



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

JUL 31 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Reid:

(U//FOUO) I am writing to express my strong support for passage of a comprehensive bipartisan cyber security bill by the Senate this week. The cyber threat facing the Nation is real and demands immediate action. The time to act is now; we simply cannot afford further delay. Moreover, to be most effective in protecting against this threat to our national security, cyber security legislation should address both information sharing and core critical infrastructure hardening.

(U//FOUO) Both the government and the private sector have unique insights into the cyber threat facing our Nation today. Sharing these insights will enhance our mutual understanding of the threat and enable the operational collaboration that is needed to identify cyber threat indicators and mitigate them. It is important that any legislation establish a clear framework for such sharing, with robust safeguards for the privacy and civil liberties of our citizens. The American people must have confidence that threat information is being shared appropriately and in the most transparent way possible. This is why I support information to be shared through a civilian entity, with real-time, rule-based sharing of cyber security threat indicators with all relevant federal partners.

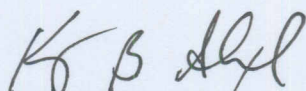
(U//FOUO) Information sharing alone, however, is insufficient to address the vulnerabilities to the Nation's core critical infrastructure. Comprehensive cyber security legislation also needs to ensure that this infrastructure is sufficiently hardened and resilient, as it is the storehouse of much of our economic prosperity. And, our national security depends on it. We face sophisticated, well-resourced adversaries who understand this. Key to addressing this peril is the adoption of minimum security requirements to harden these networks, dissuading adversaries and making it more difficult for them to conduct a successful cyber penetration. It is important that these requirements be collaboratively developed with industry and not be too burdensome. While I believe this can be done, I also believe that industry will require some form of incentives to make this happen.

(U//FOUO) Finally, any legislation needs to recognize that cyber security is a team sport. No single public or private entity has all of the required authorities, resources, and capabilities. Within the federal government, the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community are now closely partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of

Investigation. The benefits of this partnership are perhaps best evidenced by the Managed Security Service (MSS) program, which affords protections to certain government components and defense companies. The legislation will help enable us to make these same protections available widely to the private sector.

(U//FOUO) The President and the Congress have rightly made cyber security a national priority. We need to move forward on comprehensive legislation now. I urge you to work together to get it passed.

VR



KEITH B. ALEXANDER
General, U.S. Army
Director, NSA

Copy Furnished:
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader