

Cybersecurity order finally released

On May 11, the Trump administration released the long-delayed Executive Order on Strengthening the Cybersecurity of Federal Networks and Critical Infrastructure. The order calls for government agencies to follow best cybersecurity practices and holds agency leaders accountable for security breaches.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary John Kelly spoke about DHS's cybersecurity efforts and the new executive order, saying "DHS has long been a leader in protecting our nation against cyber threats and this executive order reaffirms our central role in ongoing cybersecurity efforts." While other government agencies are responsible for the cybersecurity of their networks, the executive order build's on DHS's legal authorities and directs DHS to lead efforts to ensure a baseline of security across the civilian executive branch.

The executive order calls on DHS to coordinate with other departments and agencies to protect critical infrastructure that is vulnerable to cyberattacks, including commerce, communications, defense industry, and the electric grid. The order also promotes "an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet," directing interagency teams to report on options for protecting the American people from cyber threats and develop an international cybersecurity engagement strategy.

- Department of Homeland Security

House passes Intelligence Authorization Act

On May 3, the House of Representatives passed the Intelligence Authorization Act (IAA) for Fiscal Year 2017. The bill ensures that the programs and activities of the U.S. intelligence community are authorized by law, fully resourced, and subject to rigorous congressional oversight.

The IAA provides urgent funds and authorities to help thwart potential attacks and deny these terrorists safe haven in Iraq, Syria, North Africa, and elsewhere. The bill also provides the means to counter significant threats from nation-state actors, and bolsters counterproliferation and counterintelligence capabilities.

The IAA also establishes within the executive branch an interagency committee to counter Russian activities to influence the U.S., like the interference with the 2016 presidential election. The committee will include representative from various U.S. departments and government entities, including the Director of National Intelligence, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Departments of State and Defense.

- U.S. House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Ambassador Moon visits Fort Leavenworth

Ambassador (Ret.) Patrick S. Moon, former U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, visited the Leavenworth area 26-28 April where he shared his expertise as part of the Simons Center's Interagency Speaker Series program.

Ambassador Moon met with students at the University of Saint Mary, where he discussed the important role of women in the development of the Balkans, the various on-going U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, and public service as a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State. He also met with several seminars of U.S. Army Command and General Staff College students and faculty, where he discussed the topics of European Security Affairs and Country Team operations.

- Simons Center