



For Immediate Release

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INSA Chair Fran Townsend Testifies Before Senate Committee on Cyber Security Legislation

Today, Intelligence and National Security Alliance (INSA) Board Chairwoman, Frances Fragos Townsend, gave testimony before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs hearing on *The Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act of 2010*.

Despite its great strategic and economic importance, cyber space remains largely unprotected and insecure. The lack of proper legislation protecting our nation's cyber security has opened the door to industrial and state espionage, as well as disruptive cyber attacks with real world consequences for the banking industry, online commerce and other critical infrastructure systems.

Townsend praised the new legislation for its emphasis on public-private cooperation that effectively integrates an "inclusive private sector membership, unified in the pursuit of common goals, a single responsible and accountable government partner organization and clearly delineated roles for both public and private entities."

INSA and its Cyber Security Council have long been proponents of the public-private partnership as outlined in their 2009 white paper, [Addressing Cyber Security Through Public-Private Partnership](#). In her prepared statement, Townsend specifically spoke to the "importance of establishing a public-private partnership to promote national cyber security priorities, strengthen and clarify authorities regarding the protection of federal civilian systems, and improve national cyber security defenses."

Townsend, former Assistant to President George W. Bush for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, focused her remarks on three specific aspects of the legislation that the INSA Cyber Security Council has identified as vital for an effective public-private cyber security partnership:

- A flexible and incentivized approach to regulation that preserves the innovative and entrepreneurial environment that exists in information technology. Townsend stated that this approach "not only creates a true give-and-take security partnership, but also allows for innovation and growth with the development of new security procedures and products."

- Robust and reciprocal information sharing, including a commitment from the Executive branch to share information with the private sector that is equal to the private sector's responsibility to report to the government.
- Cooperation and communication on standards and best practices. "Government must develop security standards and systems that deal with known threats and have the capacity to adapt to the rapidly changing cyber environment, and it must do so in concert with industry partners. Just as directive regulations can limit innovation, security standards that are not developed in partnership with businesses can have adverse and unplanned consequences. The vetting of proposed security standards through the industry community is necessary to avoid undue burden and hardship for American business," stated Townsend.

INSA President Ellen McCarthy said, "INSA's Cyber Security Council has been closely and actively studying the problems surrounding national cyber security for the past two years. Our Cyber Security Council has called for clear ownership of the problem and the creation of a central, responsible party within government with whom the private sector can interact and consult on security issues. We believe this legislation can and will create such a center and that it is a vital step forward in the effort to secure cyberspace and preserve American power and security. INSA values the opportunity to testify before the HSGAC on the importance of drafting cyber security legislation that adequately addresses one of the most critical security concerns our nation faces. Our membership looks forward to continue being a resource for Congress and other interested parties on this issue."

[Click here](#) to read a full text version of Ms. Townsend's prepared testimony.

About INSA's Cyber Security Council:

INSA's Cyber Security Council is composed of senior government and industry professionals with extensive policy research in cyber security. It was formed in January of 2009 to support the President's 60-day cyberspace policy review. The Cyber Security Council has worked with and solicited the opinions of current government officials, outside policy and technical experts, privacy and civil liberties advocates and current private sector CIO's and CISO's in an effort to gain the best possible perspective. [Click here for additional information.](#)

About INSA:

INSA is the premier intelligence and national security organization that brings together the public, private and academic sectors to collaborate on the most challenging policy issues and solutions. As a non-profit, non-partisan, public-private organization, INSA's ultimate goal is to promote and recognize the highest standards within the national security and intelligence communities. INSA has over 100 corporate members and nearly 1,200 individual members who are leaders and senior executives throughout government, the private sector and academia. To learn more about INSA visit www.insonline.org.