

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2019

Mr. Robert O' Brien  
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC, 20006

Dear Mr. O'Brien,

Several leaders within the Executive Branch recently briefed the bipartisan leadership of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Senate Armed Services Committee on the United States' efforts to develop and deploy fifth generation (5G) telecommunications technologies.

As you may be aware, the United States and its allies are facing an unprecedented security challenge with the current marketplace of 5G technologies. While the United States has led in the development and deployment of previous telecommunications evolutions, 5G represents the first evolutionary step for which an authoritarian nation leads the marketplace for telecommunications solutions. China's leadership, combined with the United States' increased reliance on high-speed, reliable telecommunications services to facilitate both commerce and defense, poses a strategic risk for the country. We cannot rely exclusively on defensive measures to solve or mitigate the issue, but rather we must shape the future of advanced telecommunications technology by supporting domestic innovation through meaningful investments, leveraging existing areas of U.S. strength, and bringing together like-minded allies and private sector expertise through a sustained effort over the course of decades, not months. A challenge of this magnitude requires a more ambitious response than traditional agency processes can support.

While we appreciate the progress being made within and across departments and agencies, we are concerned that their respective approaches are not informed by a coherent national strategy. In our view, the current national level approach to 5G is comprised of a dispersed coalition of common concern, rather than a coordinated, interagency activity. Without a national strategy, facilitated by a common understanding of the geopolitical and technical impact of 5G and future telecommunications advancements, we expect each agency will continue to operate within its own mandate, rather than identifying national authority and policy deficiencies that do not neatly fall into a single department or agency. This fractured approach will not be sufficient to rise to the challenge the country faces.

We hope that you, as the new National Security Adviser, will make this issue a top priority. We would further urge you to designate a dedicated, senior individual focused solely on coordinating and leading the nation's effort to develop and deploy future telecommunications technologies. We believe that having a senior leader would position the United States to lead on telecommunications advancements, ensure the United States is appropriately postured against

this strategic threat, and demonstrate to our allies the seriousness with which the nation considers the issue.

We look forward to working with you as we consider additional authorities and resources necessary to address an issue of this importance. We hope that you and your designated lead on 5G issues will continue to engage in a serious and frank dialogue with Congress about what is required to address this challenge.

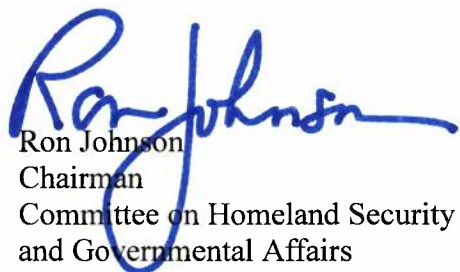
Sincerely,



Richard Burr  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence



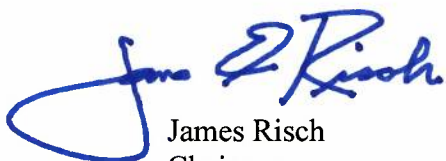
Mark R. Warner  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence



Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs



Gary C. Peters  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs



James Risch  
Chairman  
Foreign Relations Committee



Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member  
Foreign Relations Committee



James Inhofe  
Chairman  
Armed Services Committee



Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Armed Services Committee

cc: Mr. Lawrence Kudlow, Director of the National Economic Council