Message from the CEO and president of ISOC, Lynn ST.Amour, 6.11.2013

With respect to the Montevideo meeting this year and the press release that was issued afterwards -- these meetings have taken place regularly for the past three years (usually twice a year, several days). They were mainly to build relations/common cause across the I* organizations on key issues. We work to understand our respective positions on these key issues with a goal of reaching alignment or at least ensuring no surprises. They were not meant to be a "standing venue", but rather to build stronger relations between all organizations. (The I* organizations are: ISOC, IETF, IAB, ICANN, the 5 RIR's, IANA functions operator and W3C). The meeting is chaired by me, as ISOC President & CEO, as requested by the other organizations. Unlike past meetings, the I* community felt that the surveillance issues (and the reactions we were seeing that were affecting the Internet and users) were so serious that we needed to go on record, and hence the idea of a press release was born during the meeting. As virtually all (maybe all) of the organizations had previously been on record for many of these points, we felt that it was appropriate to go forward.

In the press release, we recalled that:

"the Internet and World Wide Web have brought major benefits in social and economic development worldwide. Both have been built and governed in the public interest through unique mechanisms for global multistakeholder Internet cooperation, which have been intrinsic to their success. Furthermore, they agreed that there was a "clear need to continually strengthen and evolve these mechanisms, in truly substantial ways, to be able to address emerging issues faced by stakeholders in the Internet".

In more concrete terms, they

- expressed strong concern over pervasive government suveillance and monitoring activities, as they were undermining of the trust and confidence of Internet users globally

- identified the need for ongoing effort to address Internet Governance challenges, and agreed to catalyze community-wide efforts towards the evolution of global multistakeholder Internet cooperation.

- called for accelerating the globalization of ICANN and IANA functions, towards an environment in which all stakeholders, including all governments, participate on an equal footing.

- called for the transition to IPv6 to remain a top priority globally. In particular Internet content providers must serve content with both IPv4 and IPv6 services, in order to be fully reachable on the global Internet.

Nothing in these statements is particularly new. ISOC has previously expressed concerns about surveillance; we tried hard to catalyze community wide effort in the past (WCIT was a good example), played a leading role in promoting IPv6, etc.

What attracted most attention perhaps was the call for accelerating the globalization of ICANN. And, this was in line with our previously agreed policy. All the I* organizations had worked closely when preparing their submission for the "Notice of Inquiry" and "Further Notice of Inquiry" in 2011. The common understanding had always been that there was no need for centralized control by any government, but the entire system needed time to mature. And, we have always supported the continuing evolution/increasing independence from the USG.

As a useful point of information, back in 2006, we said in our submission on the "Notice of Inquiry" by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, on "The Continued Transition of the Technical Coordination and Management of the Internet Domain Name and Addressing System" that we encouraged:

"the US Government to take a more hands-off approach in its relationship to ICANN and believe[d] this is fully consistent with the original intent when ICANN was launched. To a significant extent, [ISOC] believe[s] the calls for greater multi-lateral government control over ICANN are motivated by the current geo-political situation and in order to minimize future politicization of the management of the DNS and the allocation of IP addresses, the Internet Society encourages the US Government to give ICANN more freedom following the model the US Government and many other governments have helped nurture over the years."

The ISOC submission continued as follows: "The debate over the future of ICANN has been characterized as a choice between unilateral government control and multilateral government control. This is a false dichotomy; there is a third option—no centralized management or centralized control. This model has served the Internet very well in regards to Internet standards, scalability, new innovative services, good (and still improving) competition and many other aspects of the Internet. This model allows maximum participation nationally and regionally and so should not be characterized as preventing any entity from participating in the governance of the Internet. There are many, many models of international non-governmental organizations which provide international coordination and/or influence billion-dollar industries, such as the International Red Cross, the SWIFT system for international banking transfers, the International Air Transport Association, and even, from the world of sports, the International Olympic Committee and FIFA. Each can provide useful lessons and certainly prove the feasibility of such models."