

## America, Meet Your New CISO

And you thought *your* IT job was challenging...

Yes, the United States now has its first ever Federal CISO.

Think of the largest enterprise you can, running every manner of incompatible hardware and software – new, not so new, and downright ancient – then multiply that organization by a very large number and focus three quarters of the world’s hackers, bad actors, and state-run cyberespionage teams against you. And, by the way, welcome to the new job.

The lucky candidate is Gregory Touhill. He’s a retired Brigadier General and will be leaving his current job as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cybersecurity and Communications in the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications at the Department of Homeland Security (Holy long titles, Batman! Try fitting all of THAT on one business card!)

The creation of a Federal CISO is part of a cybersecurity blueprint (the Cybersecurity National Action Plan, or, this being government, CNAP) that President Obama announced this past February which includes a long term plan, and any number of steps, to improve the government’s – and the nation’s – cybersecurity infrastructure.

At Homeland Security, Touhill was tasked with protecting the government’s networks and infrastructure. As the nation’s first CISO, Touhill will be building on a long career serving to protect the nation’s physical and cybersecurity infrastructure to further secure our virtual networks and standardize cybersecurity best practices across all levels of government. He’ll be assisted by Grant Schneider as the country’s new Acting Deputy CISO, who comes from directing cybersecurity policy as part of the National Security Council staff at the White House, and one would guess he’ll report to Tony Scott, who is the current US Chief Information Officer (CIO). There’s also some talk of creating a CISO-like Cabinet position, but that hasn’t happened yet.

It’s certainly an interesting time to step into this role, after the well-publicized NSA and DNC hacks, along with those several states’ voter registries, and a general aura of ‘cyber-nervousness’ about a foreign power (looking at you, Russia) possibly trying to flip the election for a favored candidate; and all of this during a particularly chaotic election cycle with at least one of the two candidates warning of impending voter fraud.

Interestingly, this being late in the year right before an election, it’s technically possible that both Touhill and Schneider could be out of a job within a few months as, being presidential appointees, both serve at the pleasure of whoever is sitting in the Oval Office this coming January.