



### Issue Background

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Nations around the world rely on an interconnected global communications infrastructure for vital economic and political activities. The President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) recognizes that information regularly traverses areas of the world without transparent network security, architecture, or management practices, which poses a national security challenge. The NSTAC has a long history of investigating the impact of globalization on the provisioning of key national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications services.

### History of NSTAC Actions

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In 1993, the NSTAC began a multi-year effort to examine the NS/EP effects of the rapid integration of the national and global information infrastructures and determined the information infrastructure environment required additional, more comprehensive scrutiny due to the potential for increased vulnerabilities with significant implications for national security. Between 1997 and 2000, the NSTAC commissioned multiple subgroups to examine various possible impacts of growing connectivity to the global network, including ways foreign ownership of telecommunications assets and U.S. exports of high-tech communications equipment could affect the Nation's NS/EP posture.

The NSTAC's May 2000 *Global Infrastructure Report* correctly predicted that network infrastructure would provide increased global availability of broadband communications, with satellite communications and wireless technologies bringing the global information infrastructure and NS/EP communications to less accessible geographic regions. The report recommended that since there is no essential communications availability guarantee, prudent NS/EP communications contingency planning should consider end-to-end systems using a broad range of wireless, satellite, and terrestrial capabilities. Based on several case studies of past mergers and acquisitions in the telecommunications market, the report also determined that the current regulatory structure effectively accommodated the growing number of international firms with interests in domestic telecommunications facilities and the provisioning of commercial services without compromising the Federal Government's authority to ensure national security.

### Recent NSTAC Activities

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Following the NSTAC XXIX Annual Meeting in May 2006, the NSTAC created an International Task Force (ITF) to study ways the convergence of wireless, wireline, and Internet Protocol (IP) networks into global next generation networks could affect NS/EP communications from an international perspective. Specifically, the ITF evaluated current U.S. operational strategies, policies, and frameworks for international collaboration, and in August 2007, the NSTAC submitted recommendations to the President to promote United States NS/EP communications interests in emerging international network security efforts and to encourage the expansion of relationships and response coordination efforts with international partners.

The NSTAC continues to analyze the international communications environment and is currently considering the international cyber attack and response environment and the influence of foreign entities on communications hardware, software, and operations.