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**OPINION CONTRIBUTOR**

# Letter to the editor: Internet censorship is bad business



The Internet adds \$2 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product. | AP Photo

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In your interview with John Morton, director of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, “ICE director defends website seizures” (POLITICO, Feb. 28), about seizing domain names from foreign enterprises, Morton displays a troubling and cavalier disregard for the consequences of applying our intellectual property law extraterritorially.

The Internet adds \$2 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product. We must not endanger this engine of innovation and job creation by promoting international norms by which foreign governments might seize assets or

domain names from U.S. companies. This is particularly important at a time when authoritarian governments, fearing free exchange of ideas by their citizens, seek any pretext to suppress the open Internet.

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I was particularly troubled to see Morton's claim that ICE's conduct doesn't really affect Internet censorship by authoritarian regimes. Our State Department has clearly recognized that the world is watching a competition between the China-Iranian-North Korean model for Internet control versus the Internet freedom model of democracies.

The more the U.S. blocks the Internet, the more hypocritical we become when our diplomats try to combat the trade and free speech issues created

by Internet blocking and censorship abroad.

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