

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 16, 2021

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Katherine Tai
U.S. Trade Representative
Executive Office of the President
600 17th St. NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Secretary Raimondo, Secretary Blinken, and Ambassador Tai:

We welcome President Biden's announcement at the East Asia Summit that the United States will work with regional partners to develop a new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. This is a positive step toward a more comprehensive trade agreement in the region. Many of the United States' most significant trading partners and closest allies are in the Indo-Pacific, and deepening our economic engagement with those foreign partners will benefit American workers and our economy, and strengthen our strategic position in the region. We should use our engagement in the region to support a prosperous, free Indo-Pacific, to advance and support a rules-based international trading system anchored by democratic values and market-based economics, and to bring about less carbon-intensive global economy.

In his announcement, President Biden identified several focus areas for the new Framework, including the development of standards for the digital economy and technology. We strongly agree that digital trade must be at the core of the U.S. Government's global economic agenda in the coming decades, and we encourage the Biden Administration to develop a focused and forward-leaning plan for engaging our allies in the Indo-Pacific on these critical issues.

The United States has long boasted the most innovative economy in the world. Our innovators have seen commercial success selling their products overseas, and the U.S. government has historically played a pivotal role in opening foreign markets for American exporters. As we engage with trading partners in the Indo-Pacific, we should seek to ensure that our most innovative companies—small, medium, and large—can freely export their cutting-edge digital services and technologies. Further, we should use this opportunity to set global standards for the digital economy. How governments manage data, the platform economy, and emerging

technologies like artificial intelligence will have an outsized impact on societies and human freedom in the decades to come, and if democratic governments do not come together to set the rules, then our adversaries will seize the opportunity to advance a digital authoritarianism built on surveillance, propaganda, censorship, and control.

Data is the lifeblood of the global digital economy, and our recent trade agreements offer a strong starting point for ensuring that data can flow freely across borders and data-intensive businesses are not required to build redundant data centers in every market they serve. In building a new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework with like-minded allies, we have the opportunity to strengthen these trade rules by tying them to our shared democratic values. For example, as data moves freely across borders, the privacy of any personal information must be protected and access to personal data by government authorities must be conditioned on the rule of law and protection of human rights. Sensitive personal information should not be transferred to jurisdictions that cannot or will not protect it.

In building a new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, we should also address emerging technological arenas. Artificial intelligence is increasingly prevalent across our economy, powering everything from autonomous vehicles to weather forecasting. Working with our allies, we should define rules that protect sensitive algorithms from forced disclosure and ensure algorithmic decision-making is unbiased and supportive of human freedom. Digital platforms have disrupted industries ranging from news media to local transportation, creating challenges for workers and competition while also creating opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs who have leveraged these platforms to great effect. While continuing to support innovation, free speech, and economic opportunity, democratic governments must collaborate to find ways to protect platform workers, ensure fair competition, and limit the spread of harmful content.

Ongoing debate over domestic rules for the digital economy should not hold us back from substantive engagement with our allies. To be sure, our competitors are not waiting: new trade agreements in the Indo-Pacific are setting rules on digital trade, but none include the United States. We welcome recent engagement with the European Union on digital issues through the Trade and Technology Council, and we encourage similar engagement with allies in the Indo-Pacific. Going beyond principles to identify the rules and commitments that ensure economic prosperity, national security, and the advancement of democratic values is a project we must undertake in concert with our allies.

On issues of trade, technology, and decarbonization, the world is at a pivot point. This is a moment that calls for creative rethinking of our international economic priorities and global leadership in implementing a new strategy. We look to you to show such leadership in the development of this new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

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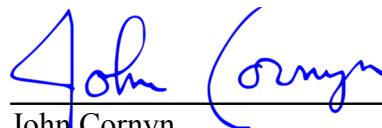
Mr. Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor
The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



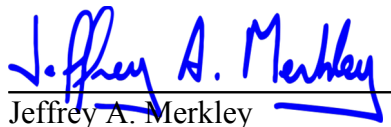
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