

Top US cybersecurity official quits

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A top US cybersecurity official has quit, complaining in a resignation letter obtained by Wired magazine that US cyber protection efforts are being dominated by the super-secret National Security Agency (NSA). Wired published what it said was a copy of the resignation letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano (pictured) from Beckstrom, who was appointed to the post a year ago.

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The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) confirmed the resignation of Rod Beckstrom, director of the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC), but did not give a reason for his decision to step down.

"We thank Rod for his service, and regret his departure," the DHS said

in a statement emailed to AFP.

While declining to confirm the authenticity of the letter published by the online edition of Wired, the department stressed in its statement that it had a "strong relationship" with the NSA.

"The Department of Homeland Security has a strong relationship with the NSA, and continues to work in close collaboration with all of our federal partners on protecting federal civilian networks," it said.

"We look forward to our continued, positive working relationship with all our partners on outreach to the private sector as we strive to further secure our nation's cyber networks," the department added.

Wired, in its "Danger Room" blog, published what it said was a copy of the resignation letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano from Beckstrom, who was appointed to the post a year ago by former DHS secretary Michael Chertoff.

In the letter, Beckstrom complained that the NCSC had been effectively sidelined by the NSA and warned against putting the surveillance agency in charge of national cybersecurity.

"NSA effectively controls DHS cyber efforts," Beckstrom said. "While acknowledging the critical importance of NSA to our intelligence efforts, I believe this is a bad strategy on multiple grounds," he said.

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