DEC 1 2 2017

Mr. Cherine Chalaby
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536, USA

Re: Suspension of the Security and Stability Review Team

Dear Chairman Chalaby:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). As the recently confirmed Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and Assistant Secretary of Commerce, I look forward to working with you to meet our shared goals of the preserving the stability and security of the domain name system (DNS) and ensuring transparency and accountability in ICANN's work. I am writing you now to raise a matter of some concern to the United States Government.
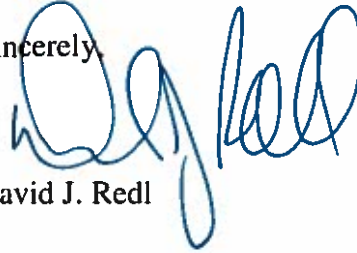
I am concerned about the October 28th announcement by the ICANN Board that it would suspend the activities of the Security and Stability Review Team (SSRT). This action appears to have been done with little notice given and no clear rationale provided to the ICANN community. The ICANN Bylaws express no actual role for the ICANN Board in the workings of a Review Team outside those associated with designating a Board Liaison and the actions the Board should take in cases in which it decides not to accept recommendation(s) in the final Review Team's report. There is in fact currently a draft ICANN Review Operating Standards document out for public consultation. Nothing in that draft expressly articulates a role for ICANN or its Board to suspend or otherwise disrupt a review. Everything documented to date about these reviews stresses the importance of openness, transparency, and community consultation. Unfortunately, it seems that with the October 28th action, the ICANN Board violated these principles by substituting its judgement for that of the community.

While there may have been reasons for this work to be suspended, such standalone action by the Board calls into question the transparency and accountability of ICANN as an organization and marginalizes the ICANN community. Suggestions that a discussion with the leadership of ICANN's supporting organizations and advisory committees are a sufficient work method of community consultation, misunderstands the role and purpose of those in these leadership positions. They are not a substitute for the ICANN community. NTIA's concerns are compounded by the fact that review teams, such as the SSRT, are a critical accountability tool in the post IANA stewardship transition phase of ICANN, something all stakeholders, particularly those in the United States are watching closely.

NTIA has long been committed to working within and supporting ICANN's multistakeholder model, and under my leadership that will continue. Moving forward, we expect that the ICANN Board will carefully reflect on this experience and the concerns expressed by the United States Government and other stakeholders. The community expectations of the ICANN and its Board are high. I hope that under your leadership you can provide assurances that the Board will resist the urge to substitute its judgement for that of the ICANN community and commit to work in a transparent and accountable manner.

Sincerely,

David J. Redl

Cc: Göran Marby, CEO and President, ICANN