


# Chapter 3


## Leveraging Internet Sovereignty for Digital Supremacy

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### ABSTRACT

*While geographical boundaries are not recognized on the Internet, network service providers are driven through internet protocols. The revelations by whistleblowers have shaken the world of a free Internet and have raised concerns about data security. Recent developments in Russian Internet (RUnet) and the Great Firewall of China (GFW) advocate Internet sovereignty as a means to protect sensitive information from foreign surveillance. This paper critically surveys the approaches adopted*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-3171-3.ch003

*by nations, evaluates the enacted legislation, and categorizes their actions within the theoretical framework proposed by Mueller, known as the Mueller framework. The impact of these actions has also been analyzed along with an overview of cybersecurity measures taken by a few other countries. In this study, we present a conceptual framework aimed at elucidating the implementation of internet control measures, emphasizing the accomplishments and challenges encountered by modern nations in this endeavor.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Internet was primarily created for information exchange without anyone predicting that it would become as powerful as it is today. It can change social orders, trigger insurgencies, and overthrow rulers by mobilizing protests (Breuer, 2012). The notion that the Internet knows no borders is widely accepted as a fact. However, the capability and political will to establish borders on the Internet have gradually matured among nations. There is a growing significance of internet sovereignty frameworks within contemporary geopolitical landscapes. Understanding the achievements and limitations of such frameworks is essential for informing policy decisions and ensuring the effective management of digital ecosystems. By exploring these frameworks, we aim to contribute to the discourse surrounding internet governance and cybersecurity, addressing critical concerns in an increasingly interconnected world.

The Internet is a common asset among countries and a communication medium with profound social and political impacts. Countries have a significant stake in ensuring that social values are upheld and political stability is maintained. Nations are expected to comply with global standards, including respecting the autonomy of other states in their geographical and domestic matters (Sanjay, 2017). Despite global ethical considerations, nations continue to engage in conflicts supported by propaganda, as discussed by Fielding and Cobain (2011). The conflict between the United States and China over 5G technology, commonly referred to as the “US-China Tech War” is a recent example. The U.S. government, like several other nations, including China, exercises caution when adopting foreign technology for critical communication infrastructure, primarily due to concerns regarding espionage backdoors and data security vulnerabilities. This cautious stance is particularly evident concerning 5G networks, given their pivotal role in enabling advanced technologies such as autonomous vehicles and the Internet of Things. For instance, Vodafone Group’s discovery and subsequent rectification of backdoors in Huawei equipment contributed to a climate of uncertainty regarding Huawei’s credibility (Bloomberg, 2023). Additionally, rumors regarding a potential ban on the use of iPhones by

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