Spotlight
Department of Homeland Security
Office of Inspector General
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DHS Can Strengthen Its International Cybersecurity Programs

Why This Matters

Our Nation's economy and security are highly dependent on the global cyber infrastructure. The borderless nature of threats to, and emanating from, cyberspace requires robust engagement and strong partnerships with countries around the world.

International engagement is a key element of the DHS' cyber mission to safeguard and secure cyberspace. As such, the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) has established multiple functions to support its international affairs program, which promotes cybersecurity awareness and fosters collaboration with other countries and organizations.

DHS Response

NPPD concurs with all recommendations in the above referenced draft report. The Under Secretary, NPPD has taken actions to address these recommendations.

What We Determined

Overall, NPPD and its subcomponents have undertaken actions to promote collaboration with the international community and develop partnerships with other nations to better protect cyberspace. While continuing to build upon its existing partnerships, NPPD can take additional steps to better protect global cyberspace. Specifically, we determined that:

1) NPPD's Office of Cybersecurity and Communications (CS&C) has not defined its roles for carrying out the mission of its International Affairs Program in the context of its overarching domestic cybersecurity mission. In addition, CS&C has not yet developed a strategic implementation plan to provide a clear plan of action for achieving its cybersecurity goals with international partners, international industry, and the private sector.

2) NPPD has not streamlined its International Affairs functions and processes to efficiently support its international cybersecurity goals, objectives, priorities, and effectively consolidate resources.

3) NPPD and its subcomponents need to strengthen their communications and information sharing activities with and among their counterparts to promote international incident response, the exchange of cyber data with other nations, and the sharing of best practices.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Under Secretary, NPPD:

1) Develop a comprehensive strategic implementation plan that defines CS&C's mission and priorities, specific roles and responsibilities, and detailed milestones for supporting the requirements outlined in the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace.

2) Take steps to streamline NPPD's international affairs activities and processes to improve transparency and reduce inefficiencies while supporting NPPD's international engagements.

3) Ensure that sufficient US-CERT resources are dedicated to maintaining and actively pursuing new relationships with the international community.

4) Develop and implement policies and procedures for establishing and maintaining open dialogues with foreign partners regarding cyber threats and vulnerabilities.

5) Conduct information sharing assessments to identify internal gaps and impediments in order to increase situational awareness and enhance collaboration with foreign nations.

For Further Information:
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