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The One Global Internet Act of 2010

*For the technical integrity of the Internet, market opportunities for U.S. businesses,
and the global free flow of information*

The early pioneers of the Internet imagined it as a single global network, enabling the free flow of information across national borders. Today, that vision is under threat. More than ever before, actions by foreign governments risk breaking the global Internet into a fractured patchwork of national internets. These threats come in many forms:

- **Country-specific technology standards.** Different computers must use compatible technologies to communicate with each other. The global Internet thus depends on standards—common specifications and protocols, often developed by voluntary, private organizations and chosen by the market. But some foreign governments are now requiring or promoting country-specific standards for Internet technologies. For example, China tried to mandate its own standard for wireless networking, called WAPI, instead of the Wi-Fi standards adopted worldwide. Russia, South Korea, and other countries are pursuing their own unique standards for encryption, which is critical to Internet commerce and other secure communications.

In some of these instances, repressive governments are seeking greater control over the use of technology within their borders. In others, governments are trying to promote technologies developed by their domestic industries while inhibiting imports and foreign competitors, including U.S. businesses. Regardless of the motivations, these country-specific standards threaten the global Internet, creating technical barriers to international Internet communications and trade in hardware, software, online services, and related technologies.

- **Censorship of foreign services and content over the Internet.** Many countries across the globe censor foreign Internet content and block foreign Internet-based services. While governments have legitimate goals in some cases, filtering and blocking are more often tools of repression and protectionism. Iran has blocked Twitter and Gmail to shut down dissident communications. China uses a "Great Firewall" to block thousands of foreign websites. Turkey has blocked YouTube outright. State-owned telephone companies around the world have blocked Skype. These restrictions and many others discriminate against Internet services based in the United States.
- **Conditions for market access.** Even when not blocking Internet traffic and technology trade outright, some foreign governments place onerous conditions on access to their markets. This includes demands for the transfer of intellectual property from American technology businesses to domestic companies or the governments themselves.

These actions threaten the interests of the United States in several ways. They enable control of the Internet by repressive governments. They stop American businesses from competing in foreign markets. And they undermine the seamless operation of the global Internet, as a tool for communications and commerce across borders.

The One Global Internet Act of 2010 would prioritize these concerns and coordinate effective responses from the United States, with a focus on trade policy. It would:

- ***Identify Threats to the Global Internet.*** The Act creates a Task Force on the Global Internet, comprised of representatives of the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense, the U.S. Trade Representative, and others. In an annual report delivered to Congress, the Task Force would identify actions by foreign governments that threaten the Internet and trade in related services and technologies, including discriminatory restrictions on Internet-based content and services, deviations from international standards for Internet technology, and demands for intellectual property and other conditions for market access. This report must include a strategy for a response by the Executive Branch to each specific threat.
- ***Establish Clear Executive Branch Responsibility.*** In order to implement its responses to various threats to the global Internet, the Task Force will coordinate all related policy and executive activity. At present, many different agencies have divided responsibility over trade barriers, internet repression, technical standards, and related issues, hindering effective policymaking.

- ***Change Foreign Government Behavior through Trade Policy.*** As part of its annual report, the Task Force would identify actions by foreign governments that are “priority concerns.” For each of these measures, the Act directs the U.S. Trade Representative to initiate an investigation pursuant to section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which authorizes a variety of sanctions in response to foreign government practices that violate international trade agreements or restrict U.S. businesses without justification.

Trade investigations and the threat of sanctions are a promising force against threats to the Internet. Many such acts, such as mandates for country-specific standards and discriminatory blocking of U.S.-based services, may violate international agreements. And the mere threat of a trade response by the U.S. government has been successful at changing foreign behavior in other settings, such as the “Special 301” process for reviewing intellectual property protections in other countries.

The United States can and should use its political and economic power to protect the free flow of information and the opportunities that the Internet creates worldwide for commerce, development, and free expression. The One Global Internet Act would direct this power to its maximum potential.