



**One Hundred Seventeenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

August 11, 2021

The Honorable Chris Inglis
National Cyber Director
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Director Inglis,

We would like to congratulate you on being confirmed as the nation's first National Cyber Director (NCD). Having someone coordinating the Federal government's cybersecurity efforts is long overdue, and you are uniquely qualified for this role. We are pleased to see that President Biden has appointed cybersecurity professionals with a wealth of private sector and federal government experience for key cybersecurity positions in his administration. I am confident that Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Director Jen Easterly, Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technology (DNSACET) Anne Neuberger, and you have the expertise, the leadership, and resolve to address the many pressing cybersecurity issues facing our nation.

While the talent that you and other senior cybersecurity officials bring to bear is undeniably encouraging, we remain concerned that lingering confusion about the roles and responsibilities among the NCD, CISA Director, and the DNSACET will stunt whole-of-government efforts to address pressing cybersecurity challenges facing the nation. In particular, we are concerned that lack of clarity related to roles and responsibilities will frustrate the Congressional intent that drove enactment of a number of provisions in the *National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2021*, including those establishing the NCD and empowering CISA. We also hope you can help clear up lingering confusion about the roles between the National Security Council (NSC) and operational agencies, such as CISA. The NSC plays an important role developing and coordinating policy, but the directing of operational activities should be left to agencies like CISA. Given the current threat landscape, seamless coordination between respective cybersecurity leaders is in everyone's best interest.

As you are aware, Congress authorized the NCD in response to a recommendation made by the Cyberspace Solarium Commission. The Commission recommended, and Congress agreed, that the NCD should serve as the principal advisor to the President on cybersecurity issues and should lead federal coordination on cybersecurity strategy and policy. At the same time, the Commission recommended, and Congress agreed, that CISA should be empowered as the federal

government's cybersecurity hub and preferred private sector partner. In short, a strong NCD and an empowered CISA were at the core of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission's recommendations to mature and improve the nation's approach to cybersecurity, and Congress embraced and acted on those recommendations.

As you coordinate national cybersecurity efforts, it is critical that CISA has a seat at the table. CISA is the nation's lead federal civilian cybersecurity agency with responsibility for both resilience of critical infrastructure and protection of federal networks. Recent efforts to bolster its capabilities and provide further centralized visibility across the .gov are welcomed developments, but we cannot let interagency turf battles handicap its continued – and necessary – maturation.

We believe you are in a position to provide clarity around roles and responsibilities for cybersecurity policy development, planning, and incident response. Earlier this year, the Committee raised concerns with the White House over the federal response to the cyber attack against Colonial Pipeline. In that case, the Department of Energy was named as the lead agency for incident response, despite not being the designated lead under the National Incident Response Plan or the Sector Risk Management Agency for the pipeline sector. It is our hope that you, as NCD, will provide the needed consistency and coordination to ensure the federal government is following long-established policies and procedures governing federal cybersecurity efforts.

Accordingly, we ask that you provide the following to the committee:

1. An overview of how the Office of the NCD will complement CISA's statutory roles to protect federal networks and coordinate the protection of the nation's critical infrastructure.
2. A description of the differences between the responsibilities of your role as NCD and that of the Director of CISA and the DNSACET.
3. A description of how you plan to carry out your statutorily required duties to coordinate and consult with private sector leaders on cybersecurity and emerging technology issues in coordination with the CISA Director as required by Section 1752 of the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Please provide a briefing in response to the questions above no later than September 10th of 2021. Should you have any questions, please contact the Committee's Republican staff at 202-226-8417 or Majority staff at 202-226-2616.

Thank you for your continued leadership on one of our nation's preeminent national security issues. I look forward to continuing to work with you to bolster America's cyber resilience.

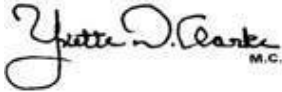
Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



JOHN KATKO
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security



YVETTE CLARKE
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity,
Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation



ANDREW GARBARINO
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity
Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation

CC: Director Jen Easterly

CC: Deputy National Security Advisor Anne Neuberger