



Homeland
Security

February 13, 2008

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

Thank you for your February 1, 2008 letter regarding my decision to appoint Scott Charbo as the Deputy Under Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD). Our Nation continues to experience threats on many fronts, including attacks on our critical information technology (IT) networks. Scott Charbo brings to this position invaluable management skills he developed not only during his tenure as Chief Information Officer (CIO), but also as Acting Under Secretary for Management.

As CIO, Mr. Charbo inherited a highly complex and fragmented IT environment. This environment is a legacy of the Department's creation, with 22 agencies each bringing their own systems and programs into the newly-formed DHS. Fully integrating our vast IT architecture will take years, and Mr. Charbo's leadership has enabled us to achieve great advancement towards that end.

Under Mr. Charbo's management, the Office of the CIO has made impressive progress on securing the Department's computers and networks and has taken great strides to institutionalize rigorous network security and data and privacy protection programs. It is misleading to castigate the CIO for all of the Department's network vulnerabilities, especially given the size and scope of our networks, the persistent legacy of decentralized network controls, and the fact that our networks are under constant attack. Through Mr. Charbo's leadership, the Department continues to gain positive improvement of direct control over its diverse networks. A few of his accomplishments in IT security are as follows:

- Consolidated all 22 Component networks into OneNet, the Department's unified network platform that will allow the CIO to centralize IT security control measures and deploy additional sensors to monitor DHS data traffic.
- Improved security accreditation of the Department's 611 major IT systems from 26 percent in 2005 to 88 percent in 2007.
- Issued a detailed concept of operations in 2007 that provides enterprise-wide guidance for IT security operations.

- Strengthened the Plan of Action and Milestones program that tracks Component compliance with IT security guidelines and ensures DHS Office of the Inspector General and Government Accountability Office findings are addressed and closed.
- Implemented enterprise-wide IT security training as part of the Department's Learning Management System.

Once the CIO's vision is fully implemented, the Department will be better positioned to achieve the zero-defect level of performance that is our goal.

Mr. Charbo has an outstanding record. He has led enterprise-level consolidation of networks and data centers with exceptional results. He has continued to build the OneNet network; consolidated dozens of major systems in the new data center; awarded the contract for the second consolidated data center; and achieved a "green" progress score on the Office of Management and Budget's e-Gov initiative. He has also developed and tested improved security measures; tenaciously built an enterprise architecture; increased cooperation with DHS Components; and improved information technology acquisition practices. He leads by example and expertise and stays focused on our most important IT and management issues. I look forward to the positive impact he will have on securing the homeland in his new position. His strong leadership abilities will help to improve the capabilities of NPPD.

As you rightly point out, cyber threats are one of our great homeland security challenges, and reducing our networks' vulnerability to attacks is one of my top priorities. I am grateful to Mr. Charbo for his leadership in this area and I look forward to his continued leadership role in promoting cybersecurity. I thank you for your attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Chertoff", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Chertoff