

Wiley Rein's David Gross Testifies on Plan to Transfer Control of Internet Protocols

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Washington, DC – Ambassador David A. Gross, chair of Wiley Rein's International Telecommunications Group, testified today at a U.S. House subcommittee hearing on the Obama administration's plan to transfer oversight of the system for assigning website addresses from the U.S. government to an international multi-stakeholder community.

Speaking on behalf of the Internet Governance Coalition, Amb. Gross told members of Congress that the plan to transfer control of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to the international community is a "critical step" to ensuring the "economic and societal benefits of the Internet continue uninterrupted."

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) currently manages the IANA under a contract with NTIA that expires in September 2015. NTIA is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Amb. Gross told members of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology that since its inception in 1998, ICANN has been "focusing on implementing accountability and transparency mechanism and practices, such that it is now possible for NTIA to initiate this process for the further evolution of the Internet and ICANN."

In mid-March, the Obama administration asked ICANN to develop a plan that would transfer oversight of the IANA from Commerce to the international multi-stakeholder community. The plan would have to be approved by the U.S. government.

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Amb. Gross testified on behalf of an industry-led group whose members include Amazon; AT&T, Inc.; Cisco Systems, Inc.; Comcast NBCUniversal; Google Inc.; Juniper Networks Inc.; Microsoft Corporation; Telefónica, S. A.; The Walt Disney Company; Time Warner Cable Inc.; Twenty-First Century Fox Inc.; and Verizon Communications Inc.

“By allowing for the careful transition of the IANA to a bottom-up multi-stakeholder entity, the United States has affirmed its commitment to the multi-stakeholder model,” Amb. Gross said. “If the principles NTIA identified for the transition are met—which is a critical condition for this process to work—the United States will also succeed in maintaining the freedom, openness, security, and stability of the network we have all enjoyed since its inception.” He also noted the importance of NTIA’s assurance that it “will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental organization solution.”

Amb. Gross served in the U.S. Department of State as the U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy from 2001 to 2009. During that time, he was the co-head of the United States delegations to both actual phases of the United Nations’ World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005), which, among other things, focused on the role of governments regarding Internet governance and resulted in the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

Please read the full transcript of Amb. Gross’s testimony [here](#).