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S. RES. 323

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the United Nations and other international organizations should not be allowed to exercise control over the Internet.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 18, 2005

Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. SMITH, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. KYL, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. BUNNING, and Mr. CHAMBLISS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the United Nations and other international organizations should not be allowed to exercise control over the Internet.

Whereas market-based policies and private sector leadership have given the Internet the flexibility to evolve;

Whereas given the importance of the Internet to the global economy, it is essential that the underlying domain name system and technical infrastructure of the Internet remain stable and secure;

Whereas the Internet was created in the United States and has flourished under United States supervision and oversight, and the Federal Government has followed a path of transferring Internet control from the defense sector

to the civilian sector, including the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) with the goal of full privatization;

Whereas the developing world deserves the access to knowledge, services, commerce, and communication, the accompanying benefits to economic development, education, and health care, and the informed discussion that is the bedrock of democratic self-government that the Internet provides;

Whereas the explosive and hugely beneficial growth of the Internet did not result from increased government involvement but from the opening of the Internet to commerce and private sector innovation;

Whereas on June 30, 2005, President George W. Bush announced that the United States intends to maintain its historic role over the master “root zone” file of the Internet, which lists all authorized top-level Internet domains;

Whereas the recently articulated principles of the United States on the domain name and addressing system of the Internet (DNS) are that—

(1) the Federal Government will—

(A) preserve the security and stability of the DNS;

(B) take no action with the potential to adversely affect the effective and efficient operation of the DNS; and

(C) maintain the historic role of the United States regarding modifications to the root zone file;

(2) governments have a legitimate interest in the management of country code top level domains (ccTLD);

(3) the United States is committed to working with the international community to address the concerns of that community in accordance with the stability and security of the DNS;

(4) ICANN is the appropriate technical manager of the Internet, and the United States will continue to provide oversight so that ICANN maintains focus and meets its core technical mission; and

(5) dialogue relating to Internet governance should continue in multiple relevant fora, and the United States encourages an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders and will continue to support market-based approaches and private sector leadership;

Whereas the final report issued by the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), established by the United Nations Secretary General in accordance with a mandate given during the first World Summit on the Information Society, and comprised of 40 members from governments, private sector, and civil society, issued 4 possible models, 1 of which envisages a Global Internet Council that would assume international Internet governance;

Whereas that report contains recommendations for relegating the private sector and nongovernmental organizations to an advisory capacity;

Whereas the European Union has also proposed transferring control of the Internet, including the global allocation of Internet Protocol number blocks, procedures for changing the root zone file, and rules applicable to DNS, to a “new model of international cooperation” which could confer significant leverage to the Governments of Iran, Cuba, and China, and could impose an undesirable layer of politicized bureaucracy on the operations of the Internet

that could result in an inadequate response to the rapid pace of technological change;

Whereas some nations that advocate radical change in the structure of Internet governance censor the information available to their citizens through the Internet and use the Internet as a tool of surveillance to curtail legitimate political discussion and dissent, and other nations operate telecommunications systems as state-controlled monopolies or highly-regulated and highly-taxed entities;

Whereas some nations in support of transferring Internet governance to an entity affiliated with the United Nations, or another international entity, might seek to have such an entity endorse national policies that block access to information, stifle political dissent, and maintain outmoded communications structures;

Whereas the structure and control of Internet governance has profound implications for homeland security, competition and trade, democratization, free expression, access to information, privacy, and the protection of intellectual property, and the threat of some nations to take unilateral actions that would fracture the root zone file would result in a less functional Internet with diminished benefits for all people;

Whereas in the Declaration of Principles of the First World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva in 2003, delegates from 175 nations declared the “common desire and commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive and development oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge”;

Whereas delegates at the First World Summit also reaffirmed, “as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression” and that “this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and import information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;

Whereas the United Nations Secretary General has stated the objective of the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis is to ensure “benefits that new information and communication technologies, including the Internet, can bring to economic and social development” and that “to defend the Internet is to defend freedom itself”; and

Whereas discussions at the November 2005 World Summit on the Information Society may include discussion of transferring control of the Internet to a new intergovernmental entity, and could be the beginning of a prolonged international debate regarding the future of Internet governance: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) calls on the President to continue to oppose
3 any effort to transfer control of the Internet to the
4 United Nations or any other international entity;

5 (2) applauds the President for—

6 (A) clearly and forcefully asserting that
7 the United States has no present intention of
8 relinquishing the historic leadership role the

1 United States has played in Internet govern-
2 ance; and

3 (B) articulating a vision of the future of
4 the Internet that places privatization over
5 politicization with respect to the Internet; and
6 (3) calls on the President to—

7 (A) recognize the need for, and pursue a
8 continuing and constructive dialogue with the
9 international community on, the future of Inter-
10 net governance; and

11 (B) advance the values of an open Internet
12 in the broader trade and diplomatic conversa-
13 tions of the United States.

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