was "committed to a transition that will allow the private sector to take leadership for DNS management." Sarah Horowitz, an NTIA spokesperson, also declined to answer what had brought about such an abrupt shift to American policy.

That same 1998 policy also states: "The US Government would prefer that this transition be complete before the year 2000. To the extent that the new corporation is established and operationally stable, September 30, 2000 is intended to be, and remains, an 'outside' date." For now, many American officials appear to be passing this transition off as merely an exercise in good stewardship.

"NTIA's announcement today that it is beginning the process of transferring additional domain name functions to ICANN is the next phase in this transition," wrote Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) in a [statement](#). "It is also consistent with other efforts the US and our allies are making to promote a free and open Internet, and to preserve and advance the current multi-stakeholder model of global Internet governance."

It seems that at least some of the major figures in Internet policy were unaware of the sudden change. [Larry Landweber](#), a professor emeritus of computer science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and who helped create ICANN, said he was surprised to hear the sudden news. "I bet I have some of the same questions you have," [Bob Kahn](#), the co-inventor of the TCP/IP protocol, also told Ars.

The man considered the father of the Korean Internet, [Kilnam Chon](#), a professor emeritus at the Korean Advanced Institute of Science Technology, and also a professor at Keio University in Japan, told Ars that this "brilliant move" has "been overdue." "This [advances] Internet governance to the next phase," he said by e-mail. "I hope the US Congress [won't be able to] stop the move."

[Vint Cerf](#), the other co-inventor of the TCP/IP protocol, and now a vice president and "Internet evangelist" at Google, e-mailed Ars to say that he also applauded the shift. Cerf was also the chair of ICANN from 2000 until 2007.

"The announced change would ultimately eliminate the contract between ICANN and NTIA and leave it to ICANN and the Internet community to create a transparency and accountability regime that is rooted in the multistakeholder model of administration," he wrote. "The Affirmation of Commitment (AOC) might be revised in such a way that any interested government could sign on to a relationship with ICANN. The AOC is not an oversight relationship. Rather, it is a mutual commitment by ICANN and a government to recognize one another's responsibilities regarding the Internet, within the context of [ICANN's specific role \(PDF\)](#)." "This is a major step towards implementing a global, multistakeholder system of Internet administration."

Bloomberg: U.S. to Relinquish Control of Internet Address System

By Christ Strohm

March 15, 2014

The U.S. said it plans to hand over control of the system for assigning website addresses to a non-government entity, the final phase in an effort to fully privatize and globalize management of the Internet's backbone.

The [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#), which has managed the system since 1998 under a U.S. government contract that expires next year, is being asked to convene interested groups from around the world to develop a proposal to transition the system. ICANN said it plans to begin a consultation process March 24 at a meeting in [Singapore](#).

Pressure has been building internationally for the U.S. to give up the last vestiges of control over a system that gives websites the unique identifiers essential for users to find what they're looking for online. Nations in the European Union have called for more global supervision of the system, a topic that has grown in importance amid an increase in cyber-attacks, censorship in some nations and government spying.

"We thank the U.S. government for its stewardship, for its guidance over the years," Fadi Chehade, president and chief executive officer of Los Angeles-based ICANN, told reporters on a conference call yesterday. "And we thank them today for trusting the global community to replace their stewardship with appropriate oversight mechanisms."

The transition in oversight isn't being done in response to revelations about U.S. National Security Agency spying, revealed in leaks by former government contractor Edward Snowden, Chehade said. "The world wants to participate increasingly in how we shape it together," he said. "That's why now."

The U.S. is fulfilling a pledge it made as far back as 1998 to relinquish control of the Internet's domain-name system. The contract that the ICANN-affiliated Internet Assigned Numbers Authority has with the government will be allowed to expire on Sept. 30, 2015, said Lawrence Strickling, administrator of the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

"We will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government or intergovernmental organization," Strickling said on the conference call.

It isn't clear yet what groups will take over the responsibilities to maintain the unique codes and numbering systems used in technical standards that underpin the Internet. Chehade said he's confident companies and nonprofit groups with the proper qualifications will develop a transition process without disrupting Internet operations.

"Since 1998, the U.S. has been committed to transitioning management of the Internet's domain name system to an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community," Senator Jay Rockefeller, a West Virginia Democrat, said in a statement. Yesterday's announcement "is the next phase in this transition."

Created in 1998, ICANN manages the Web and has taken over Internet duties that used to be directly controlled by the U.S. government. The organization has primarily been responsible for opening up the Internet's addressing system to new names to the right of the dot, known as domains, adding .biz, .info. and other domains to the original .com, .net and .org. The U.S. will seek a new structure that involves groups that have a stake in the management of the Internet, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force, and that maintains the security, stability and openness of the Web, Strickling said.

The administration of President [Barack Obama](#) and several other nations refused to sign a telecommunications treaty at a United Nations conference in Dubai two years ago, saying new provisions could allow Internet regulation and censorship by governments.

Congress has favored efforts to promote a global Internet free from government control in order to advance the current decentralized model of Web governance by technical groups such as ICANN.

CNET: [US government begins loosening decades-old grip on the Internet](#)

By Stephen Shankland

March 14, 2014

After incubating the Internet and overseeing it for decades, the US government announced Friday it's releasing the last elements of control it has.

The Department of Commerce originally handled core parts of the Internet, but gradually backed away from those duties through a contract with a nonprofit organization called the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ([ICANN](#)). In a [statement Friday](#), the Commerce Department tasked ICANN with convening involved parties to formalize a "multistakeholder" approach to Internet governance.

The nuts and bolts of that work involves running the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS), which translates numeric Internet Protocol addresses into the more convenient human-readable domain names like cnet.com; managing the root servers that hold those DNS records for use by all other machines on the Internet; and overseeing the current explosive growth of [new top-level domain names](#) such as .berlin, .social, and .cleaning.

It's been a long time coming -- the privatization process began under President Bill Clinton in 1997 -- but now the timing is right for ICANN. In a January interview, ICANN Chief Executive [Fadi Chehade told CNET, "US oversight is not sustainable any longer."](#)

ICANN has matured, the Commerce Department had committed to handing off responsibility at some point, and the revelations from Edward Snowden of US government surveillance on the Net increased the need for the hand-off, Chehade said:

There is no question that Edward Snowden's revelations have stimulated the dialog. I attended a couple of sessions at the World Economic Forum about security risks. I saw leader after leader of major companies like GE sincerely worried about the trust factor on the Internet. And we have the Target situation. The trust in the ecosystem has been punctured a little bit.

Working toward the hand-off, ICANN already had set up a [meeting on Internet governance](#) in Brazil on April 23-24. The Commerce Department generally is on the same page, using the "multistakeholder" term Chehade also relies on.

Those stakeholders include the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), the Internet Society (ISOC), and Regional Internet Registries that oversee the distribution of IP addresses to those registering new domain names.

Those organizations welcomed the Commerce Department's move. They and others said in a [statement Friday](#): Our organizations are committed to open and transparent multistakeholder processes...The Internet technical community is strong enough to continue its role while assuming the stewardship function as it transitions from the US government.

The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) wants ICANN not just to build its multistakeholder approach, but also to maintain the DNS security and resilience and to make sure the "openness of the Internet" is maintained.

Computerworld: [U.S. to give it up, ceding control of ICANN to the world](#)

By Richi Jennings

March 15, 2014

Yesterday, the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) made an announcement the whole world has been waiting for. The NTIA will cede its interest in ICANN -- the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers -- in 2015 to an as-of-yet-unnamed body.

ICANN is chiefly responsible for administering the DNS "domain name" mechanism of the Internet. Domain names (*such as [www.computerworld.com](#)*) are translated into addresses understandable by computers. All in all, most bloggers are *hunky-dory* with the news, yet some are apprehensive of the next big dogs of DNS.

In *IT Blogwatch*, bloggers register new domains. Filling in for our humble blogwatcher Richi Jennings, is a humbler Stephen Glasskeys.

Grant Gross faces criticisms formally:

[NTIA] will end its formal relationship with [ICANN] in late 2015, with ICANN developing a new global governance model.

...

ICANN has faced [criticism]...about the influence of the U.S. government on its operations, but [ICANN officials] said the decision to end the formal relationship was driven...by a longtime understanding that the partnership would be temporary.

So, Shaun Nichols takes a ride:

The US Department of Commerce is ready to leave the keys to the internet's worldwide DNS system in the hands of non-profit net overseer ICANN.

...

The DNS system...is used [by internet devices] to convert human-readable domain names...into network addresses...which computers can understand.

Straight from the acronym's mouth:

To support and enhance the multistakeholder model of Internet policymaking and governance, the [NTIA] today announces its intent to transition key Internet domain name functions to the global multistakeholder community.

"It's about time," says Stephen Shankland:

It's been a long time coming -- the privatization process began under President Bill Clinton in 1997 -- but now the timing is right for ICANN. In a January interview, ICANN Chief Executive Fadi Chehade [said] "US oversight is not sustainable any longer."

And Stacey Higginbotham gives up control:

In the wake of Edward Snowden revelations [about NSA spying], world leaders have been calling on the U.S. to relinquish control over the internet.

...

So what's next for control of the internet if the NTIA doesn't control that contract?
That's going [to be discussed] over the next year and half. MORE

Silenced, Erin Mershon and Jessica Meyers want to say more:

[U.S. officials] have warned about the dangers of ceding ICANN's authority to the International Telecommunication Union, a United Nations agency, fearing countries like Russia and China could use it to allow online censorship.

Meanwhile, David Murphpy thinks this approach sucks:

The jokes almost write themselves on this one: Senator Jay Rockefeller, a West Virginia Democrat and chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, does not seem to agree with [the ICANN] approach to extending domain names.

...

Specifically, he takes issue with one domain name in particular: the proposed .sucks domain, which three companies are currently vying to control.

Daily Caller: [US government gives up control of the Internet](#)

By Giuseppe Macri

March 14, 2014

The United States Department of Commerce gave up control of the organization charged with managing the Internet's core infrastructure Friday as a result of mounting global pressure born out of the backlash over global National Security Agency surveillance.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers has overseen domain names, assigned Internet protocol addresses, and executed other crucial Internet functions since 2000 under the supervision of the Commerce Department. Basically, it's the map that points computers to the servers and websites their users are looking for. According to the National Telecommunications & Information Administration – a Commerce Department subsection – the government will relinquish control of the Los Angeles, California-based organization to the “global Internet community” after its current contract expires in fall 2015.

Foreign governments' complaints that the department's control of the web management organization gave it influence over the Internet have escalated dramatically since the leak of classified Internet surveillance programs by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden last year. The Obama administration's relinquished control includes a set of conditions – namely that ICANN be free of any other government influence or interference, that nothing interfere with the preservation of the Internet's stability and security, and that it be kept open and free from censorship.

[The Wall Street Journal reports](#) that one of the major goals of the transition will be to increase transparency for the world as a whole to see and understand how the Internet's core structures function.

Economic Times: [US plans to give up its control over Internet's domain name system](#)

March 15, 2014

The US has announced to give up its control over [Internet's technical operations](#) handing over those functions to "the global multistakeholder community."

The US government, in a statement yesterday, sought to convene global stakeholders to develop a proposal to transition away from [US government](#) oversight of the Internet's domain name system.

The decision is aimed at supporting and enhancing the multi-stakeholder model of Internet policymaking and governance, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) said. "The timing is right to start the transition process," Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, Lawrence E Strickling, said.

In 1997, the Internet domain system was handed over by the US government to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a non-profit group. "We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the [global Internet community](#) to craft an appropriate transition plan," he added.

NTIA said ICANN is uniquely positioned, as both the current IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) functions contractor and the global coordinator for the DNS (Domain Name System), as the appropriate party to convene the multi-stakeholder process to develop the transition plan. NTIA has informed ICANN that it expects that in the development of the proposal, ICANN will work collaboratively with the directly affected parties, including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the [Internet Architecture Board](#) (IAB), the Internet Society (ISOC), the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), top level [domain name operators](#), [VeriSign](#), and other interested global stakeholders.

At the same time, NTIA said it will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an inter-governmental organisation solution. During a conference call, Strickling said any proposal "must have broad community support" and must be based on a multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance. "It must maintain the openness of the Internet. We will not accept a proposal... with a government led or an inter-governmental solution," he said.

The move was welcomed by top American lawmakers, including the Senate Commerce Committee Chairman, [John Rockefeller](#). "The Internet was invented and developed in the US, and it has completely transformed the way people communicate and do business in every corner of the world," he said.

"Since 1998, the US has been committed to transitioning management of the Internet's domain name system to an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community. NTIA's announcement today that it is beginning the process of transferring additional domain name functions to ICANN is the next phase in this transition," Rockefeller said. "It is also consistent with other efforts the US and our allies are making to promote a free and [open](#) Internet, and to preserve and advance the current multi-stakeholder model of global Internet governance," he added.

Financial Times: [US relinquishes control of internet's addressing system](#)

By Richard Waters

March 14, 2014

The Obama administration said on Friday that it would give up control of the internet's addressing system, marking one of its most significant responses yet to the international outcry over revelations of widespread US internet surveillance.

The offer to hand control of the internet addressing system to the private sector also signalled an end to a long-running dispute over a key aspect of the internet. Other countries have pushed Washington for more than 15 years to give up its final sanction over the global network.

The US began a transition in 1997 that was meant to bring the eventual privatisation of Iann, the body that assigns internet addresses. However, a change in the political mood in Washington after the 9/11 terrorist attacks left the body under the ultimate sanction of the Department of Commerce.

It has taken the outcry over internet surveillance to prompt the US finally to promise to give up its privileged role in overseeing the global internet, said Milton Mueller, a professor at Syracuse University who had [proposed a way](#) for the US to hand over its powers to an international body. “The Snowden revelations had a lot to do with it, even though the NSA spying had nothing to do with Iann,” he said.

International anger over the revelations led to a call from a group of influential internet organisations last October for the US to step back from the internet addressing system. In what became known as the Montevideo statement, the group warned of “the undermining of trust and confidence of internet users globally due to recent revelations of pervasive monitoring and surveillance”, raising the risk that the internet would fragment into separate national networks.

The US was also set to face pressure at a meeting over governance due to take place in Brazil next month, with calls growing for it to hand over more control.

Technically, control of the internet’s Domain Name System has left the US in a position to disrupt internet access in other countries, though few experts involved in the field believe it would ever have taken such a radical step. However, the requirement for the commerce department to renew Iann’s contract every three years has left the body subject to intense lobbying in Washington, bringing a heavy political aspect to decision-making, Mr Mueller said.

While promising to step back, the Obama administration nonetheless made clear on Friday that it wanted Iann itself to shape the debate about how authority is handed to a new international group. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration, part of the commerce department, said it had asked Iann to assemble a group of “international stakeholders” to decide the next step forward. It also said it would block any attempt to transfer the internet addressing powers to any government-led group, reflecting continued US resistance to calls for the UN to take over the role.

Forbes: [US Government Cedes Control Of The Internet](#)

By Emma Woollacott

March 15, 2014

The US government is to give up control of the administration of the internet, handing over responsibility for the IP numbering network and domain name system (DNS) to the global community.

Since 1998, under a contract with the Commerce Department’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), DNS has been handled by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a non-profit corporation created for the purpose. But when its current contract expires in September 2015, it won’t be renewed. In the meantime, an alternative will be worked out.

“The timing is right to start the transition process,” says assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information Lawrence E Strickling. “We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan.”

ICANN will work with organizations including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), the Internet Society (ISOC), the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), top level domain name operators, VeriSign and others to develop new proposals. The first meeting on the subject will take place in Singapore later this month.

The intention is to maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the internet – along with its openness. The Commerce Department says it won’t accept a proposal that simply allows another government or group of governments to take over the role of the NTIA. The responsibilities to be farmed out will include the administration of changes to the DNS’s authoritative root zone file – the database containing the lists of names and addresses of all top-level domains – as well as managing the unique identifiers registries for domain names, IP addresses, and protocol parameters.

The move has been a long time coming. Right back in 1998, the Commerce Department declared that it was “committed to a transition that will allow the private sector to take leadership for DNS management.” However, there have been increased calls for changes in the light of Edward Snowden’s revelations about NSA spying. Critics have complained that the present system gives the US too much influence, and have called for greater input from the UN and International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

“Even though ICANN will continue to perform these vital technical functions, the US has long envisioned the day when stewardship over them would be transitioned to the global community,” says Dr Stephen D Crocker, ICANN’s board chair. “In other words, we have all long known the destination. Now it is up to our global stakeholder community to determine the best route to get us there.”

The move has been broadly welcomed by rights groups. “This is a very constructive step, definitely in the right direction, and a unique opportunity to make progress in the evolution of the internet governance ecosystem,” says Anriette Esterhuysen, executive director of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). “This is particularly important for stakeholders from developing countries.”

But some people are less happy. “Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the internet to an undefined group. This is very, very dangerous,” tweeted former speaker of the house Newt Gingrich. “What is the global internet community that Obama wants to turn the internet over to? This risks foreign dictatorships defining the internet.”

But this is just scare-mongering, says the Internet Governance Project (IGP), an alliance of academics that has been campaigning for changes to internet governance since 2005, in a statement. “Far from ‘giving up’ something or ‘losing control’, the US is sure to find that its policy has gained strength. We have just made it a lot harder for opponents of a free and open internet to pretend that what they are really against is an internet dominated by one hegemonic state,” it says. “We have also made it harder for anyone to complain that multistakeholder governance is just a fig leaf for US pre-eminence.”

The IGP does, though, have its own concerns, centered around the importance of separating root zone management functions from the policy making functions – which have highly political implications. It's worried that ICANN is managing the transition process itself.

“Everyone needs to understand that ICANN as an organization has a very strong interest in gaining control of both the technical-operational and the policy making functions. Controlling both makes ICANN a far more powerful, and far less accountable, entity,” it warns. “Like all organizations, ICANN wants to achieve autonomy and strengthen itself. Countervailing forces in the internet community will be needed to keep it in check.”

FOX News: [Backlash over administration decision to relinquish control of Internet overseer](#)

By James Rosen

March 17, 2014

A plan by the Obama administration to relinquish control over the organization that administers the Internet is raising concerns that the United Nations -- or individual foreign governments -- could make a play for Internet control.

The organization in question is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit called the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN. The group controls Internet domain names and other aspects of Internet architecture, and operates under a contract with the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

On Friday, that agency quietly announced that it wants ICANN to come up with a new governing structure -- one that would be "global" and involve multiple "stakeholders." "This is all about ... separating the Internet from government control," said Cameron Kerry, former general counsel with the Commerce Department. "And the United States is in the strongest position to argue against government control of the Internet if it relinquishes that last little bit of control that it has."

But some voiced concern that the move could create confusion, and the possibility that unsavory actors in the international community would try to seize the reins. Of particular concern is whether Internet domain names would eventually come under control of a government less committee to free speech than the United States.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich took to Twitter on Friday to sharply challenge the Commerce Department's decision, warning that it "risks foreign dictatorships defining the internet." "Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the internet to an undefined group. This is very, very dangerous," Gingrich tweeted. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., according to Politico, cautioned that it would be a "scary thought" to be in a situation where nations like China or Russia "could take a firm hold on the Internet."

Leaders of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation voiced initial support for the Commerce Department plan. "The U.S. helped create the Internet, and we want to see it grow and stand on its own. It doesn't need a nanny state, or a collection of nanny states, trying to stifle it," Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., the committee's top Republican, said.

But Thune also warned that lawmakers would be "watching closely" as the transition proceeds.

"There are people who want to see the Internet fall into the grip of the U.N. or who would allow ICANN to become an unaccountable organization with the power to control the Internet, and we cannot allow them to determine how this process plays out," he said in a statement.

It's not clear what arrangement ICANN will come up with.

Officials at NTIA say this shift of authority has been on the books as official policy since 1997, but that another government, or group of governments, will not be allowed to assume control.

Mary Kissel, of the Wall Street editorial board, indicated she believes the administration on that point. "I don't defend them a lot, but on this one I will," she said. "They will not release that tether between Commerce and ICANN unless there is no government control, the Internet remains secure and stable, and the Internet remains free and open."

FOX News: [US transfer of Internet control years in the making, fueled by foreign pressure](#)

By Judson Berger

March 18, 2014

The decision was announced nonchalantly, in trademark Washington fashion on a Friday afternoon: The U.S. government will cede its last bit of control over the Internet.

The government has maintained that influence through contracts with the organization that administers the Internet, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit called the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN. But a Commerce Department agency announced Friday that it would relinquish control over ICANN, presumably when its contract expires in September 2015. The office said it wants the group to next convene "global stakeholders" to come up with a transition plan -- a transition to what remains unknown.

But that sudden and highly controversial decision was years in the making, and it arguably dates back close to two decades. Further, despite the Internet being hatched in the U.S., the move to transfer control to the "global" community has accelerated in recent years -- under heavy pressure from foreign governments.

It came as little surprise, then, that United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday praised the U.S. Commerce Department's decision. "The Secretary-General takes note of this important development," a statement from Ban's office said, calling for all stakeholders to pursue a "single, open, free, secure and trustworthy Internet."

But whether that goal can be achieved is the big question. The decision Friday by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has raised concerns that, in the void left by America's transfer of oversight, other nations that don't share the United States' commitment to free speech and expression could make a grab at Internet influence.

FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai said Tuesday that the current model of Internet governance has been a "tremendous" success, and he cautioned against moving too quickly to change it. "Any proposal to change that model therefore demands rigorous scrutiny, including close congressional oversight. In particular, those advocating change must prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that their proposals would not increase the influence of repressive foreign governments over the Internet," Pai said in a statement.

"If I am not convinced that a different governance structure would preserve Internet freedom, I will strongly oppose it."

Robert Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a nonpartisan tech-focused D.C. think tank, [wrote on his organization's website](#) that the U.S. was effectively giving up its "bodyguard" role. "While on the surface this may seem like a simple administrative decision that gives more control over this key Internet function to more stakeholders, it could actually have far reaching negative implications for the freedom and security of the Internet," he wrote.

The U.S. government does not technically control ICANN, but it nevertheless maintains significant oversight through the contractual agreements the Commerce Department has with the group. ICANN manages some of the most important elements of the Internet, including the domain name system and IP addressing. Domains are those tiny suffixes at the end of Internet addresses, like .com and .org and .gov.

The Commerce Department, whose contract with ICANN lasts through September 2015, stressed in its announcement that whatever system comes to replace the existing one will not give control to other governments. "... NTIA will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an inter-governmental organization solution," the official announcement said. Lawrence Strickling, assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information, simply said in explaining the shift that "the timing is right to start the transition process."

Strickling has been talking for years about broadening the oversight of the Internet. In a July 2012 speech at an Internet governance forum, he discussed giving the "global Internet community" more of a "direct say" in the process, and he said the Obama administration was making a "concerted effort" to expand international participation.

In response to criticism of Friday's announcement, Strickling reiterated that a government body will not replace the NTIA role. "Our announcement has led to some misunderstanding about our plan with some individuals raising concerns that the U.S. government is abandoning the Internet," he said in a statement. "Nothing could be further from the truth. This announcement in no way diminishes our commitment to preserving the Internet as an engine for economic growth and innovation."

The Committee on Energy and Commerce announced Tuesday that it will hold a hearing in the first week of April to investigate the matter, pledging to conduct "aggressive oversight following the recent announcement by the Obama administration on the future of Internet governance."

The latest push to transition oversight began with a 2009 agreement between NTIA and ICANN. The agency, though, noted that the goal of completely privatizing the domain name system dates back to 1997, and that the U.S. government reiterated that goal when it partnered with ICANN a year later. But international pressure has undoubtedly been mounting in recent years, only to be fueled by anger over NSA spying -- which by itself has little to do with ICANN.

Some governments repeatedly have pushed for an Internet oversight body within the United Nations -- to adamant objections from U.S. lawmakers. The process formally started in 2003, when the [U.N. agreed to study bringing in more international involvement](#). That report, released in 2005, said no individual government should play the primary role in overseeing the Internet. This led to proposals to create U.N.-linked governance bodies, which U.S. officials opposed.

The U.N.'s International Telecommunications Union also held a major conference in Dubai in late 2012 to address these and other issues. Amid concern about the U.N. and its multitude of member states asserting more authority, the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed a resolution advocating a "global Internet free from government control." The resolution was a direct message to the U.N., as countries like Russia, China and Sudan tried to undermine the current structure.

Nevertheless, Edward Snowden's revelations about NSA activities subsequently increased pressure on the U.S. But [Daniel Castro, a senior analyst with the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation](#), wrote on the group's blog that the NSA controversy is a "pretext."

"While the NSA revelations have rightly angered many people around the world, they have nothing to do with Internet governance. The U.S. Department of Commerce has not once abused its oversight of ICANN to aid the intelligence community," he wrote, adding: "And if the Obama Administration gives away its oversight of the Internet, it will be gone forever."

Huffington Post: [A New U.S. Global Policy in Communications](#) (Opinion)

By John M. Eger (*Van Deerlin Endowed Chair of Communications and Public Policy / Director of the Creative Economy Initiative, San Diego State University*)

March 15, 2014

We have finally recognized that the International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ([ICANN](#))--a U.S. based corporation with unlimited power to set all the names and numbers for the internet all over the world--is disagreeable to too many other nations also dependent on the Internet . Now, something new, an international body controlled by all governments, global corporations and non-governmental organizations will be assuming its function.

This makes a lot of people nervous--particularly many international corporations-- but it gives America the opportunity to launch global initiatives that foster cooperation and consensus on global communication policies to solve global problems no one individual country can solve itself such as terrorism, education, health care and a sustainable earth.

Moreover, as nations around the world awaken to the importance of creating a robust communications infrastructure, they should be less dependent and less willing to accept what has been considered a one-way flow of information and communications goods and services from the United States.

This undoubtedly places a greater burden on U.S. policy makers to pursue the basic idea of a free, unregulated, unrestricted flow of news, entertainment and information. Clearly trade in information goods and services and the future of journalism itself face new challenges.

Just a few years ago UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, adopted a treaty promoting or recognizing cultural identity. The Motion Picture Association of America among others in the industry opposed the U.S.'s support of the resolution. The U.S. stood alone, along with Israel, in opposing the cultural treaty on the grounds that it would be used for trade purposes to block the importation of American information and entertainment products, which constitute a major percentage of U.S. exports.

This concern about the "free flow" of information across borders is certainly not new. Most recently, in the late '70s and early '80s, the term "[The New World Information Order](#)" was part of the debate by the

MacBride Commission -- named after Nobel Prize winner Sean MacBride, chairman of the panel -- whose concern, then as now, is that the current flow of information and communications heavily favored the U.S.

The developing countries were expressing their frustration with what they were calling a form of electronic colonialism with the U.S., indeed the Western world, dominating media flow. In protest, the U.S. and the United Kingdom, among other countries, withdrew from UNESCO in the '80s and rejoined a few years ago.

Despite the concerns expressed by the McBride Commission report and the call for a New World Information Order, the report's concern with concentration and commercialization, and what it felt was unequal access to information and communications, has not changed significantly. The commission's call for a "strengthening of national media to avoid dependence on external sources" has had some success, and as noted earlier, many countries are now focusing on developing a robust communications media unique to their national economy and culture.

However, the concern with the U.S.'s dominance of media flow does not extend to the developing nations alone. Indeed, in the mid-'70s France published a treatise called "[The Computerization of Society](#)" written by the then-secretary of the Treasury, Simon Nora and co-authored by his assistant Alain Minc, which called for a way of taxing information flows as well as information assets.

France and much of Europe subsequently developed privacy laws to control the flow of all data -- they called it "name-linked data" -- under the guise of protecting privacy. Such laws applied to both persons and corporations and severely threatened the free flow of trade and commerce and we saw recently that our piracy laws, or the lack of them, have caused Europe to threaten that US corporations might no longer collect data within European boundaries.

All this may seem arcane and distant to the average American. Perhaps too little has been said or written about these issues. Perhaps most Americans don't care or simply trust the UN system. Yet unless the U.S. has a plan to negotiate and establish global polices which satisfy the worldwide hunger for the bold new future promised by the growing Internet, our own future may be in peril.

IDG News Service: [US government to end formal relationship with ICANN](#)

By Grant Gross

March 14, 2014

The U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration will end its formal relationship with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers in late 2015, with ICANN developing a new global governance model, the agency said Friday.

The [NTIA plans to let its contract](#) with ICANN to operate key domain-name functions expire in September 2015, while requiring the organization to develop a new global Internet governance model, NTIA administrator Lawrence Strickling said during a press conference.

ICANN has faced growing criticism in recent years about the influence of the U.S. government on its operations, but Strickling and ICANN CEO and President Fadi Chehadé said the decision to end the formal relationship was driven instead by a longtime understanding that the partnership would be

temporary. ICANN's contract with the NTIA to operate the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions dates back to 1999.

As a condition of the change, the transition away from the NTIA contract "must have broad community support" from Internet users, governments and companies, Strickling said. The new governance model must "maintain the security, stability and resiliency of the Internet Domain Name System," he added.

The new governance model must also maintain the openness of the Internet, Strickling said. The NTIA will not support a governance model that puts control in the hands of governments only, he added. "I want to make clear that we will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or intergovernmental solution," he said.

The global Internet community will be included "in full" in the transition process, Chehadé said. He encouraged civil society, Internet groups and other organizations to be involved in the transition and in the new governance model. Debate on the transition will begin during ICANN's [meeting in Singapore](#) March 23 to 27, he said.

U.S. trade group NetChoice questioned the decision. The announcement comes after a series of revelations about U.S. National Security Agency surveillance programs across the Internet, coming from leaks by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

"I hope it's not just a frightened reaction to the Snowden revelations, which have nothing to do with the Internet Domain Name System," NetChoice executive director Steve DelBianco said by email. "Maybe the administration wants to rack up political points for upcoming [Internet governance] meetings. I'm afraid those points won't be worth what this move may cost."

The end of the contract means the NTIA will not be able to continue to push ICANN to improve its services, as it has in recent years, DelBianco said. In addition, ICANN could now "escape its legal presence in the US, despite having many contracts that are adjudicated under U.S. law," he said.

InformationWeek: [ICANN Move Doesn't Equal Net Armageddon](#) (Opinion)

By Jonathan Feldman (*Chief Information Officer, City of Asheville, NC*)

March 18, 2014

The Internet was envisioned as a global network, free of the shackles of political borders. It evolved further towards that last week when it put central coordination for domain names and IP addresses into the hands of an actual global entity instead of a US government sidecar. Cue conspiracy theory and xenophobia. ["Obama's giving away the Internet!"](#) But is this level of freakout based on historical data or anything factual? No.

A quick refresher. [ICANN](#) is the "Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers." They're the ones who coordinated those lovely new DNS top level domains (TLDs) like .Coffee, .Shoes, and, of course, .Sexy. But expansionism and marketing aside, the important thing about new TLDs is that they also allow citizens in countries to type in their own language when accessing the web. Imagine that. So, instead of having to type "hunger.game", a Chinese citizen might type "□□.游□", using the new ".game" (游□) Chinese language TLD. This basic need has only been met because of greater international participation in ICANN.

ICANN also globally allocates Internet numbers to providers, although in practice, ICANN doesn't micromanage the huge blocks of addresses that it delegates to regional authorities. The detail is left to the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) like ARIN (American Registry for Internet Numbers) and APNIC (Asia-Pacific Network Information Centre).

ICANN is also responsible for doing boring but essential work like crafting policies for the use of [IPv6](#), not for the US, but for nations all over the globe who use Internet Protocol. So why is it such a big deal to transition ICANN away from control of National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), an agency of the US Federal government? Well, it's not, if you're not the US government or a US partisan chanting "USA! USA!"

And there are plenty of those. "Without the U.S. government providing an effective backstop to ICANN's original operating principles, there would be no mechanism in place to stop foreign governments from interfering with ICANN's operations," [declares Daniel Castro](#), senior analyst with the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a public policy think tank based out of Washington, D.C. Um, because the US has done such a great job at being a backstop against foreign governments engaging in other hateful activities like human trafficking? Not quite.

US Senator Tim Scott said, "The 'global Internet community' this would empower has no First Amendment." And [Newt Gingrich tweeted](#) last week that "Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the Internet to an undefined group. This is very, very dangerous."

To be sure, ICANN's role is important, and uncorrected missteps could create serious problems. But you cannot expect other countries to stand by forever while a so-called global Internet's future is steered by *one* country. The global financial system is similarly important, but it's not completely controlled by the US either. It's also impossible to overlook that the US has lost global trust. Foreign business has lost trust in "made in USA" tech because of [NSA fallout](#); we shouldn't expect the international community to be satisfied when the US continues to be the contracting agency for ICANN.

But does it really matter who contracts with ICANN as long as global issues are addressed? The whole point of the Internet is that it is a relatively decentralized and robust network that no single entity controls.

Larry Strickling, administrator of the NTIA, allaying fears that foreign powers might step into an ICANN power vacuum, said that the U.S. won't go through with it unless it's sure that ICANN won't be picked up by a [foreign government or a coalition of foreign governments](#). Whether or not they can be "sure" remains to be seen. It's more than likely that various nation-states, including the US, will be trying to stack the deck of governance given the amount of paranoia flying around. That's what we really need to worry about.

But the bottom line is: today, we trust ICANN, under contract to the NTIA, to manage DNS, delegate control of IP addresses, and deploy things like DNSSEC to the root DNS zone. The Internet is a hierarchical system with areas of autonomy (such as the RIRs). It's not such a stretch to think, if ICANN continues to operate "under contract" to a board of governors, that they will continue to do the same things and that events will continue along the same path, despite cries of possible censorship.

But the essential logic error in the hue and cry is this: that the Internet as we know it -- beyond the ARPAnet, beyond BITNET -- could not have happened without significant global cooperation and international effort. It is something of a testament to citizen-scientists and engineers working together regardless of politics or national origin. The fact that it works at all means that the governance model works.

There is Internet in Africa. There is Internet in Latin America. And there's Internet in Asia. Even though the US could conceivably be influencing ICANN because of the current contract. But that's not happening. The US doesn't control the Internet in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. So why are we getting hysterical about this? Oh, right, politics. But this is a non-event in the world of organizational governance or technology pragmatics.

Los Angeles Times: [U.S. to give up control of making policy for the Web](#)

By Jessica Guynn

March 14, 2014

Amid growing international concern over U.S. control of the Internet, the federal government plans to relinquish control of policy making for the Web to the “global Internet community.” The U.S. Commerce Department said Friday that it has asked the Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers to bring together interested groups from around the world to come up with a plan to transition oversight of the Web.

Governments have complained that the United States had too much influence over the Internet, particularly in light of revelations of online surveillance by the National Security Agency and other intelligence agencies.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, last month suggested establishing “a clear timeline” for global control of ICANN, which is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit. ICANN said it will kick off the process of transitioning to a new oversight body at an international meeting scheduled for March 24 in Singapore. The contract with ICANN is set to expire in September 2015 but could be extended if a transition plan has not been chosen.

U.S. officials say any new oversight body must consist of a broad cross-section of stakeholders from around the globe and operate independently from government influence. They have warned that allowing the United Nations to oversee Web policy could lead to increased censorship in countries such as China and Russia. “We will not accept a proposal that replaces the [U.S.] role with a government-led or an intergovernmental solution,” said Lawrence E. Strickling, assistant secretary of Commerce for communications and information. He also said the new body must preserve the openness, security and stability of the Web.

An official with the Commerce Department denied that the move was prompted by the damaging disclosures made by former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden. He said the relationship between the Commerce Department and ICANN was always intended to be temporary. ICANN is responsible for assigning Internet domains such as .com, .biz, .edu and .gov. It’s in the process of adding hundreds of new domains. “We thank the U.S. government for its stewardship, for its guidance over the years, and we thank them today for trusting the global community to replace their stewardship with the appropriate accountability mechanisms,” ICANN President Fadi Chehade said.

Los Angeles Times: [Who should run the Internet?](#) (Editorial)
March 18, 2014

One of the technological marvels of the Internet is that it acts as a unified system, despite the fact that it's a global collection of disparate computer and communications networks. That's thanks in part to the use of a common address book administered by a nonprofit organization created and overseen by the U.S. government. Now, the Obama administration says the time has come to remove Washington's oversight, leaving the U.S. government with no greater influence over how the Internet operates than any other country has. That's a risky step, yet one that seems unavoidable. And if the transition is handled the right way, it may actually reduce the risk that governments will impose rules that Balkanize the Net.

The federal involvement in the Web's address book, formally known as the Domain Name System, is a holdover from days when the Internet was just a federal research project. Although independent engineering groups came up with the standards that enable networks to interconnect and data to be shared, federal contractors were in charge of maintaining the list of the names (such as latimes.com) and corresponding Internet Protocol addresses (such as 163.192.187.17) of all the computers that connected online. That system, shared by users around the world, functions as a road map that guides email, Web browsers and other Internet traffic to the right destination.

In 1998, however, the federal government started shifting oversight of the Domain Name System to the private sector, contracting with the newly created Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers to manage domains and IP addresses. ICANN isn't controlled by Washington or any other single entity; instead, it has a board of directors chosen by its constituents, which include telecommunications companies, engineering groups and governments. Yet the fact that ICANN is a U.S. government contractor has led many observers to assume that Washington has, if not veto power, at least an unusual degree of influence over the organization.

That matters because some foreign governments want a very different Internet from the free, open and global one we have today. Some, such as China, long to (and, to some extent, do) censor the traffic coming in and out of their countries. And in the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations about National Security Agency surveillance around the globe, some, such as Brazil, want to force websites to store all the data they collect within their borders, effectively creating local duplicates of the World Wide Web.

So when the administration announced Friday that it planned to finish privatizing the management of Internet names and addresses, some proponents of Internet freedom were outraged. Rob Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, said the administration was "giving up its traditional 'bodyguard' role of Internet governance." Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich warned that the move "risks foreign dictatorships defining the Internet."

Those concerns would be more realistic if the U.S. could dictate ICANN's every move, but it can't. Still, the federal government's involvement has protected ICANN from being subjected to some other government or governments' rule. And given that a United Nations agency recently tried to impose its own version of governance on the Internet, it's not far-fetched to think that opponents of a unified, free and open Internet will see the administration's proposed retreat as an opportunity to advance.

To its credit, the administration placed some important conditions on its withdrawal. It plans to cede the authority it exerts now to "the global multistakeholder community" — in other words, the academics, engineers, businesses, consumers and governments that have a stake in the Internet — when its current deal with ICANN expires in September 2015. And while it handed ICANN the job of coming up with a replacement for the current system, it said it will not accept "a government-led or an inter-governmental organization solution."

The Internet is so important to the global economy that even the United States' allies have been pressing Washington to give up control. The leaks about the NSA's activities only amplified those calls. If the rest of the world can't trust the U.S. to keep its hands off, the best hope for preserving the Internet as we know it is to make sure no governments are in charge. The administration took a step in that direction Friday, although no destination is yet in sight.

Mashable: [U.S. Set to Give up Its Last Power Over the Internet](#)

By Jason Abbruzzese
March 15, 2014

The U.S. government will give up its last measure of control over the Internet, possibly as soon as next year.

An agreement between the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is set to expire in 2015 and will not be renewed if a changeover plan is developed.

"To support and enhance the multistakeholder model of Internet policymaking and governance, the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announces its intent to transition key Internet domain name functions to the global multistakeholder community," the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, wrote in [a press release](#).

ICANN was founded in 1998 by the U.S. government and oversees the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, which regulates IP addresses and the Domain Name System (DNS), in addition to other responsibilities.

The U.S. role in web domain management has been among the last pieces of the Internet under the government's control. The contract through which the U.S. exerts influence over ICANN was [renewed in 2006](#).

Fadi Chehadé called the move "the culmination of a commitment the U.S. government made in 1998" to relinquish its remaining control of the Internet.

"This is historic because it marks a point of maturity in ICANN, the ICANN community and the global Internet community, and I think that the decision of the United States government to do this at this point is truly at triumph of the multi-state model, the model that underpins how we do everything in the Internet technical community," Chehadé said in a phone call with journalists.

When asked if there would be any visible impact on the Internet for the average consumer, Chehadé said: "The answer is a flat no."

The details of the handover are not yet set. ICANN has been tasked with developing a plan that will relieve the role of the U.S of its role.

"As the first step, NTIA is asking the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to convene global stakeholders to develop a proposal to transition the current role played by NTIA in the coordination of the Internet's domain name system (DNS)," the Commerce Department said in its statement.

The U.S. has been widely criticized for its control of aspects of the Internet, particularly in light of Edward Snowden's revelations about the actions of the National Security Agency. The EU recently called for [a replacement to ICANN](#) in an effort to minimize U.S. control.

National Journal: [U.S. Government to Give Up Key Internet Powers](#)

By Brendan Sasso

March 14, 2014

Facing international pressure, the U.S. government said Friday it will give up control over important technical aspects of the Internet. The Commerce Department will no longer oversee the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers, a nonprofit group that manages the Internet's address system.

Larry Strickling, the assistant secretary of Commerce for communications and information, said the "global Internet community" will have the final say over the database of names and addresses that allows computers around the world to communicate with each other.

The Internet was invented in the United States, and the country has long maintained a central role. But as the Internet has grown, other countries have demanded a greater voice in its governance. Edward Snowden's leaks about the National Security Agency's mass-surveillance programs have exacerbated resentment over the central role of the United States in managing the Internet.

But officials argued the transition is not a response to the international controversy over NSA spying. Strickling said the U.S. oversight of the Internet's domain system was always meant to be temporary. "The timing is right to start the transition process," he said. "We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan."

Fadi Chehadé, the president and CEO of ICANN, said he will work with governments, businesses, and nonprofits to establish a new system for managing the Internet's domain system. "All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and governance of this global resource as equal partners," he said.

The U.S. government will continue its role until its current contract with ICANN expires in September 2015. Strickling said ICANN's proposal must meet certain criteria, including that it "maintain the openness of the Internet" and preserve security and stability. He insisted that foreign governments and intergovernmental groups will not gain new powers over the Internet.

But some business groups are nervous about what the transition will mean. Daniel Castro, an analyst for the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a pro-business think tank, warned that giving up the traditional U.S. oversight role could result in "a splintered Internet that would stifle

innovation, commerce, and the free flow and diversity of ideas that are bedrock tenets of world's biggest economic engine."

Bob Liodice, the CEO of the Association of National Advertisers, said he is "very disappointed" with the announcement. His group has battled with ICANN for several years over its plan to allow for thousands of new Web address endings beyond the traditional ".com" and ".org."

"We saw the U.S. relax accountability with the recent domain name expansion," he said. "In a world without U.S. oversight, we worry that such issues will be further aggravated potentially causing significant economic concerns, consumer confusion and impairment to brand ownership."

Sen. Jay Rockefeller, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, has been a frequent critic of ICANN's decisions. But he said Friday that the announcement is consistent with U.S. efforts to ensure the Internet is free from government control.

"Since 1998, the U.S. has been committed to transitioning management of the Internet's domain name system to an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community," he said.

National Journal: [When U.S. Steps Back, Will Russia and China Control the Internet?](#)

By Brendan Sasso

March 17, 2014

The United States is planning to give up its last remaining authority over the technical management of the Internet.

The Commerce Department announced Friday that it will give the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), an international nonprofit group, control over the database of names and addresses that allows computers around the world to connect to each other.

Administration officials say U.S. authority over the Internet address system was always intended to be temporary and that ultimate power should rest with the "global Internet community."

But some fear that the Obama administration is opening the door to an Internet takeover by Russia, China, or other countries that are eager to censor speech and limit the flow of ideas.

"If the Obama Administration gives away its oversight of the Internet, it will be gone forever," wrote Daniel Castro, a senior analyst with the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. Castro argued that the world "could be faced with a splintered Internet that would stifle innovation, commerce, and the free flow and diversity of ideas that are bedrock tenets of world's biggest economic engine."

Rep. Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican, called the announcement a "hostile step" against free speech. "Giving up control of ICANN will allow countries like China and Russia that don't place the same value in freedom of speech to better define how the internet looks and operates," she said in a statement.

Critics warn that U.S. control of the domain system has been a check against the influence of authoritarian regimes over ICANN, and in turn the Internet.

But other advocacy groups, businesses, and lawmakers have praised the administration's announcement—while also saying they plan to watch the transition closely. The Internet was invented in the United States, and the country has always had a central role in its management. But as the Internet has grown, other countries have demanded a greater voice. Edward Snowden's leaks about U.S. surveillance have only exacerbated that tension.

China, Russia, Iran, and dozens of other countries are already pushing for more control over the Internet through the International Telecommunications Union, a United Nations agency. The transition to full ICANN control of the Internet's address system won't happen until October 2015, and even then, there likely won't be any sudden changes. ICANN was already managing the system under a contract from the Commerce Department.

But having the ultimate authority over the domain name system was the most important leverage the United States had in debates over the operation of the Internet. It was a trump card the U.S. could play if it wanted to veto an ICANN decision or fend off an international attack on Internet freedom.

The Obama administration is keenly aware of the potential for an authoritarian regime to seize power over the Internet. ICANN will have to submit a proposal for the new management system to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, an agency within the Commerce Department. "I want to make clear that we will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental solution," Larry Strickling, the head of NTIA, said Friday.

Fadi Chehadé, the president and CEO of ICANN, said he will work with governments, businesses, and nonprofits to craft a new oversight system. "All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and governance of this global resource as equal partners," he said.

Verizon, AT&T, Cisco, and other business groups all issued statements applauding the administration's move. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller argued that the transition will help ensure the Internet remains free and open.

Sen. John Thune, the top Republican on the Commerce Committee, said he will watch the process carefully, but that he trusts "the innovators and entrepreneurs more than the bureaucrats—whether they're in D.C. or Brussels."

The transition will reassure the global community that the U.S. is not trying to manipulate the Internet for its own economic or strategic advantage, [according](#) to Cameron Kerry, a fellow at the Brookings Institution and the former acting Commerce secretary.

Steve DelBianco, the executive director of NetChoice, a pro-business tech group, said the U.S. was bound to eventually give up its role overseeing Internet addresses. But he said lawmakers and the Obama administration will have to ensure that ICANN will still be held accountable before handing the group the keys to the address system in 2015.

DelBianco warned that without proper safeguards, Russian President Vladimir Putin or another authoritarian leader could pressure ICANN to shut down domains that host critical content. "That kind of freedom of expression is something that the U.S. has carefully protected," DelBianco said in an interview. "Whatever replaces the leverage, let's design it carefully."

NBC News: [U.S. to Cede Control of Internet Regulating Organization](#)

By Devin Coldewey

March 14, 2014

The U.S. government is finally [relinquishing its hold on ICANN](#), an organization that controls or influences many key pieces of Internet infrastructure. ICANN will soon operate independently, though it will continue to work closely with Washington and other governments.

The nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers was created in 1998 to oversee the selection and distribution of "top-level domains" (things like .com, .org, .edu, .us, and infamously, [.xxx](#)), as well as more technical work.

ICANN operates under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Commerce, but in recent years there have been questions at home and abroad over whether a single government should have control over the Internet — especially after the leaks suggesting the National Security Agency has been subverting Internet infrastructure to its own purposes.

To that end, the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration announced Friday that it would be stepping out of its role at ICANN, transitioning it to management by "the global multistakeholder community," i.e. all the other organizations and regulatory bodies out there. ICANN has its own announcement [here](#).

This was, in fact, always the plan, though the timing was never set in stone. From the beginning, and reiterated in documents through the years, DNS management was always in the process of being weaned, so to speak, and made private and independent.

And don't worry, it's not just a case of regulatory hot potato: "NTIA will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an inter-governmental organization solution." So the likes of Homeland Security won't be snapping up the responsibilities.

"All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and governance of this global resource as equal partners," said ICANN CEO Fadi Chehade in the organization's press release.

The transition should be taking place over the next year. More information on the basics of ICANN, NTIA and the many other Internet-related acronyms relating to this topic can be found at [this helpful FAQ \(PDF\)](#) from the Department of Commerce.

NPR: [U.S. To Relinquish Remaining Control Of The Internet](#)

By Eyder Peralta

March 14, 2014

The United States announced its intention on Friday of relinquishing its remaining control of the Internet. [In a statement](#), the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration said it wants to relinquish its oversight of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

ICAAN is a kind of cooperative that includes a wide array of companies and people, as well as more than 100 governments. One of the key functions overseen by the U.S. is the assignment of domain names. (Think of .com or .org.)

"The timing is right to start the transition process," Lawrence E. Strickling, the assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information, said in a statement. "We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan."

NPR's Steve Henn tells our Newscast unit that the world community has been calling for this handover for a while. But the current revelations over spying by the National Security Agency has led to louder calls.

"The announcement by the Commerce Department Friday that it would relinquish its oversight role of ICANN was widely viewed as a response to that criticism," Steve reports. "Administration officials have said any new governance structure for ICANN should be transparent and free from any hint of government interference."

The Commerce Department adds that it was always the intention of the United States to hand over these responsibilities to the global community.

The Wall Street Journal [adds](#):

"The impact of the change remains unclear, because the Commerce Department's day-to-day role in overseeing the contract with Icann is largely clerical. However, other nations have suggested the U.S. can still use its current authority to block certain websites for reasons like copyright infringement or having links to known terrorists. One goal of transitioning Icann to nongovernmental oversight would be to provide more transparency to all nations into how the Internet's root structure operates.

"Until 1998, the functions were managed by Jon Postel, a computer scientist at the University of Southern California, one of the early pioneers of the World Wide Web. Upon Postel's death in 1998, the Commerce Department issued a contract to Icann to take over those functions, making Icann the primary body in charge of setting policy for Internet domains and addresses."

Politico: [Internet administration to shift from U.S. to global stage](#)

By Erin Mershon and Jessica Meyers

March 15, 2014 (updated version)

Three paragraphs of story appeared in Politico Playbook as a "TOP STORY" on same day.

The U.S. Commerce Department is relinquishing its hold over the group that manages the Internet's architecture amid pressure to globalize its functions in the wake of reports about NSA surveillance.

The National Telecommunications & Information Administration, a Commerce Department agency, said Friday it is transitioning the function to the "global Internet community." The decision marks a dramatic change. Since the Internet's inception, the United States has played a leading role in the management of critical back-end Web work, including management of .com and other domain names. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has performed those functions under U.S. Commerce contract since 2000.

The United States will give up its oversight role when the current contract with ICANN expires in fall 2015, NTIA Administrator Larry Strickling said. He set out a series of four principles required for the transition, including that ICANN maintain the openness of the Internet. Some U.S. officials and businesses have expressed fears about the United Nations, or governments like Russia and China, taking over control of the Web.

“We will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental solution,” Strickling said in a conference call.

ICANN, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit, has been pushing to transform itself into a global organization without U.S. oversight. European Union officials have strongly backed the globalization campaign, which has picked up steam in the wake of Edward Snowden’s leaks about the NSA’s sprawling surveillance programs.

The European Commission, the EU’s executive arm, last month proposed establishing “a clear timeline” for globalizing ICANN and the duties it performs under the U.S. contract.

“We thank the U.S. government for its stewardship, for its guidance over the years, and we thank them today for trusting the global community to replace their stewardship with the appropriate accountability mechanisms,” said ICANN President Fadi Chehade, who joined Strickling on the call.

Some U.S. officials have warned about the dangers of ceding ICANN’s authority to the International Telecommunication Union, a United Nations agency, fearing countries like Russia and China could use it to allow online censorship. Congress unanimously passed a resolution ahead of a 2012 ITU meeting, highlighting the U.S. commitment to keeping the Internet free from government control.

Daniel Castro, a senior analyst at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, disputed the connection between NSA revelations and Internet governance in an op-ed Friday, and he warned that ICANN would not be held accountable without U.S. control. “If the Obama Administration gives away its oversight of the Internet,” he said, “it will be gone forever.”

Some criticism of the decision immediately started popping up on Twitter. “Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the internet to an undefined group,” former House Speaker Newt Gingrich tweeted shortly after the announcement. “This is very, very dangerous.”

An NTIA official denied that this was a reaction to the Snowden disclosures, pointing out that the relationship between the Commerce Department and ICANN was always envisioned as temporary.

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller applauded the government’s decision to relinquish oversight of the Internet’s critical functions, calling it “the next phase” in a transition to “an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community.” He said the decision resembles “other efforts the U.S. and our allies are making to promote a free and open Internet, and to preserve and advance the current multi-stakeholder model of global Internet governance.”

ICANN recently embarked on a controversial expansion of the Internet’s domain-name system. The group is preparing to approve hundreds of new Web endings, like .clothing, .shop or .hospital, in the next year. Industry groups have criticized the program, saying it will increase the potential for cybersquatting and add to their costs.

The group has been working to give itself a more international aura. The group announced last year it would open new hubs in Singapore and Istanbul. And it has been touting the international aspects of its domain-name expansion, which will usher in new non-English Web endings in Cyrillic, Chinese and Arabic.

Politico: [Internet transition triggers GOP backlash](#)

By Jessica Meyers and Erin Mershon

March 17, 2014 (*Updated version; originally appeared March 15*)

The Obama administration's decision to relinquish oversight over the group that manages the Internet's architecture has raised an early red flag with Republicans, who blast the move as a threat to free speech.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers has managed the Web's domain-name system under contract with the U.S. government for more than a decade — but the Los Angeles-based nonprofit has worked to transform itself into a global organization free of U.S. ties. European Union officials backed the globalization effort, which intensified with Edward Snowden's leaks about the NSA's sprawling surveillance programs.

The United States has always played a leading role in overseeing the management of .com and other domain names, but the administration announced Friday night that it will give up its oversight when the current contract expires in fall 2015. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, last month proposed establishing “a clear timeline” for globalizing ICANN and the duties it performs under the U.S. contract. Exactly who would regulate the Web's back-end is unclear, but the decision already has sparked backlash among some in the GOP, who warn it could allow the United Nations or authoritarian countries to step in and seize control of the Web.

“While I certainly agree our nation must stridently review our procedures regarding surveillance in light of the NSA controversy, to put ourselves in a situation where censorship-laden governments like China or Russia could take a firm hold on the Internet itself is truly a scary thought,” Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) said. “I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Senate Commerce Committee and with the Commerce Department on this, because — to be blunt — the ‘global internet community’ this would empower has no First Amendment.”

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, minutes after the Friday announcement, tweeted: “Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the Internet to an undefined group. This is very, very dangerous.” And that's just a start. “This is red meat for the base,” said former Rep. Mary Bono (R-Calif.), who sponsored a resolution in 2012 aimed at keeping the Internet free of governmental control. “We're at a critical time where [Russian President Vladimir] Putin is proving he is capable of outmaneuvering the administration. ... As they digest it, I think people are going to be very upset.”

U.S. lawmakers have long warned about the dangers of ceding ICANN's authority to the International Telecommunication Union, a United Nations agency. They see the U.N. as a vehicle for countries with tight constraints to allow even greater online censorship. Congress unanimously passed Bono's resolution ahead of a 2012 ITU meeting to reinforce America's commitment to an open Internet.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration — the Commerce Department agency that made the announcement — emphasized ICANN would need to meet several principles ahead of the transition, including ensuring the openness of the Internet. “We will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental solution,” the agency's administrator, Larry Strickling, told reporters.

An NTIA official said Friday the agency had no intention of handing the contract over to another government or group, but wanted to find a method of oversight that incorporated broader voices. Only a proposal with broad community support would be approved, he said.

Several Democratic lawmakers, including Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), applauded the planned transition. He called it “the next phase” toward “an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community.”

Some Republicans reacted with more caution. A spokesman for Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said lawmakers “must consider this carefully and ensure this transition reflects the unanimous statement Congress made last year,” adding, “Under no circumstances should this contract transition to a government or government entity.” Senate Commerce Committee ranking member John Thune (R-S.D.) said the Internet “needs — and deserves — a strong multi-stakeholder system free from the control of any government or governmental entity,” and he vowed the committee would keep watch over the transition.

There are people who want to see the Internet fall into the grip of the U.N. or who would allow ICANN to become an unaccountable organization with the power to control the Internet, and we cannot allow them to determine how this process plays out,” he said. But he added, “I trust the innovators and entrepreneurs more than the bureaucrats — whether they’re in D.C. or Brussels.”

At least one right-leaning group called on lawmakers to intervene. “Congress needs to prevent the Obama administration from giving away U.S. control over the Internet to any international body,” Americans for Limited Government said in a statement. “Perhaps this latest egregious action by the Obama administration in their quest to deconstruct the United States will finally wake Congress up to their power of the purse responsibility as a co-equal partner in government.”

And GOP FCC Commissioner Michael O’Rielly shared concern “that NTIA’s announcement could set the stage for foreign governments and quasi-governmental entities to try to gain control of the Internet.” “If this goes forward, the real work will be to ensure that ICANN satisfies the conditions outlined and that these principles cannot and will not be undermined in the future,” he said. “The only acceptable Internet governance structure, other than the current one, is a multi-stakeholder model completely free from foreign government intrusion.” The GOP may have just found a midterm election rallying cry, Bono predicted. “It could be the beginning of censorship,” she said. “Anyone frustrated with the UN Security Council could take a look at this and recognize potential problems.”

Politico: [Defenders of Net transition: GOP off base](#)

By Jessica Meyers and Erin Mershon

March 17, 2014

Supporters of an Obama administration decision to untether the group that manages Internet infrastructure are challenging Republican criticism as misplaced or even politically motivated.

The Commerce Department announced Friday that it would give up oversight of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, which manages .com and other domain names, when the current contract expires in fall 2015. The decision triggered backlash from some in the GOP, who worry the move hands authoritarian countries the power to take over the Internet.

Advocates see the opposite: a necessary step toward a more global Internet and one less susceptible to strong-arming tactics.

Critics “are trying to politicize this,” said Cameron Kerry, the Commerce Department’s former general counsel and current visiting fellow at Brookings. “This is about protecting the Internet from governmental interference. And the best way to do this is to get the U.S. government out of this role.”

ICANN, a non-profit based in Los Angeles, has managed the nuts and bolts of the Internet under a long-time contract with the United States. But the U.S. role has worried countries like China and Russia, who want another organization to take ICANN’s place. They’ve tried to empower an alternative authority, the United Nations-led International Telecommunication Union.

Calls to diminish U.S. authority also have grown stronger from the European Union and other allies in the wake of last summer’s revelations about the National Security Agency’s surveillance practices.

That all has Republicans concerned. “Giving up control of ICANN will allow countries like China and Russia that don’t place the same value in freedom of speech to better define how the Internet looks and operates,” Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) said Monday. Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the House, called it “very, very dangerous.”

But Democrats and Internet experts believe the move actually lessens the power of the United Nations’ agency and makes the entire playing field more fair.

“It’s not a good news item for the ITU,” said Nick Ashton-Hart, the Geneva representative for the Computer & Communications Industry Association and a former ICANN official. “If the U.S. was to try and maintain the master key, it would have been more likely to result in the fragmentation of the Internet,” because other countries could claim a similar role.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration — the arm of the Commerce Department that made the announcement — vowed to turn down any proposal that leaves the Internet infrastructure in the hands of specific countries or groups like the ITU.

“NTIA has made it clear we will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental organization solution,” the agency’s administrator Larry Strickling reiterated Monday.

An NTIA official emphasized last week that the administration always intended to give up its oversight role, a plan outlined as early as 1998 — when the Department of Commerce first established ICANN.

If the agency hadn’t relinquished its oversight, the ITU could continue to argue that ICANN functioned as a pawn for the U.S. government, said former Rep. Rick Boucher (D-Va.), who oversaw the Energy and Commerce subcommittee with jurisdiction over ICANN. “This will reduce the level of global controversy.”

The uncertain path forward still has some in the business community concerned.

“I don’t see how the future ends up being better than the last decade of responsible stewardship by the U.S.,” said Steve DelBianco, executive director of the trade association NetChoice, which counts

Yahoo and Facebook as members. “Once the contract leverage is gone, what’s to prevent ICANN from being more significantly influenced by [specific] governments. ... The devil is in the details.”

Kerry, the former Commerce Department official, views the transition as the only option.

“There is a fundamental misunderstanding about how the Internet is run and the U.S. role in ICANN [only helped fuel] that fundamental misunderstanding,” he said. “This puts a much clearer focus on the multi-stakeholder organizations that set technical roles.”

Recode: U.S. to Give Up Key Internet Governance Role

By Amy Schatz

March 14, 2014

Obama administration officials moved late Friday to end the U.S.’s role in overseeing Internet domain names and addresses, announcing plans to relinquish its role by the end of next year and turning the keys over to the global Internet community.

Commerce department officials [announced](#) that the U.S. government would relinquish its role overseeing Internet addresses in favor of a to-be-determined global body.

The [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) has managed the use and governance of domain names and Internet addresses for the U.S. government since 1998, when it was awarded the task by the Commerce Department. Based in Los Angeles, ICANN oversees the Internet’s address system and has moved in recent years to open up new domain names.

U.S. officials originally proposed easing out of their oversight function in 1997. That move was opposed by some companies and users concerned about such key Internet functions being taken over by the United Nations or countries like China, which restrict access to information online.

The Obama administration’s move is likely to rile conservatives who have previously expressed concerns about allowing the Internet to be more heavily influenced by foreign governments or controlled by the United Nations. Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich immediately blasted the move on Twitter, saying, “Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the internet to an undefined group. This is very, very dangerous.”

U.S. officials didn’t say why they were taking the step now, but they have faced increasing pressure to give up their Internet oversight role in the wake of continuing revelations about the National Security Agency’s mass global Internet surveillance operations.

“We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan,” said Commerce Department Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information Lawrence E. Strickling, in a [statement](#).

ICANN president Fadi Chehadé applauded the move and [said](#) the organization would invite “governments, the private sector, civil society, and other Internet organizations from the whole world to join us in developing this transition process.”

Commerce Department officials indicated that they wouldn't give up oversight of ICANN to another government or "inter-governmental organization," which would include the United Nations.

Whoever takes over would be required to maintain the security and stability of the Internet domain name system, meet the needs of global customers and "maintain the openness of the Internet," according to a Commerce Department statement.

Many tech companies have been frustrated by the U.S. intelligence community's surveillance activities, and a few weighed in with cautious support of the plan Friday evening.

Vint Cerf, Google's Chief Internet Evangelist and a former member of ICANN's board, said in a statement that "the Internet was built to be borderless and this move toward a more multistakeholder model of governance creates an opportunity to preserve its security, stability and openness."

Yahoo released a statement that it was committed to keeping the Internet secure, open and free. "A more multi-stakeholder, bottom-up governance structure as outlined by the [Commerce Department] will help all parties reach this goal," a Yahoo spokeswoman said.

Meanwhile, Internet provider AT&T Inc. said in a [blog post](#) that it supports the effort and believes it will lead "to even more thoughtful discussions" about how to ensure a stable, secure open Internet. But the company added that "we are not kidding ourselves about how important and challenging this task will be."

Reuters: [U.S. government to get out of Internet naming business](#)

By Ros Krasny

March 14, 2014

A division of the U.S. Commerce Department said on Friday it would give up control of the group that manages much of the architecture of the Internet, including the parceling out of domain names.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration said in a statement it would shift those tasks to "the global multistakeholder community." NTIA's role includes administering changes to the database that contains the list of names and addresses of all so-called "top level" Internet domains, including the commonly used ".com," ".edu," ".info," and others.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a nonprofit organization, will help launch a process to transition away from the current, U.S.-government-run Internet domain name system.

"The timing is right to start the transition process," said Lawrence Strickling, U.S. assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information. "We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan."

Fadi Chehade, ICANN's chief executive officer, said it would seek input from groups including representatives from governments, the private sector and "civil society" around the world to develop the plan.

"All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and governance of this global resource as equal partners," Chehade said.

San Jose Mercury News: [What It Means For The U.S. To Hand Over Internet Governance To The World](#)

By Michelle Quinn

March 17, 2014

The reaction has been mostly positive to [news](#) that the U.S. government will relinquish its oversight of the organization that manages the Internet architecture and naming system.

But there has been some blow back from conservatives and others who say that a more international approach to Internet governance could result in ceding too much control to governments that might try to repress or control the Internet.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich sounded the alarm, [tweeting](#) that “every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the Internet to an undefined group. This is very, very dangerous.” Former Rep. Mary Bono (R-Calif.) said that the decision was “red meat for the base,” [Politico reported](#).

However, key federal lawmakers of both parties as well as tech firms such as Yahoo and Cisco have supported the move.

Late Friday, the National Telecommunications & Information Administration, the Commerce Department agency that has a contract with ICANN to manage the Internet’s naming system, said it would hand over its function to the “global Internet community.” The U.S. government’s contract with ICANN is set to expire in September 2015, [reports the Wall Street Journal](#), which has a good primer on what the decision means.

Although the U.S. rarely intervened in ICANN, there was a possibility that it could. The move is a way for the U.S. to reassure companies and governments in the wake of the national security surveillance disclosures that the oversight of the Internet architecture will not be in U.S. hands, the Journal said.

Critics raise the specter of a United Nations-style governance of the Internet, which some countries have advocated for. But U.S. government officials have rejected that model or a system that replaces the U.S. with another government.

In a statement to Silicon Beat, Lawrence E. Stricking, the assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator, said: NTIA has made it clear that it will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an inter-governmental organization solution.

Transitioning the stewardship of key Internet domain name functions to the global community of Internet stakeholders will help preserve the stability and security of the Domain Name System, upon which the Internet relies.

Techdirt: [US Relinquishing What Tiny Control It Had Of The Internet...If UN Isn't Allowed To Take Over](#)

By Mike Masnick

March 14, 2014

This was rumored for a while, but the Commerce Department has now said that it will be ["relinquishing"](#) its "control" over ICANN's IANA, which administers the basic structure of the internet domain system. You can [read the details here](#). Of course, the US government's "control" over ICANN/IANA has always been a lot more on paper than in reality. From the beginning, while the Commerce Department technically had oversight concerning ICANN, it had always been careful to live up to its promise that ICANN was to be independent of the US government. So, while some are [making a big deal](#) over this, it's unclear if it will really matter that much.

The big fear over the past few years was that certain foreign interests -- lead by authoritarian regimes in China and Russia (with long track records of censoring the internet and stifling dissent) -- would [take control of the internet](#) away from ICANN via the ITU, an organization that's a part of the UN. That was extremely problematic on a number of levels, given in part that the ITU process is entirely controlled by country governments without input from other stakeholders, such as technologists. ICANN is far from perfect ([very](#), [very](#), [very](#), [very](#), [very](#) far from perfect), but the ITU would be *significantly worse*.

However, from what's being said, it appears that the Commerce Department's plan is conditional on the UN/ITU *not getting control*, and for internet governance to remain a multi-stakeholder process, rather than one solely controlled by governments.

U.S. officials set strict conditions and an indeterminate timeline for the transition from federal government authority, saying that a new oversight body must be created and win the trust of crucial stakeholders around the world, said Lawrence Strickling, a top Commerce Department official. The announcement essentially ruled out the possibility that the United Nations would take over the U.S. role, something many nations have advocated and U.S. officials have long opposed.

That's a good thing. From what's being said, it sounds like the Commerce Department would like ICANN to continue more or less the way it has been running, just without the official claim to being overseen by the Commerce Department. Could that lead to troubles down the road? Sure. But, frankly, the US more or less forced itself into this position with its idiotic decision to let the NSA spy on everything. Before that, plenty of other countries were happy with de facto US "control" over the internet. But once it became clear just how deep the NSA's claws were within the internet, even former allies began to [demand changes](#).

While the ICANN model can be improved upon (greatly), it can also be much, much worse. So where this goes will need to be watched closely. But, on a first pass, simply taking the Commerce Department's name off of things should have little direct impact for the time being. And, of course, it's worth remembering, that before ICANN, the internet was more or less [governed \(benevolently\) by this guy](#).

The Hill: [US to relinquish control over Internet management system](#)

By Kate Tummarello

March 14, 2014

The U.S. government on Friday announced it is taking steps to relinquish control over the back end of the Internet.

The Department of Commerce announced it is beginning a process to transfer control over the technical system that operates the Internet's domain name system, which ensures that Internet users can get to the websites they're looking for.

Currently, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration — an agency with Commerce — oversees that technical system, named the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). Historically, it has contracted the operation of IANA out to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Number (ICANN) on a biennial basis. The current contract is set to expire in September of 2015.

ICANN — which contains an advisory board comprised of government representatives — also manages the system for naming domains, ensuring that each web address is registered to only one person.

"NTIA is asking ICANN to convene global stakeholders to develop a proposal to transition the current role played by NTIA," NTIA Administrator Larry Strickling said during a press call Friday. Strickling said any proposal "must have broad community support" and must be based on a multistakeholder approach to Internet governance. "It must maintain the openness of the Internet," he said. "We will not accept a proposal ... with a government led or an intergovernmental solution."

According to an NTIA official, the U.S. agency will continue overseeing IANA until the contract expires in 2015. At that point, the agency hopes to be able to transfer stewardship, the official said.

Some lawmakers and members of the tech industry have expressed concern that relinquishing control of IANA will open up the Internet to threats from other governments that seek to censor it.

While the U.S. can participate in the domain name system through ICANN's Government Advisory Council, its oversight role of IANA was the only direct link between the U.S. government and the critical Internet infrastructure.

Critics of ICANN have said that increased globalization of the domain name system could decrease the influence of the U.S. as one of the most vocal proponents of Internet freedom. Senate Commerce Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) applauded the administration's move, calling it consistent with a free and open Internet. "The U.S. has been committed to transitioning management of the Internet's domain name system to an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community," Rockefeller said in a statement.

The announcement "is beginning the process of transferring additional domain name functions to ICANN is the next phase in this transition" and is "consistent with other efforts the U.S. and our allies are making to promote a free and open Internet, and to preserve and advance the current multi-stakeholder model of global Internet governance," Rockefeller said.

Fadi Chehade, the CEO of ICANN, said during the call that his organization will bring stakeholders together to discuss a transition process for IANA during ICANN's upcoming meeting in Singapore later this month. "All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and government of this global resource as equal partners," he said. "We thank the U.S. government for its stewardship, for its guidance, over the years, and we thank them today for trusting the global community to replace their stewardship."

An NTIA official denied that the agency's move was in reaction to revelations about U.S. government surveillance programs over the last year which have sparked international criticism of America's role in Internet governance.

Chehade and Strickling both pointed to the original plans for IANA. "The U.S. government and Internet stakeholders envisioned that the U.S. role in the IANA functions would be temporary," Strickling said.

In a statement, Verizon applauded the Commerce agency's move to relinquish control over the technical system. "A successful transition in the stewardship of these important functions to the global multi-stakeholder community would be a timely and positive step in the evolution of Internet governance," Craig Silliman, senior vice president of public policy, said.

"Given the importance of the IANA functions to the stability and correct functioning of the Internet, it will be essential that a plan that preserves the security, stability, and seamless nature of the Internet be developed through a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process prior to the transition."

The Hill: [Eshoo backs Commerce decision to relinquish Internet management role](#)

By Kate Tummarello

March 18, 2014

Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) applauded the recent decision by the Obama administration to relinquish its oversight role in Internet governance.

"I've long held the belief and championed the U.S. support for the successful multistakeholder model for Internet governance," Eshoo — the leading Democrat on the House Commerce subcommittee on technology — said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration announced late last week it would be relinquishing its oversight role of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), which runs the technical side of the Internet's domain name system.

The Commerce agency said that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers — which manages the assignment of domain names and operates the technical side of the domain name system under contract with the Commerce Department — will convene Internet stakeholders to develop proposals for transitioning oversight of IANA from the U.S. government to a global entity.

Eshoo said she welcomes the transition "to a multistakeholder governance community, guided by the principles of an open, secure, stable and resilient Internet."

"Multistakeholder governance of the Internet is essential to preserving a global Internet driven by choice, competition and innovation, and making it a revolutionary tool for commerce and freedom of expression," she said.

While some have praised the Commerce agency's move as a step toward globalizing the Internet, others worry it would allow foreign governments to impose limits on the Internet.

Earlier this year, Eshoo said she would not support an Internet governance model that allowed other countries to change the open and global nature of the Internet.

The U.S. "gave birth" to the Internet, Eshoo said on an episode of C-SPAN's "The Communicators," and countries "with a different view" should not be allowed to impose restrictions.

"I don't want to go there. I don't want to see that."

The Hill: [House panel to examine Internet governance](#)

By Kate Tummarello

March 18, 2014

The House Commerce Committee will hold a hearing next month to examine the Obama administration's recent move to relinquish oversight of the technical back end of the Internet, the committee announced Tuesday.

"Changes to the current model should be approached with a cautious and careful eye," Reps. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Greg Walden (R-Ore.), chairmen of the House Commerce Committee and the Commerce Subcommittee on Technology, said in a joint statement.

The hearing comes after last week's announcement by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration that it will relinquish its oversight role of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), which manages the technical side of the Internet's domain name system.

The Commerce agency is looking to move away from the current system — under which the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) operates IANA under a contract with the U.S. government — to one where an entity run by global stakeholders has ultimate oversight over IANA.

Critics of the decision to relinquish its oversight role say the Commerce agency is giving foreign governments a chance to seize control of the Internet, while supporters say the move will lead to a more globalized Internet.

Walden and Upton said they "welcome a thoughtful discussion amongst Internet stakeholders" but "have many questions, and look forward to a thorough examination" during a hearing set to take place during the first week in April.

"The Internet changed the world, and we must ensure the world does not change the Internet," which "has thrived across the globe under the existing multi-stakeholder effort, and should serve as a guide for the future," the pair said.

Some members of the committee have already expressed vocal support and opposition to the Commerce agency's announcement.

Committee Vice Chairman Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) said on Monday that the move is "another hostile step by the administration" that threatens free speech.

On the other hand, Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) applauded the Commerce agency, saying that global management of the Internet by stakeholders "is essential to preserving a global Internet driven by choice, competition and innovation, and making it a revolutionary tool for commerce and freedom of expression."

The New York Times: [U.S. to Cede Its Oversight of Addresses on Internet](#)

By Edward Wyatt

March 14, 2014

The United States [will give up its role](#) overseeing the system of Web addresses and domain names that form the basic plumbing of the Internet, turning it over in 2015 to an international group whose structure and administration will be determined over the next year, government officials said on Friday.

Since the dawn of the Internet, the United States has been responsible for assigning the numbers that form Internet addresses, the .com, .gov and .org labels that correspond to those numbers, and for the vast database that links the two and makes sure Internet traffic goes to the right place.

The function has been subcontracted since 1998 to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or Iann, an international nonprofit organization, with the expectation that the United States would eventually step back from its role.

But that transition has taken on a new urgency in the last year because of revelations that the United States intelligence community, particularly the National Security Agency, has been intercepting Internet traffic as part of its global spying efforts.

While other countries have called for the United States to turn over the keys to the system, many businesses around the world, dependent on the smooth functioning of the Internet for their livelihood, have expressed concern about what form the new organization will take. "We don't want to break the Internet," said Laura DeNardis, a professor at American University and the author of "The Global War for Internet Governance," a recent book on the subject.

For consumers who use the Internet to stream movies or send email, nothing will change, if everything goes according to plan. "We want to carefully transition to something that doesn't just give the power to one stakeholder, but that takes into account the interests of private industry, of large users of the Internet, of the purchasers of domain names, of governments and of civil society," Ms. DeNardis said.

Lawrence E. Strickling, the assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information, said on Friday that the United States would not accept a proposal that replaced it with a government-led or intergovernmental organization. The Commerce Department also laid out principles that must govern any new body, including maintaining the openness of the Internet and maintaining its security and stability.

Icann will conduct a meeting that will be the first step in the transition process, beginning March 23 in Singapore. “We are inviting governments, the private sector, civil society and other Internet organizations from the whole world to join us in developing this transition process,” said Fadi Chehadé, the president and chief executive of Icann. “All stakeholders deserve a voice in the management and governance of this global resource as equal partners.”

While the announcements were structured to portray a cooperative global community, there has been widespread hostility toward the United States since the former National Security Agency contractor Edward J. Snowden began releasing documents showing the extent of United States global spying.

Those spying programs had nothing to do with the role of the United States or Icann in administering Internet addresses. But the perception that the United States was pulling all the strings led to a global uproar.

President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil canceled a planned visit to the United States last year and called the activities “an assault on national sovereignty and individual rights” and “incompatible with relations between friendly nations.”

Brazil also announced it would host Net Mundial, a global meeting on Internet governance, in April in São Paulo to discuss the coming transition. But by announcing its plans before the Brazil meeting, “the U.S. is trying to make sure the transition happens on its own terms, and that the U.S. is setting the rules for the transition,” said Greg Shatan, a partner at the law firm Reed Smith in New York.

With its statement that no government-led organization would take over Icann, the United States also made clear that the International Telecommunication Union, a United Nations affiliate that oversees global telephone traffic, would not be allowed to take over Internet governance. That was an issue last year at an I.T.U. conference in Dubai. Ms. DeNardis said that a key to a new governance structure would be to keep in place the expertise that currently allows the Internet to function smoothly. “It is very easy to take the stability of the Internet for granted,” she said.

The New York Times: [Updating Internet Governance](#) (Editorial)
March 18, 2014

The technical business of managing Internet addresses and domain names has often taken on geopolitical overtones. About a year ago, some countries including Russia and China tried to [pressure](#) the United States into relinquishing management and coordination of web addresses to the telecommunications arm of the United Nations.

The Internet’s domain name system, which provides unique identifiers to websites, has served the world well. It has made it possible for people to find sites no matter where they are. That is why efforts to change the system — managed by a nonprofit organization under a contract from the Department of Commerce — should be viewed skeptically, particularly when they come from governments that do not respect the freedom of expression.

To critics of the United States, American oversight of the system has become a pretext to demand change, and even more so in light of Edward Snowden’s revelations about government surveillance. But many of the ideas proposed by other countries are potentially troubling. Handing control of the system to [the International Telecommunication Union](#), a United Nations agency, as China and Russia

proposed in late 2012, could create an opening for countries to try and squelch speech by, for example, demanding that dissident websites not be allowed to register domain names.

In an effort to ensure that the administration of Internet addresses is never politicized in that way, the Commerce Department last week [said](#) that, starting in September 2015, it would hand oversight of the domain name system to a global community of businesses, public interest groups, academics, businesses and governments. It has not said how this large, and potentially unwieldy, group would conduct its activities. But department officials have said that they intend to make sure that no harm comes to the openness, security and stability that are essential to the functioning of the Internet.

Details of the change will be worked out in the coming months in discussions [convened by](#) the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the contractor that manages the address system for the Commerce Department. The first meeting is scheduled to take place in [Singapore](#) next week. The department has said it will not support any change that would replace the current system with a government-led or intergovernmental body.

From its [early days](#) as a network built and used by American government and university scientists, the Internet has evolved into a vital utility used by billions of people around the world. What's needed now is a clear examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the current system of Internet addresses and how it can be made better.

TR Daily: NTIA, ICANN Launch Process for U.S. to Step Aside from IANA Oversight

By Lynn Stanton (Subscription Only)

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration said today that it is taking the first step in its long-standing plan to end its role in overseeing the Internet Assigned Names Authority (IANA) function of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

To that end, NTIA said it was asking ICANN to bring stakeholders together to develop a plan for the transition. The process will begin with a public consultation at ICANN's public meeting in Singapore the week of [March 23](#). NTIA's current contract with IANA expires in September 2015, but an NTIA official emphasized that nothing in the agency's role in overseeing the IANA function would change until an acceptable transition plan is in place.

NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling told reporters that NTIA will expect the transition proposal to "support and enhance the multistakeholder model"; maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the domain name system (DNS); "meet the needs and expectation of the global customers and partners of the IANA services"; and "maintain the openness of the Internet." Mr. Strickling also said that NTIA will not accept a proposal that would replace the U.S. with another government or governments. An NTIA official elaborated that an acceptable proposal would not give governments a position that excludes other stakeholders.

ICANN President and Chief Executive Officer Fadi Chehadé said that "the global community will be included in the process" of developing a transition proposal. The NTIA official rejected the idea that the announcement was related to concerns about the U.S. role in Internet governance in the wake of revelations about U.S. communications surveillance, saying that the announcement instead was spurred by improvements in ICANN's accountability to global stakeholders and recent growing acceptance of a multistakeholder in developing countries.

NTIA noted in a press release that a 1998 Commerce Department policy statement said that the U.S. Government was “committed to a transition that will allow the private sector to take leadership for DNS management.”

“Even though ICANN will continue to perform these vital technical functions, the U.S. has long envisioned the day when stewardship over them would be transitioned to the global community,” said ICANN Chairman Stephen Crocker. “In other words, we have all long known the destination. Now it is up to our global stakeholder community to determine the best route to get us there.”

In a joint statement, Internet-related organizations including the Internet Society (ISOC), the Internet Engineering Task Force, and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) welcomed the announcement. “The transition of the US Government stewardship has been envisaged since the early days of IANA functions contract. This transition is now feasible due to the maturity of the Internet technical organizations involved in performing their respective roles related to the IANA functions, and ICANN will facilitate a global, multi-stakeholder process to plan for the transition,” they said.

The groups added, “Our organizations are committed to open and transparent multi-stakeholder processes. We are also committed to further strengthening our processes and agreements related to the IANA functions, and to building on the existing organizations and their roles. The Internet technical community is strong enough to continue its role, while assuming the stewardship function as it transitions from the U.S. government.”

Other organizations joining in the statement included the Internet Architecture Board, the African Top Level Domains Organization, the African Network Information Center, the Asia-Pacific Network Information Centre, the Asia-Pacific Top Level Domain Association, the American Registry for Internet Numbers, the Council for European National Top Level Domain Registries, the Latin America and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry, the Latin American and Caribbean TLD Association, and the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre.

Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John D. (Jay) Rockefeller IV (D., W.Va.) responded to the announcement by saying, “The Internet was invented and developed in the U.S., and it has completely transformed the way people communicate and do business in every corner of the world. Since 1998, the U.S. has been committed to transitioning management of the Internet’s domain name system to an independent entity that reflects the broad diversity of the global Internet community. NTIA’s announcement today that it is beginning the process of transferring additional domain name functions to ICANN is the next phase in this transition. It is also consistent with other efforts the U.S. and our allies are making to promote a free and open Internet, and to preserve and advance the current multi-stakeholder model of global Internet governance.”

Washington Post: [U.S. to relinquish remaining control over the Internet](#)

By Craig Timberg

March 14, 2014

U.S. officials announced plans Friday to relinquish federal government control over the administration of the Internet, a move that pleased international critics but alarmed some business leaders and others who rely on the smooth functioning of the Web.

Pressure to let go of the final vestiges of U.S. authority over the system of Web addresses and domain names that organize the Internet has been building for more than a decade and was supercharged by the backlash last year to revelations about National Security Agency surveillance.

The change would end the long-running contract between the Commerce Department and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a California-based nonprofit group. That contract is set to expire next year but could be extended if the transition plan is not complete.

“We look forward to ICANN convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan,” Lawrence E. Strickling, assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information, said in a statement.

The announcement received a passionate response, with some groups quickly embracing the change and others blasting it. In a statement, Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John D. Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.) called the move “consistent with other efforts the U.S. and our allies are making to promote a free and open Internet, and to preserve and advance the current multi-stakeholder model of global Internet governance.”

But former House speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) tweeted: “What is the global internet community that Obama wants to turn the internet over to? This risks foreign dictatorships defining the internet.”

The practical consequences of the decision were harder to immediately discern, especially with the details of the transition not yet clear. Politically, the move could alleviate rising global concerns that the United States essentially controls the Web and takes advantage of its oversight position to help spy on the rest of the world. U.S. officials set several conditions and an indeterminate timeline for the transition from federal government authority, saying a new oversight system must be developed and win the trust of crucial stakeholders around the world. An international meeting to discuss the future of Internet is scheduled to start on March 23 in Singapore.

The move’s critics called the decision hasty and politically tinged, and voiced significant doubts about the fitness of ICANN to operate without U.S. oversight and beyond the bounds of U.S. law. “This is a purely political bone that the U.S. is throwing,” said [Garth Bruen](#), a security fellow at the Digital Citizens Alliance, a Washington-based advocacy group that combats online crime. “ICANN has made a lot of mistakes, and ICANN has not really been a good steward.”

Business groups and some others have long complained that ICANN’s decision-making was dominated by the interests of the [industry that sells domain names](#) and whose fees provide the vast majority of ICANN’s revenue. The U.S. government contract was a modest check against such abuses, critics said. “It’s inconceivable that ICANN can be accountable to the whole world. That’s the equivalent of being accountable to no one,” said Steve DelBianco, executive director of NetChoice, a trade group representing major Internet commerce businesses.

U.S. officials said their decision had nothing to do with the NSA spying revelations and the worldwide controversy they sparked, saying there had been plans since ICANN’s creation in 1998 to eventually migrate it to international control. “The timing is now right to start this transition both because ICANN as an organization has matured, and international support continues to grow for the multistakeholder model of Internet governance,” Strickling said in a statement.

Although ICANN is based in Southern California, governments worldwide have a say in the group's decisions through an oversight body. ICANN in 2009 made an "Affirmation of Commitments" to the Commerce Department that covers several key issues.

Fadi Chehade, president of ICANN, disputed many of the complaints about the transition plan and promised an open, inclusive process to find a new international oversight structure for the group. "Nothing will be done in any way to jeopardize the security and stability of the Internet," he said. The United States has long maintained authority over elements of the Internet, which grew from a Defense Department program that started in the 1960s. The relationship between the United States and ICANN has drawn wider international criticism in recent years, in part because big American companies such as Google, Facebook and Microsoft play such a central role in the Internet's worldwide functioning. The NSA revelations exacerbated those concerns.

"This is a step in the right direction to resolve important international disputes about how the Internet is governed," said Gene Kimmelman, president of Public Knowledge, a group that promotes open access to the Internet.

Verizon, one of the world's biggest Internet providers, issued a statement saying, "A successful transition in the stewardship of these important functions to the global multi-stakeholder community would be a timely and positive step in the evolution of Internet governance."

ICANN's most important function is to oversee the assigning of Internet domains — such as dot-com, dot-edu and dot-gov — and ensure that the various companies and universities involved in directing digital traffic do so safely.

Concern about ICANN's stewardship has spiked in recent years amid a [massive and controversial expansion](#) that is adding hundreds of new domains, such as dot-book, dot-gay and dot-sucks, to the Internet's infrastructure. More than 1,000 new domains are slated to be made available, pumping far more fee revenue into ICANN. Major corporations have complained, however, that con artists already swarm the Internet with phony Web sites designed to look like the authentic offerings of respected brands.

"To set ICANN so-called free is a very major step that should done with careful oversight," said Dan Jaffe, executive vice president of the Association of National Advertisers. "We would be very concerned about that step."

Wall Street Journal: [U.S. Plans to Give Up Oversight of Web Domain Manager](#)

By Gautham Nagesh

March 14, 2014

The U.S. government plans to give up control over the body that manages Internet names and addresses, a move that could bring more international cooperation over management of the Web, but will make some U.S. businesses nervous.

The Commerce Department said Friday it plans to relinquish its oversight of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or Iann, which manages a number of technical functions that serve as signposts to help computers locate the correct servers and websites.

The action is viewed as a response to increasing international concern about U.S. control over the Internet's structure, particularly in light of the recent disclosures about surveillance by the NSA and other U.S. intelligence agencies.

Other governments have complained that the department's contract with Icaann gives the U.S. unique influence over the Web, which it could use for a wide variety of purposes. In response to those concerns, the Obama administration is convening a process to create a new oversight structure for Icaann when the current contract runs out in September 2015. Alan Marcus, senior director of the World Economic Forum, said "the NSA tarnished the U.S. stewardship" of the Web. Mr. Marcus said the U.S. needs to relinquish control over the Web before new leadership can emerge. "There are real issues that get clouded" by U.S. leadership, he said.

The action had been debated among technologists and policy makers, but the prospect of the U.S. relinquishing control concerns some businesses because of the potential for censorship. "If you hand over domain-name registration to someone who doesn't want certain classes of domains registered, then you're setting up a censorship structure," said Bill Reinsch, president of the National Foreign Trade Council, which represents businesses.

In recent years U.S. policy makers have pushed back against calls from nations including China and Russia for the U.N. and ITU to have a greater role in overseeing the structure of the Web. U.S. officials have previously argued that such an arrangement would lead to the repression of free speech and the Balkanization of the Internet. "We thank the U.S. government for its stewardship, its guidance over the years. We thank them today for trusting the global community to replace this stewardship with the appropriate accountability mechanisms," Icaann CEO Fadi Chehadé said.

Icaann will launch the process later this month at Singapore event and collect input throughout the year, with an aim of having the new governance structure completed by September 2015 when the existing contract with the Commerce Department expires. Anyone with an interest in how the Internet is managed is invited to take part.

According to Larry Strickling, administrator for the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration the new governance model must ensure that Icaann is free from government influence. The plan must also fulfill several other conditions, such as preserving the security and stability of the Internet while keeping it open and free from censorship.

Until 1998, the functions were managed by Jon Postel, a computer scientist at the University of Southern California, one of the early pioneers of the World Wide Web. Upon Postel's death in 1998, the Commerce Department issued a contract to Icaann to take over those functions, making Icaann the primary body in charge of setting policy for Internet domains and addresses.

Mr. Strickling said the U.S. always viewed its role as overseeing Icaann as temporary. "The Internet was built to be borderless and this move toward a more multistakeholder model of governance creates an opportunity to preserve its security, stability and openness," said Vint Cerf, Google vice president and chief Internet evangelist, in a statement. Some Silicon Valley executives support the move, which they view as inevitable in light of the concerns over the NSA disclosures. "I'm not sure they have any choice," said Peter Schwartz, senior vice president of global government relations for software maker Salesforce.com Inc., who heard a presentation from Icaann Thursday in Silicon Valley. "They're better off getting out ahead of it."

Wall Street Journal: [ICANN 101: Who Will Oversee the Internet?](#)

By Gautham Nagesh

March 17, 2014

The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration said Friday it plans to give up control over the body that manages Internet names and addresses. The action means that the [U.S. government will relinquish its oversight](#) of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, which manages a number of technical functions that help computers locate the correct servers and websites. Here are some basics of what's happening.

What is ICANN? It is the nonprofit organization that's in charge of handing out domain names and Web addresses for the entire Internet. They've been handling those duties since 1998.

How did the U.S. get oversight of it in the first place? The Internet was pioneered in the U.S., and for a long time the folks that helped invent it were also in charge of managing it. Until 1998, a computer scientist named **Jon Postel** at the University of Southern California managed a host of functions related to Internet names and addresses, collectively known as IANA (Internet Assigned Names Authority). When Mr. Postel died in 1998, the Commerce Department issued a contract to ICANN to manage the IANA functions.

How soon is oversight of ICANN going to change? The IANA contract between the Commerce Department and ICANN is set to expire in September 2015. The hope is to have a new governance plan in place by then, so the contract can expire without needing to renew it.

What happens after that? ICANN will be subject to some new form of multistakeholder oversight, possibly a new organization assembled from the various international bodies that have an interest in how the Internet is managed.

Will this mean that we have a multilateral body like the United Nations controlling the Internet? In short, no. **Larry Strickling**, head of the Commerce Department agency that oversees ICANN, said a main objective for the U.S. is to make sure that NTIA isn't replaced by the U.N. or another governmental organization. Mr. Strickling said he's confident that a solution can be reached; the implication is that the U.S. is not going to back out unless it's sure another government-led organization isn't going to take its place.

Should we be worried about censorship? Most stakeholders don't believe that releasing ICANN from the Commerce Department's contract will lead to censorship, but down the road there will likely be debates about things like copyright and spam, and whether they should be policed as part of the domain name system. Censorship would inevitably be part of those debates.

Will I see a change in how the Internet operates? In the short term, no. Longer term, a more internationally-focused ICANN could perhaps have different priorities, but it's difficult to predict what those would be.

What effect will this have on U.S. businesses? In the short term, there shouldn't be any effect. In the future, there may be changes to how ICANN selects and distributes top-level domain names like .com and .music, but for now, things should stay largely the same.

So why is this happening? Couldn't they just leave things the way they were? The main goal is to reassure other countries that the U.S. isn't secretly controlling the structure of the Internet. To the extent American businesses have been damaged by the [Edward Snowden](#) disclosures, especially those offering cloud and other online services, this is a move aimed at repairing the relationship between the U.S. and other countries on Internet issues.

Make no mistake, this is a concession by the U.S. While the Commerce Department rarely intervened publicly in ICANN's affairs, the implicit threat of its ability to do so will be gone. That could have an unforeseen impact in the future, particularly if cyberweapons continue to play a larger role in military and counter-intelligence activities.

Wall Street Journal: [U.S. Plan for Web Faces Credibility Issue](#)

By Gautham Nagesh

March 18, 2014

The Commerce Department's decision to step back from its supervision of an Internet policy-making body is an attempt by the U.S. to prove it is serious about Internet freedom at a time when its credibility on the issue is suffering.

The U.S. government said Friday it wants to transition away from its relationship with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or Icann—the organization that manages Internet names and addresses—to a multilateral structure where engineers, nonprofits and other stakeholders make decisions about how the Internet is managed. The move is an attempt to prove the U.S. is serious about preventing governments from censoring or interfering with the Internet.

But selling this vision abroad won't be an easy task. The U.S. government's standing on Internet freedom issues has eroded following disclosures by former [National Security Agency](#) contractor [Edward Snowden](#) regarding surveillance by the NSA.

Some observers believe Russia and other nations will use the NSA reports to justify a greater government control of the Internet at a series of conventions this year, starting with the Icann meeting in Singapore next week. Robert McDowell, a former Federal Communications Commissioner, said on Monday there is more support for Russia's position than there has been in recent years. Other countries have complained that the NSA disclosures show the U.S. has unique control over the structure of the Internet.

As recently as 2012, the U.S. and its allies resisted calls for greater oversight of the Internet by the International Telecommunication Union, part of the United Nations. Mr. McDowell said he expects a similar push this year, first at the NetMundial conference on Internet governance in São Paulo next month, and especially at the ITU constitutional convention in South Korea in October.

"In all honesty, the Ukraine, Crimea, and the Internet all have something in common: Vladimir Putin would like to control them," said Mr. McDowell, a Republican. "The Snowden revelations came at the worst possible moment for determining the fate of Internet governance."

Since 1998, the Commerce Department has held a contract with Icann to manage the domain names and IP addresses that serve as signposts on the Internet, which must be renewed every three years.

On Friday officials said Commerce would start a process to end its oversight of the domain name system when the current contract expires in September 2015.

Currently, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in the Commerce Department has oversight of the Ican contract, approving all changes to the Internet's root directory, which is managed by [VeriSign](#) Inc. Commerce Department officials say the government's involvement in the process is largely perfunctory at this point: the U.S. simply rubber-stamps changes proposed by Ican's policy-making process, then instructs VeriSign to implement them.

"The U.S. government performs admirably in this role and it is important that any new oversight mechanism performs as reliably and consistently," said Kurt Pritz of the Domain Name Association, which represents top-level domain holders and registrars internationally.

A Commerce official said the U.S. would continue to strongly resist any attempt by the ITU or international governments to play a stronger role in Internet governance.

Mr. McDowell said the U.S. has until September of next year to cancel the transition process and maintain the status quo, if the ITU attempts a power grab in Seoul. "This transition plan does not presuppose any change to Ican's incorporation status. Any potential future arrangements would have to ensure adequate legal protections to be acceptable to the Ican community," an NTIA spokeswoman said when asked if Ican planned to remain in the U.S.

Despite the concerns, most stakeholders appeared to welcome Friday's announcement. Several telecom companies praised the U.S. move, while Silicon Valley executives suggested it was inevitable after the disclosures by Mr. Snowden.

Syracuse University professor Milton Mueller, a critic of government involvement in the Internet, said he welcomed the move, but remains concerned about Ican accumulating too much influence through the process. "There is a danger, if we do this wrong and throw it all in Ican's hands, that they become an autonomous organization that really controls policy making and implementation of the root." Mr. Mueller said. "That makes them really hard to control."

Wall Street Journal: [America's Internet Surrender](#) (Opinion)

By L. Gordon Crovitz (*Former WSJ publisher, currently writes their Information Age column*)
March 18, 2014

The Internet is often described as a miracle of self-regulation, which is almost true. The exception is that the United States government has had ultimate control from the beginning. Washington has used this oversight only to ensure that the Internet runs efficiently and openly, without political pressure from any country.

This was the happy state of affairs until last Friday, when the Obama administration made the surprise announcement it will relinquish its oversight of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or Ican, which assigns and maintains domain names and Web addresses for the Internet. Russia, China and other authoritarian governments have already been working to redesign the Internet more to their liking, and now they will no doubt leap to fill the power vacuum caused by America's unilateral retreat.

Why would the U.S. put the open Internet at risk by ceding control over Icann? Administration officials deny that the move is a sop to critics of the National Security Agency's global surveillance. But many foreign leaders have invoked the [Edward Snowden](#) leaks as reason to remove U.S. control—even though surveillance is an entirely separate topic from Internet governance.

According to the administration's announcement, the Commerce Department will not renew its agreement with Icann, which dates to 1998. This means, effective next year, the U.S. will no longer oversee the "root zone file," which contains all names and addresses for websites world-wide. If authoritarian regimes in Russia, China and elsewhere get their way, domains could be banned and new ones not approved for meddlesome groups such as Ukrainian-independence organizations or Tibetan human-rights activists.

Until late last week, other countries knew that Washington would use its control over Icann to block any such censorship. The U.S. has protected engineers and other nongovernment stakeholders so that they can operate an open Internet. Authoritarian regimes from Moscow to Damascus have cut off their own citizens' Internet access, but the regimes have been unable to undermine general access to the Internet, where no one needs any government's permission to launch a website. The Obama administration has now endangered that hallmark of Internet freedom.

The U.S. role in protecting the open Internet is similar to its role enforcing freedom of the seas. The U.S. has used its power over the Internet exclusively to protect the interconnected networks from being closed off, just as the U.S. Navy protects sea lanes. Imagine the alarm if America suddenly announced that it would no longer patrol the world's oceans.

The Obama administration's move could become a political issue in the U.S. as people realize the risks to the Internet. And Congress may have the ability to force the White House to drop its plan: The general counsel of the Commerce Department opined in 2000 that because there were no imminent plans to transfer the Icann contract, "we have not devoted the possibly substantial staff resources that would be necessary to develop a legal opinion as to whether legislation would be necessary to do so."

Until recently, Icann's biggest controversy was its business practice of creating many new domains beyond the familiar .com and .org to boost its revenues. Internet guru Esther Dyson, the founding chairwoman of Icann (1998-2000), has objected to the imposition of these unnecessary costs on businesses and individuals. That concern pales beside the new worries raised by the prospect of Icann leaving Washington's capable hands. "In the end," Ms. Dyson told me in an interview this week, "I'd rather pay a spurious tax to people who want my money than see [Icann] controlled by entities who want my silence."

Icann has politicized itself in the past year by lobbying to end U.S. oversight, using the Snowden leaks as a lever. The Icann chief executive, Fadi Chehadé, last fall called for a global Internet conference in April to be hosted by Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff. Around that time, Ms. Rousseff, who garnered headlines by canceling a White House state dinner with President Obama, reportedly to protest NSA surveillance of her and her countrymen, also denounced U.S. spying in a speech at the United Nations. Mr. Chehadé said of the speech: "She spoke for all of us that day."

The Obama administration has played into the hands of authoritarian regimes. In 2011, [Vladimir Putin](#)—who, as Russia took over Crimea in recent days, shut down many online critics and independent media—set a goal of "international control over the Internet."

In the past few years, Russia and China have used a U.N. agency called the International Telecommunication Union to challenge the open Internet. They have lobbied for the ITU to replace Washington as the Iann overseer. They want the ITU to outlaw anonymity on the Web (to make identifying dissidents easier) and to add a fee charged to providers when people gain access to the Web "internationally"—in effect, a tax on U.S.-based sites such as [Google](#) and [Facebook](#). The unspoken aim is to discourage global Internet companies from giving everyone equal access.

The Obama administration was caught flat-footed at an ITU conference in 2012 stage-managed by authoritarian governments. Google organized an online campaign against the ITU, getting three million people to sign a petition saying that "a free and open world depends on a free and open web." Former Obama aide Andrew McLaughlin proposed abolishing the ITU, calling it "the chosen vehicle for regimes for whom the free and open Internet is seen as an existential threat." Congress unanimously opposed any U.N. control over the Internet.

But it was too late: By a vote of 89-55, countries in the ITU approved a new treaty granting authority to governments to close off their citizens' access to the global Internet. This treaty, which goes into effect next year, legitimizes censorship of the Web and the blocking of social media. In effect, a digital Iron Curtain will be imposed, dividing the 425,000 global routes of the Internet into less technically resilient pieces.

The ITU is now a lead candidate to replace the U.S. in overseeing Iann. The Commerce Department says it doesn't want to transfer responsibility to the ITU or other governments, but has suggested no alternative. Iann's CEO, Mr. Chehadé, told reporters after the Obama administration's announcement that U.S. officials are "not saying that they'd exclude governments—governments are welcome, all governments are welcome."

Ms. Dyson calls U.N. oversight a "fate worse than death" for the Internet.

The alternative to control over the Internet by the U.S. is not the elimination of any government involvement. It is, rather, the involvement of many other governments, some authoritarian, at the expense of the U.S. Unless the White House plan is reversed, Washington will hand the future of the Web to the majority of countries in the world already on record hoping to close the open Internet.

Washington Times: [Obama's great Internet giveaway to ICANN](#) (Editorial)

March 17, 2014

Open communication on the Internet has allowed free men and women to paint the globe with the liberating message of democracy. Tyrants, despots and charlatans, large and small, understand they can no longer get away with concealing the truth as they once did. The Net spreads Western values, culture and language throughout the world. This gives the internationalists, such as President Obama, severe heartburn.

The [Commerce Department](#) announced late on Friday, the usual time the government agencies release news that it doesn't want anybody to see, that it would relinquish control of the Internet domain name servers, essentially the Internet's phone book, to a multinational body known as the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#), or [ICANN](#).

“We look forward to [ICANN](#) convening stakeholders across the global Internet community to craft an appropriate transition plan,” says Assistant Secretary of Commerce [Lawrence E. Strickling](#). The [U.S. government](#) has until now retained control over this essential function because the Internet is a U.S. creation. [Al Gore](#) claimed paternity, but it was actually a combination of government researchers and academics who developed the concept in the 1960s, built it, and opened it to widespread public use in the 1990s. [Congress](#) was very clear in establishing a “hands-off” policy from the very beginning, exempting the Internet from regulation by the [Federal Communications Commission](#) in 1996 and several times knocking down the idea of discriminatory Internet taxes. Those protections are less effective if the United States no longer holds the keys to the Internet.

Although [ICANN](#), the international body that is to take over, is a private organization, it is subject to enormous influence from other nations that had nothing to do developing the Internet and do not share or tolerate democratic values. [ICANN](#) has already displayed an ambition to undermine the Western character of the system. Under the hood of the Internet, the instruction manuals are all in English. The programming language of the World Wide Web is English. This has greatly strengthened the position of English as the lingua franca of the digital age, but [ICANN](#) has been trying to undo this and Balkanize the online community. Four years ago, it began moving toward allowing top-level Internet addresses to appear in Arabic script, unreadable to Western eyes. This is the change that divides, rather than unifies.

Some nations upset with [National Security Agency \(NSA\)](#) snooping applaud the Obama administration for relinquishing U.S. dominance over the Internet as if this will hinder Internet surveillance. It won't. The [NSA](#) has tapped into the network backbone and inserted its digital bugs into Facebook, Google, Twitter and every other popular online destination. The [NSA](#) doesn't care about the Fourth Amendment, and it won't stop eavesdropping just because U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon tells it to knock it off. It's rarely a good idea to put the federal government in charge of anything, but this is a rare case in which the feds have a track record as responsible stewards — for a reason.

As House speaker, [Newt Gingrich](#) set the tone for the hands-off-the-Internet approach in [Congress](#). He has a new warning now. “Every American should worry about Obama giving up control of the Internet to an undefined group,” he says. “This is very, very dangerous.” The United States owes nothing to “international stakeholders” who are determined to make the Internet look more like the United Nations.

U.S. News & World Report: [The U.S. Gives the Internet to the World](#)

By Tom Risen

March 17, 2014

The U.S. will give away the only part of the Internet that any country owns by [passing control](#) of the domain name system to a global multi-stakeholder group in 2015, taking a step to ensure that the world's networks remain free and open for all.

Since 1997, the Commerce Department has controlled the root server for the domain name system, a digital directory that tells your computer where to go when you type in a Web address, including “.gov” or “.edu,” giving the U.S. potential - if hazy - ownership rights to the Internet. The U.S. also created the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, in 1998 to keep the management of networks in the hands of a private sector system of committees representing multiple stakeholder including companies, academics and governments. The U.S. government will work with

ICANN ahead of the lapse of the current contract in 2015 to ensure management of the Internet is fully privatized, said Lawrence Strickling, assistant secretary of commerce for communications and information, in a release.

During the past decade, governments around the world have increasingly questioned whether regulations should be added to the Internet, particularly in 2013 at the International Telecommunications Union, which has traditionally regulated telephones and satellite orbits for the United Nations. Nations including Russia and China supported adding regulatory power over the Internet, but the U.S. helped gather a coalition of nations to oppose that step. The Internet worked well under the management of ICANN, developing into a marketplace for trade, innovation and ideas free of government regulations or restrictions on free speech, the U.S. and its allies stated.

Whatever the differences at home about antitrust regulation of broadband traffic via net neutrality or surveillance of networks via spy agencies, Republicans and Democrats were united in agreement that the ITU should not regulate the Internet. That's why the NTIA "will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental organization solution," said a news release from the agency. High-profile Republicans have already taken the Obama administration to task for "giving up control of the Internet," as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich put it in a series of tweets Friday following the announcement.

The U.S. is giving away a potential global advantage by ceding these ownership rights, but it is a key moment in the evolution of Internet governance that will give strength to America's global standing, said Milton Mueller, a professor at Syracuse University School of Information Studies, in a statement. "We have just made it a lot harder for opponents of a free and open Internet to pretend that what they are really against is an Internet dominated by one hegemonic state," said Mueller, author of "Ruling the Root: Internet Governance and the Taming of Cyberspace."

"We have also made it harder for anyone to complain that multi-stakeholder governance is just a fig leaf for U.S. pre-eminence," he added. Mueller and others will [propose](#) roadmaps to fully privatize Internet governance during a meeting of ICANN on March 23 in Singapore.

The U.S. will still have a significant edge on the global tech industry as the home of Silicon Valley companies - and to a large chunk of the data centers storing backup information for those Web giants. Pressure from the United Nations, led by nations including Brazil and Germany, is also pushing the U.S. to step up privatization of the Internet. Both Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and German Chancellor Angela Merkel denounced the U.S. following reports that the National Security Agency spied on their personal communications. Diplomats from Germany and Brazil also pushed the U.N. General Assembly's human rights committee to pass a [resolution](#) called "the right to privacy in the digital age," which does not mention the NSA or any agency but takes aim at the "negative impact" of mass surveillance.

The ICANN model keeps government representatives as equal partners with committees from other stakeholders including civil rights advocates, businesses and technicians. The future success of the Internet depends on maintaining that power sharing as the U.S. shifts domain system stewardship to the private sector, said a [blog post](#) from Len Cali, a spokesman for AT&T. "We are not kidding ourselves about how important and challenging this task will be," Cali said.

Yahoo!: No, the U.S. Isn't Really Giving Up the Internet - It Doesn't Own It Anyway

By Rob Pegoraro
March 18, 2014

The United States' National Telecommunications and Information Administration [announced Friday evening](#) that it would hand over its limited oversight of the Internet's domain-name system to an undefined, new decision-making process.

Clearly, then, we're giving up on U.S. oversight of the Internet, and our government is hiding the fact by making the announcement on a Friday night.

"If there's a 5:00 on Friday news dump, you'd better be concerned. Keep the Internet!" [tweeted](#) former Republican Rep. Mary Bono. She [had company](#) in that assessment, as a variety of other GOPers denounced the proposal.

The idea of surrendering American control over one of the best things ever made in America isn't something to take lightly. Taken to an extreme, it suggests we've jacked into a future where Vladimir Putin deletes the registration for usa.gov (presumably while being whisked somewhere in a black helicopter).

But, surprise, last Friday's announcement doesn't mean that. It's not even new. The U.S. began moving in this direction [back in 1997](#), then reaffirmed it [in 1998](#) when it transferred domain-name management duties to a Los Angeles-based nonprofit called the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#).

Ever since, it's been ICANN calling the shots over the machinery that assigns domain names like yahoo.com. It's also ICANN that decides whether to create new [top-level domains](#) such as ".biz," ".info," and maybe someday [".sucks."](#)

The government's remaining responsibility has essentially been OK'ing ICANN's proposed changes to the ["root zone" of the domain name system](#)—the beating heart of the mechanism that routes Internet requests for particular site names that humans can read to numerical Internet Protocol addresses like "206.190.36.45," which computers understand. "Our role has always been a clerical, administrative role to make sure the system worked," said an NTIA official Monday afternoon.

In [2006](#), the government confirmed once again its intention to hand over that role to the global Internet community. Friday's news amounts to the feds saying, "The last two administrations weren't kidding. We still mean it."

So what has changed to make this news look so loaded in some quarters? Some blame goes to the absurd level of inter-party hostility in Washington, and in particular the ["if the Obama administration wants this, it must be wrong"](#) school of thinking. But responsibility can be found all around Washington.

Foolish, failed attempts to rewrite the Internet's core code to stop pornography ([the Communications Decency Act](#)) and copyright infringement (the [Stop Online Piracy Act](#)) were bipartisan offenses. The NSA's bulk surveillance and efforts to weaken Internet-security standards also had support in both parties.

All those things seem to have led to a general suspicion of any government-instigated change to the Internet—even if that change is to reduce government’s role in the Internet.

And then something called “WCIT” happened. At the 12th annual [World Conference on International Telecommunications](#) in Dubai two Decembers ago, other countries teamed up with the [International Telecommunications Union](#) to try to place Internet governance under that United Nations body.

The U.S. and like-minded countries balked at that and finally [walked out of WCIT](#). Friday’s announcement from the NTIA included this pointed deal-breaker: “NTIA will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an inter-governmental organization solution.”

What next, instead? That’s an outstanding question. The idea is to turn supervision of ICANN over to a “multi-stakeholder process” involving the Internet community worldwide that must keep the Internet secure, stable, resilient, and open. In tech-policy circles, the phrase “multi-stakeholder process” can translate to “mañana” or “when I get around to it,” but NTIA’s current contract with ICANN runs out in September 2015.

If all goes well—seriously, don’t ask me how we get there from here—the domain-name system will look and work about as it does now, but without crucial sign-offs coming from [a Washington, D.C., address](#). And that alone will count for something on a symbolic level. “Other countries have never particularly liked the sense that the U.S. government had a privileged position relating to Internet governance,” wrote Wendy Seltzer, policy counsel for the [World Wide Web Consortium](#).

Christian Dawson, chairman of the [Internet Infrastructure Coalition](#), made the same point: “All this will really mean is different oversight for the same task—oversight that better reflects the global Internet community.”

But on a philosophical level, reinforcing that the Internet functions beyond any one .gov’s control—[“a step toward a world in which governments no longer assert oversight over the technology of communication,”](#) as George Mason University Mercatus Center scholar Eli Dourado wrote Monday—would promote a longstanding libertarian aspiration.

That would be a remarkable accomplishment by this Democratic administration. Will it get any credit for that?

From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Fiona Alexander](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Jade Nester](#)
Subject: RE: general TPs
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 2:48:31 PM

Whatever you think. We are now slammed with requests from WP, WSJ, IDG, Ad Age. We're looking at trying to get approval to announce and do a briefing at 5 p.m.

From: Fiona Alexander
Sent: Friday, March 14, 2014 2:47 PM
To: Heather Phillips; Juliana Gruenwald; Jade Nester
Subject: RE: general TPs

This is perfect. Do you think we could share this on the other thread with State in terms of their cover note to the 5 Eyes which will be part of the pre-release notification

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Friday, March 14, 2014 2:23 PM
To: Fiona Alexander; Juliana Gruenwald; Jade Nester
Subject: general TPs

Attached is the general TP document that pulls from the other versions. This is the version we could share with outside parties. Fiona, please take a look to be sure this includes the points you flagged. I went by what you gave me.

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
(202)482-0147

From: [Larry Strickling](#)
To: [Cyril J. Dadd](#); [Fiona Alexander](#); [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Heather Phillips](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Anthony G. Wilhelm](#); [Angela Simpson](#)
Subject: RE: Hill Briefing package
Date: Thursday, March 27, 2014 6:27:24 PM

Looks good to me.

From: Cyril J. Dadd
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 5:40 PM
To: Fiona Alexander; Jim Wasilewski; Heather Phillips; Juliana Gruenwald; Anthony G. Wilhelm; Angela Simpson
Cc: Larry Strickling
Subject: Hill Briefing package

Attached is a package of materials I would like to hand out at our Hill meetings tomorrow. It is all public and previously-released material. Please let me know by 930am tomorrow if you have any concerns/edits/comments. Thanks.



From: [Fiona Alexander](#)
To: [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Suzanne Radell](#)
Cc: [Heather Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: ICANN Talking Points
Date: Friday, March 07, 2014 4:29:12 PM

I'm actually on the hook now post today's IPB to develop a set of hard q and a what the statement we would issue this weekend. So Juliana if you can send me what you have on messaging points I'll play with that as well.

From: Juliana Gruenwald
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2014 1:59 PM
To: Suzanne Radell
Cc: Heather Phillips; Fiona Alexander
Subject: ICANN Talking Points

Hey Suzanne – I've added some points to those ICANN transition talking points I gave you during our meeting with Fiona. I've included what I could so if there's anything missing or that I worded incorrectly please feel free to add and fix.

The sooner we get these done, the better.

Thanks,

Juliana

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov

From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Cyril J. Dadd](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Fiona Alexander](#); [Angela Simpson](#)
Subject: RE: Myths document
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 12:30:00 PM

Ok, thanks

From: Cyril J. Dadd
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 12:15 PM
To: Heather Phillips; Juliana Gruenwald; Jim Wasilewski; Fiona Alexander; Angela Simpson
Subject: Myths document

WH leg confirmed for me that they want the Myths document for public use, and they want to get it out asap.



From: [Fiona Alexander](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Cc: [Jade Nester](#); [Cyril J. Dadd](#)
Subject: RE: Revised statement
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 10:48:44 AM

Done. Any other edits?

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 10:46 AM
To: Fiona Alexander; Juliana Gruenwald
Cc: Jade Nester; Cyril J. Dadd
Subject: RE: Revised statement

I've suggested a change in paragraph two to explain what the root zone file is.

From: Fiona Alexander
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 10:34 AM
To: Juliana Gruenwald; Heather Phillips
Cc: Jade Nester; Cyril J. Dadd
Subject: RE: Revised statement

Here's is the revision with Cyril's recent edit included.

From: Fiona Alexander
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 10:30 AM
To: Juliana Gruenwald; Heather Phillips
Cc: Jade Nester
Subject: Revised statement
Importance: High

Redline and clean attached. Edits are done per LES email. I think it might be a bit too jargony for your tastes but I don't think we'll get away from that on this issue. I need to send this back to him in the next hour or so

From: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#)
Subject: Re: State oped
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 1:28:41 PM

Will do.

Sent from my iPhone

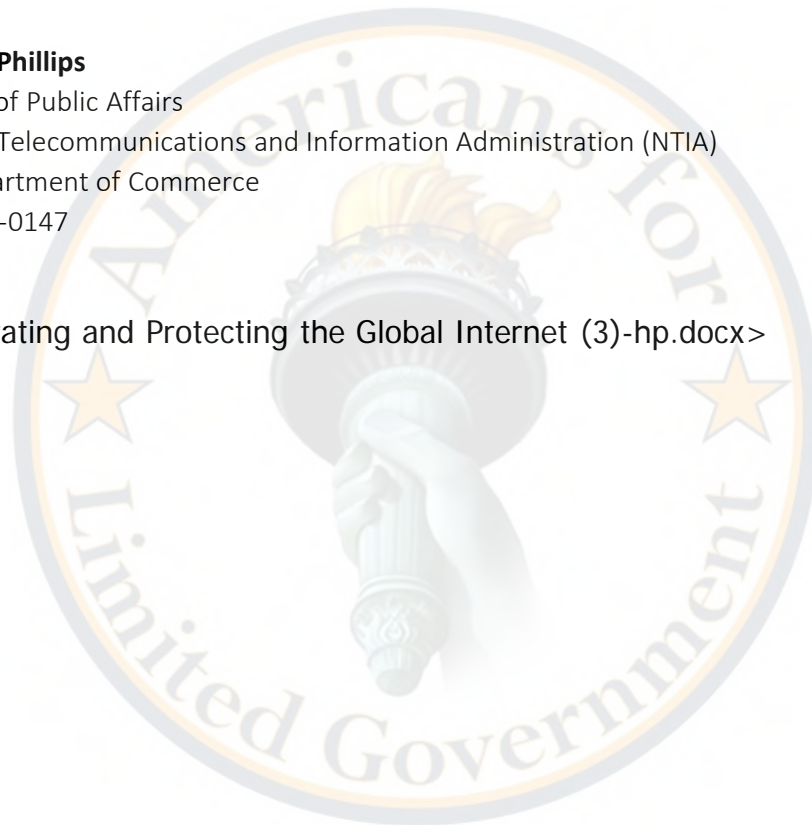
On Mar 19, 2014, at 1:26 PM, "Heather Phillips" <HPhillips@ntia.doc.gov> wrote:

Attached. Incorporated your initial edits, but add more on top of this.

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
(202)482-0147

<Celebrating and Protecting the Global Internet (3)-hp.docx>



From: Juliana Gruenwald
To: [Suzanne Radell \(SRadell@ntia.doc.gov\)](mailto:SRadell@ntia.doc.gov)
Subject: double checking this
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 10:04:00 AM
Importance: High

This Q and A on the IANA stuff currently reads like this:

Q. Are the legacy top level domains associated with U.S. Government (e.g., .mil., .gov, .edu) part of this transition?

A. No, the operation of and responsibility for the three remaining legacy top level domains associated with the U.S. Government specifically .mil, .gov, and .edu are not impacted by this transition as they are part of the IANA and related root zone management functions.

But should it be this:

Q. Are the legacy top level domains associated with U.S. Government (e.g., .mil., .gov, .edu) part of this transition?

A. No, the operation of and responsibility for the three remaining legacy top level domains associated with the U.S. Government specifically .mil, .gov, and .edu are not impacted by this transition as they are **NOT** part of the IANA and related root zone management functions.

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov

From: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)

To: [Fiona Alexander](#)

Subject: Accepted: Globalization Working Group - next meeting, note attachment in scheduler



From: Juliana Gruenwald
To: [Heather Phillips](#)
Cc: [Joelle Tessler \(JTessler@ntia.doc.gov\)](mailto:JTessler@ntia.doc.gov)
Subject: advisory
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 3:51:00 PM

Here's the advisory that I plan to send out when we get the go ahead.

Off The Record
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY

NTIA Background Briefing

What: NTIA telephone background briefing on important Internet governance issue with Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling.

When: Friday, March 14 at 5:00 p.m. EDT

Call-in info: NR

Dial Passcode: NR

For questions: contact Juliana Gruenwald at jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov or at 202-482-2145

Off The Record
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY

Juliana Gruenwald

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

Phone: 202-482-2145

Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov



From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Fiona Alexander](#); [Jade Nester](#); [Cyril J. Dadd](#)
Subject: blast out!
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 5:49:48 PM

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press-release/2014/ntia-announces-intent-transition-key-internet-domain-name-functions>

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

U.S. Department of Commerce

(202)482-0147



From: [Cyril J. Dadd](#)
To: [Larry Strickling](#); [Fiona Alexander](#); [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Heather Phillips](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: Fwd: Senate Commerce briefing
Date: Monday, March 17, 2014 6:02:57 PM

This announcement will be going out from the Committee to Senate Commerce member staffers imminently

Sorry for the late notice, but tomorrow morning at 10 A.M., we will be hosting a briefing in the Commerce Committee hearing room to discuss NTIA's announcement last Friday that the Department of Commerce intends to start transitioning Internet domain functions to ICANN and the global multistakeholder community. This briefing is open to the staff of Commerce Committee Members only.

The principal briefers will be:

Lawrence E. Strickling, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and Administrator, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce

Ambassador Daniel A. Sepulveda, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB)

From: [Jim Wasilewski](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#); [Cyril J. Dadd](#); [Fiona Alexander](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Jade Nester](#)
Subject: LES Edits to the Draft Statement
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2014 9:06:12 AM

Fiona is incorporating edits from LES to the draft statement this AM.

Fiona and Cyril will be attending a meeting at 10 am on Capitol Hill.



From: Juliana Gruenwald
To: [Larry Strickling \(LStrickling@ntia.doc.gov\)](mailto:LStrickling@ntia.doc.gov)
Cc: [Fiona Alexander](#)
Subject: line from the white paper
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2014 10:00:00 AM

This line is from the June 10, 1998 "Management of Internet Names and Addresses"

http://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/6_5_98dns.pdf

The U.S. Government is committed to a transition that will allow the private sector to take leadership for DNS management. Most commenters shared this goal. While international organizations may provide specific expertise or act as advisors to the new corporation, the U.S. continues to believe, as do most commenters, that neither national governments acting as sovereigns nor intergovernmental organizations acting as representatives of governments should participate in management of Internet names and addresses. Of course, national governments now have, and will continue to have, authority to manage or establish policy for their own ccTLDs. The U.S. Government would prefer that this transition be complete before the year 2000. To the extent that the new corporation is established and operationally stable, September 30, 2000 is intended to be, and remains, an "outside" date

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov

From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: link?
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 12:03:59 PM

Can you give me the link to this?

Transitioning NTIA out of its role marks the final phase of the privatization of the DNS, as outlined by the U.S. Government [\[SRH11\]](#) in 1997.

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

U.S. Department of Commerce

(202)482-0147



From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Fiona Alexander](#)
Cc: [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Cyril J. Dadd](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: meeting re: ICANN rollout
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 1:20:25 PM

Fiona, I understand that the ICANN stuff may be pushed up. Should we schedule a meeting next week to talk about plans and stakeholder outreach, etc.? Thanks

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

U.S. Department of Commerce

(202)482-0147



From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: blog language
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 9:44:48 AM

Fiona said she thought this sounded a bit like we are doing the consultation. I don't think so, but do have any suggestion on tweaking?

We are eager to hear from the global multistakeholder community as we begin discussion on a transition plan at the ICANN meeting in Singapore later this week. I am confident that they will ultimately develop a transition plan that the U.S. Government will fully embrace.

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
(202)482-0147



From: [Cyril J. Dadd](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Jim Wasilewski](#); [Fiona Alexander](#); [Angela Simpson](#)
Subject: Myths document
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 12:15:09 PM

WH leg confirmed for me that they want the Myths document for public use, and they want to get it out asap.



From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Charles Franz](#)
Cc: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: Blog post
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:44:36 AM
Attachments: [ICANN_blog3-18-14OPA edited-final.docx](#)

Charlie, could you please post the attached blog post, authored by Larry. Thanks

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

U.S. Department of Commerce

(202)482-0147



Promoting Internet Growth and Innovation Through Multistakeholder Internet Governance

This past Friday, NTIA asked the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to convene global stakeholders to develop a proposal to transition the U.S. government's stewardship of the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS). This marks a major milestone toward the final phase of the privatization of the DNS, which was first outlined by the U.S. Government in 1997.

We believe the timing is right for this transition, and a broad group of stakeholders – both domestically and internationally – have expressed their support and cooperation in this process.

[Cisco](#) commended NTIA for outlining a “powerful process for the move towards full privatization and globalization of DNS management.” Microsoft said it “relies on the stability, resilience and security of the DNS system to enable our cloud services – and we are confident that now is the right time to complete this transition.” Other industry giants like [AT&T](#), [Verizon](#), and Google, similarly issued statements in support of our announcement.

The [Computer and Communications Industry Association](#) called NTIA's actions a “necessary next step in the evolution of the Internet,” and other industry trade groups like the [Domain Name Association](#), [Internet Society](#), and [Internet Association](#) also expressed their strong support for our efforts. Public interest groups (Public Knowledge and [Center for Democracy and Technology](#)), and think tanks ([Brookings Institution](#)) also embraced the announcement. And on Capitol Hill, we've heard from a bipartisan group of lawmakers including [Commerce Committee Chairman Sen. John Rockefeller \(D-W.V.\)](#), [Ranking Member Sen. John Thune \(R-S.C.\)](#), Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and [Rep. Anna Eshoo \(D-Calif.\)](#), who support our announcement.

Our announcement has led to some misunderstanding about our plan with some individuals raising concern that the U.S. government is abandoning the Internet. Nothing could be further from the truth. This announcement in no way diminishes our commitment to preserving the Internet as an engine for economic growth and innovation. We will continue to advocate for U.S. interests and an open Internet through our role on ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and in other international venues including the Internet Governance Forum.

We have been clear throughout this process that any transition plan must meet the conditions of supporting the multistakeholder process and protecting the security, stability and resiliency of the Internet. I have emphasized that we will not accept a proposal that replaces NTIA's role with a government-led or an inter-governmental solution. Until the community comes together on a proposal that meets these conditions, we will continue to perform our current stewardship role.

We look forward to a spirited discussion from the global multistakeholders as they begin discussions on the transition plan at the ICANN meeting in Singapore next week. I am confident that the global community will ultimately develop a thoughtful and appropriate transition plan that the U.S. Government will fully embrace.

From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Larry Strickling](#); [Fiona Alexander](#)
Cc: [Angela Simpson](#); [Jade Nester](#); [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: op-ed -final
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 11:37:51 AM

Here's the final:

The U.S. government, working through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), has played a critical role in the stewardship of the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS). But now is the time to transition that role, based on the success and maturation of the multistakeholder system, and in response to demands from around the world. And we have to decide: Do we fully embrace the original vision of the Internet's founders and truly commit ourselves to the multistakeholder system that they helped establish? Or do we tell the world that one single government, our government, must maintain its singular contractual oversight over these vital functions? We are choosing to put our faith in the multistakeholder system, knowing that the Internet's future direction is best led by the people who helped make it what it is today -- innovators, entrepreneurs, activists, and users who together provide its incalculable economic and social value.

Since our announcement, some critics have claimed that this move opens the door for certain authoritarian states to somehow seize control of the Internet, blocking free speech and inhibiting a multitude of legitimate activity. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our transition announcement asks the Internet Cooperation for Assigned Names and Numbers organization (ICANN) to convene a multistakeholder process to develop a community-supported proposal for transitioning the U.S. government's role. ICANN will work collaboratively with the directly affected parties, including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), the Internet Society (ISOC), the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), top level domain name operators, VeriSign, and other interested global stakeholders. In developing this proposal, the Internet community will finally fully own and perform these functions; we are thereby taking stewardship by any government or group of governments off the table. Given the remarkable success that the Internet has become through the efforts of these and other stakeholders, we are confident that the fiercely devoted Internet community will serve as appropriate stewards of these functions, and we and like-minded

governments will defend their right and ability to do so.

As the demands for Internet connectivity and communication have grown, the natural pressure for participation and equity in the system's governance from the world's community of Internet users, network operators, entrepreneurs, and activists has also grown. And in response, the Internet's multistakeholder governance institutions have matured and grown in inclusiveness. In particular, ICANN has globalized its board and opened offices in parts of the world that still are not fully connected to the Internet. It has created new processes to incorporate the voices of governments along with a full range of other key stakeholders including industry, technical groups, public interest organizations and others. And it has demonstrated that it can effectively act as a convener of the global Internet community to propose a path forward.

The U.S. government has been a good steward via its IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) contract with ICANN. We are proud of that work. But it is time to let others step forward and let the Internet community develop a proposal for the next phase of the management of these functions. Enabling them to operate more independently from us will help insure that it remains independent from centralized governmental control altogether.

Heather Phillips

Director of Public Affairs

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

U.S. Department of Commerce

(202)482-0147

From: Juliana Gruenwald
To: [Heather Phillips](#)
Subject: Q and A questions
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 11:45:00 AM

This is where I believe the “not” should be

Q. Are the legacy top level domains associated with U.S. Government (e.g., .mil., .gov, .edu) part of this transition?

A. No, the operation of and responsibility for the three remaining legacy top level domains associated with the U.S. Government specifically .mil, .gov, and .edu are not impacted by this transition as they are **NOT** part of the IANA [functions contract](#).

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov



From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Charles Franz](#)
Cc: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: Re: Blog post
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:59:29 AM

Great, thanks!

Sent from my iPad

On Mar 19, 2014, at 10:55 AM, "Charles Franz" <CFranz@ntia.doc.gov> wrote:

OK, that's posted.

-charlie

Charles W. Franz
National Telecommunications
and Information Administration
**Office of Policy Coordination
and Management**
IT Division
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 4886 HCHB
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230
O: 202-482-1826
M: 202-379-6934

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:45 AM
To: Charles Franz
Cc: Juliana Gruenwald
Subject: Blog post

Charlie, could you please post the attached blog post, authored by Larry. Thanks

Heather Phillips
Director of Public Affairs
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
(202)482-0147

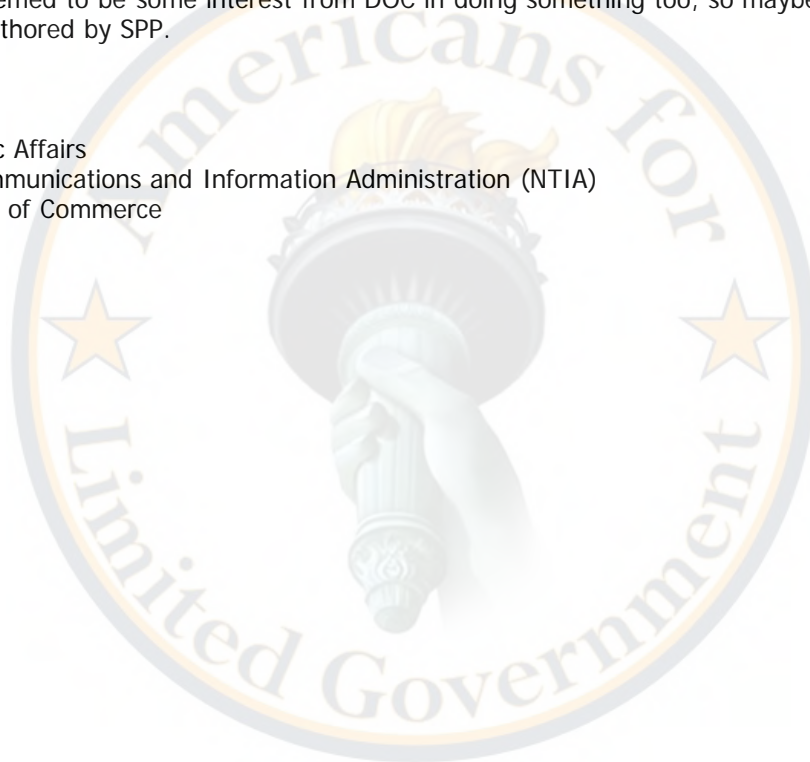
From: [Larry Strickling](#)
To: [Heather Phillips](#); [Fiona Alexander](#)
Cc: [Juliana Gruenwald](#); [Angela Simpson](#)
Subject: RE: blog
Date: Monday, March 17, 2014 10:23:27 AM

Okay

From: Heather Phillips
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2014 9:52 AM
To: Larry Strickling; Fiona Alexander
Cc: Juliana Gruenwald; Angela Simpson
Subject: blog

What do you think about doing a blog today or tomorrow just highlighting the widespread support that's come in from industry, Hill, consumer groups, etc.. We could just repeat some of the key messages again. There seemed to be some interest from DOC in doing something too, so maybe this could even be something authored by SPP.

Heather Phillips
Director of Public Affairs
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
(202)482-0147



From: Juliana Gruenwald
To: [Charles Franz \(CFranz@ntia.doc.gov\)](mailto:CFranz@ntia.doc.gov)
Cc: [Heather Phillips](#); [Fiona Alexander](#)
Subject: Can you please post this?
Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 12:23:00 PM
Attachments: [LESstatementICANN-EC-2-12-14.docx](#)
Importance: High

Hi Charlie – I've attached a statement that we would like posted on the website asap.

Thanks!

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
Email: jgruenwald@ntia.doc.gov



Statement of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling on the European Commission statement on Internet governance:

“The U.S. government welcomes the strong and continued commitment of the European Commission to the multistakeholder model of Internet governance. We will work with the Commission and other Internet stakeholders to make multistakeholder governance more inclusive, especially to support the engagement of countries in the developing world. We have long encouraged the further globalization of ICANN as reflected in our work the last five years to improve the accountability and transparency of ICANN to all nations and stakeholders.”



From: [Heather Phillips](#)
To: [Juliana Gruenwald](#)
Subject: RE: final version of statement
Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 12:17:55 PM

Looks good. Are we good to post then? If so, just send to Charlie and ask to post ASAP

From: Juliana Gruenwald
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 12:14 PM
To: Heather Phillips
Subject: final version of statement

Statement of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling on the European Commission statement on Internet governance:

“The U.S. government welcomes the strong and continued commitment of the European Commission to the multistakeholder model of Internet governance. We will work with the Commission and other Internet stakeholders to make multistakeholder governance more inclusive, especially to support the engagement of countries in the developing world. We have long encouraged the further globalization of ICANN as reflected in our work the last five years to improve the accountability and transparency of ICANN to all nations and stakeholders.”

Juliana Gruenwald
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Phone: 202-482-2145
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From: [Jim Wasilewski](#)
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Subject: FW: Upton, Walden Announce Hearing on Future of Internet Governance
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 6:14:39 PM

From: Energy and Commerce News
[mailto:EnergyandCommerceNews@ECREP.housecommunications.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 5:51 PM
To: Jim Wasilewski
Subject: Upton, Walden Announce Hearing on Future of Internet Governance

Press Release Header

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2014

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Committee Leaders Pledge Robust Oversight on Administration Announcement on Future of the Internet; Hearing Scheduled for First Week of April

Committee Will Hold Hearing the First Week of April as Administration Examines Whether Department of Commerce Can Turn DNS Functions Over to Internet Stakeholders

WASHINGTON, DC – House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) today pledged to conduct aggressive oversight following the recent announcement by the Obama administration on the future of Internet governance. The administration is looking to engage the multi-stakeholder Internet community to investigate future models for administration of the Domain Name System (DNS). The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announcement asks the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to commence a process to determine what steps can be taken to move DNS functions into the multi-stakeholder model without jeopardizing the security and freedom that have fostered the Internet's success.

"The Internet changed the world, and we must ensure the world does not change the Internet," said **Upton and Walden**. "The Internet has thrived across the globe under the existing multi-stakeholder effort, and should serve as a guide for the future. We welcome a thoughtful discussion amongst Internet stakeholders on the Department of Commerce's role in the DNS. But changes to the current model should be approached with a cautious and careful eye. The Energy and Commerce Committee has been at the forefront of the effort to preserve Internet openness and freedom. We will continue to conduct robust oversight to ensure that before any changes are considered we safeguard that no government or intergovernmental body takes over critical DNS functions. We have many questions, and look forward to a thorough examination the first week of April."

Additional hearing details, the Majority Memorandum, a witness list, and witness testimony will be available [here](#) as they are posted.

Background

In May 2013, the House [unanimously approved](#) H.R. 1580, legislation to affirm the policy of the United States regarding Internet governance and to preserve Internet freedom. The bipartisan legislation, which was unanimously approved by the Energy and Commerce Committee, will promote a global Internet managed under the current multi-stakeholder governance model. Last Congress, a similar measure unanimously passed the House and Senate. In light of continued international efforts to regulate the Internet, the House voted in May to make it official U.S policy rather than merely a sense of the Congress.

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