

DHS' TOP CYBERSECURITY OFFICER RESIGNS

As Marc Ambinder reports, the top cybersecurity guy at DHS, Phil Reitingger, announced his resignation today. Which is pretty odd, given that Obama just rolled out his cybersecurity strategy a few days ago. Though that's the excuse that Reitingger offered for the timing of his departure.

With significant progress having been made in activities across NPPD [National Protection and Programs Directorate], with growing recognition of DHS's roles and authorities, and the cybersecurity legislative proposal now delivered to the Hill, it's a logical point for me to leave the Department of Homeland Security and allow the team that we have developed together to carry our initiatives forward. [bracketed comment Ambinder's]

Okaaayyyy then. You finally win the pissing contest between NSA and DHS over who will lead cybersecurity and then you ... leave? Leaving no one to lead the program you've fought so hard to lead, not to mention leaving no one to lobby for the legislative proposal just sent to Congress?

Though Reitingger isn't technically the CyberCzar, he makes at least the 10th top cybersecurity official to have left since 9/11.

Update: Here's how his job was described when he was hired.

In addition to overseeing the department's mandate to protect government networks, Reitingger also will be responsible for coordinating Uncle Sam's outreach to private companies that own and operate the nation's most vital

information assets. These digital assets power everything from water and electricity distribution systems to telecommunications and transportation networks.

As I described here, one of the most sensitive aspects of the cybersecurity legislation the Administration proposed (and, I think, one of its weakest parts), is the means by which critical infrastructure entities prove to the government that they have adequate cybersecurity. It would seem really important to have continuity in this position to shepherd this part of the legislation through Congress.

Unless, of course, he's planning on representing the industry as the bill wends its way through Congress. Or, set up one of the auditing companies that will get rich off the way the legislation was written.