

What's ahead for WH cybersecurity 'czar'

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In Federal IT circles, one of the most highly-awaited names is that of President Obama's nominee to be White House cybersecurity czar. Three experts with different perspectives on the job talked about it Wednesday at the National Press Club.

One of the most frequently mentioned name for the job of White House cybersecurity coordinator is a familiar name in Northern Virginia Politics.

Former congressman Tom Davis, now the director for Federal Government Affairs for Deloitte, appearing at yesterday's National Press Club discussion about cybersecurity sponsored by the Harris Corporation:

The good news for whoever is named cybersecurity czar is that they won't have to be Senate confirmed. So they don't have to worry about paying their taxes, and they can hit the ground running immediately. The real question is how much authority are they going to have? You have a lot of czars, a lot of competing interest within the government. What is your ability to deal with all the stovepipes that have been set up?

Dale Meyerrose, the former Chief Information Officer for the Intelligence Community, now a vice president of Cyber Programs for Harris Corporation, says the White House cybersecurity czar has three fundamental issues facing him or her:

First is, work on the authorities (i.e., responsibilities, etc.); Second, when you add a new position within the Executive branch, there has to be an accommodation of process. You have to get into the information flow. You have to get into meetings. Third, you need an agenda, something that works for you.

James Bamford, a noted author and journalist who has covered cybersecurity and the intelligence community, has issues with what he considers a vague White House proposal for a weak cybersecurity coordinator subservient to a military/intelligence dominated cybercommander.

What you have is a very powerful player in the cyberdomain, the director of NSA, against the fairly weakened cybersecurity coordinator. It presents quite a dilemma in terms of civil liberties.

While Davis is rumored to be in the running for the job, he tells FederalNewsRadio that after 29 years of service in Fairfax County and in Congress, he's happy to be out of government on what he calls his "hiatus". "You never say 'never' when it comes to service with me," he said, drawing laughter as he added, "I was lucky enough to leave Congress undefeated and unindicted, and sometimes, it's good to leave on top."

He is currently not seeking the job of White House cybersecurity czar.