

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington DC, 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

Over the last three decades, the Internet has empowered new ideas, media, and innovation. In so doing, it has reinforced American ideals of freedom, creativity, and entrepreneurialism. Today, as advances in artificial intelligence and quantum computing are poised to fuel the next stage of the Internet's evolution, the risks of taking this enormously powerful technology for granted are growing too high to ignore. Recognizing the U.S. Administration's commitment to engaging with industry and advancing freedom of expression globally, the signatories below, which collectively represent over 200 leading software, hardware, cloud, and AI companies, write to encourage the Administration, and in particular the Department of State under your leadership, to advance Internet freedom and prioritize the preservation of the open, interoperable, secure Internet.

The Internet did not evolve into what it is today by accident. The U.S. government – together with American academics, investors, and entrepreneurs – has played an outsized role in supporting critical research and development, investing in promising technologies, and defending the Internet's underlying system of governance from efforts to bureaucratize it. Various administrations and Congresses have helped articulate and foster the concept of Internet freedom, centering human rights like freedom of expression and privacy in discussions around *governance on the Internet* and supporting those rights through targeted investments in advocacy and technology. The State Department, in particular, has led a range of Internet freedom-focused initiatives and pushed back on autocratic governments like China and Iran, who have long argued for culturally-relative approaches to human rights as they seek to assert a sovereign prerogative to abuse the rights of their people and centralize control of the Internet through censorship and surveillance.

The U.S. government has also led the charge with our like-minded partners to advocate for the bottom-up, light-touch, multistakeholder approach to the *governance of the Internet*. This approach has supported continued innovation and leadership by U.S. companies. It also recognizes the importance of and provides space for the private sector, the technical community, and civil society to help push back against protectionist, authoritarian attempts to bring [critical properties of the Internet](#) under unilateral governmental or multilateral control.

In its first six months, the Trump administration has spoken forcefully in response to efforts to assert authority over US tech companies and the data and speech of American citizens. Director of National Intelligence Gabbard's [strong stance](#) in support of cloud providers' ability to ensure the protection of user data in light of troubling demands to weaken encryption by the UK Government merits particular recognition.

However, the perceived retreat of the U.S. from multilateral engagements has created uncertainty within the international community, emboldening some who are eager to take advantage of decreased American engagement. As highlighted in recent reporting, China in particular, is seeking to take advantage of perceived U.S. disengagement to influence various multilateral processes and organizations, especially those like the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), where the State Department has historically led U.S. government engagement.¹ These shifts are particularly relevant in light of China's newly released "Action Plan for Global AI Governance,"² given that the ITU is deeply engaged in AI standards development.³

Meanwhile, critical, Congressionally-appropriated resources for key Internet freedom-enhancing technologies and advocacy have been cut, leaving many of the people most vulnerable to censorship and surveillance in the lurch. Most recently, reorganization and associated reductions in force at the State Department, including in relevant offices in the Bureaus of Cyber and Digital Policy and Democracy, Human Rights and Labor have raised questions about the Department's commitment to continuing to engage effectively to these issues.

Around the world, governments are becoming increasingly aggressive in their efforts to regulate content and impose surveillance obligations on technical intermediaries. At the multilateral level, this is highlighted by the approval of a troubling new UN Convention Against Cybercrime – the negotiations for which were rejected by the first Trump administration, but which the Biden administration ultimately supported. Meanwhile, debates around Internet governance are once again reaching a crescendo through the World Summit on the Information Society's 20-year review (WSIS+20) and debates over the UN Scientific Panel and Global Dialogue on AI governance. In preparations for the ITU World Development Conference in 2025 and Plenipotentiary Conference in 2026, debates have restarted on the creation of new Internet protocols and technical standards on AI. The ability of the private sector and

¹ Mercedes Ruehl, "[Trump left a power vacuum at the UN. China saw an opportunity](#)," *Financial Times*, 22 July 2025.

² Brenda Goh, "[China proposes new global AI cooperation organisation](#)," *Reuters*, 26 July 2025.

³ Phelim Kine, "[The global AI contest hits the UN](#)," *Politico*, 4 Aug. 2025.

others to push back against efforts to assert multilateral control over the Internet and AI will depend in no small part on the U.S. government's engagement and continued defense of multistakeholder approaches in these contexts.

As the Trump administration continues to review its approach to multilateral engagement and articulate its approach to foreign policy under the newly reorganized State Department, we encourage you to continue articulating strong, principled positions in favor of a free, open, interoperable, and secure Internet and to work with likeminded partners to ensure that the Internet continues to be governed in a transparent, participatory, multistakeholder manner.

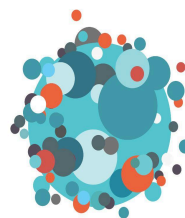
Together with our members, we will continue to engage in these spaces to defend the open, interoperable, secure Internet and the American values it represents. We look forward to continuing to engage constructively with the State Department on these topics.

Cc: Michael Needham, Counselor
Michael Anton, Director, Policy Planning
Thomas Leersten, Economic Growth, Energy, & Environment
Brent Christiansen, Arms Control & International Security
Jeremy Lewin, Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs and Religious Freedom
Russ Headlee, Cyber & Digital Policy
Jake McGee, Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor



**Computer & Communications
Industry Association**

Open Markets. Open Systems. Open Networks.



**GLOBAL
NETWORK
INITIATIVE**



**INTERNET
INFRASTRUCTURE
COALITION**



ITI