

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2021

Atlantic Council GeoTech Commission
1030 15th St NW
12th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Members of the GeoTech Commission,

Thank you for your efforts over the past year in striving to understand the nature of the new challenges posed by technology in the 21st century, and in proposing solutions to those challenges. Your work will play a critical role in ensuring the United States continues its tradition as the world leader in innovation. It is crucial we take a long look at not just how to leverage our strengths, but also how to address our shortcomings. Your report will help policymakers improve the technological, economic, and strategic goals of the United States.

The year 2020 exposed a number of strategic vulnerabilities for the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed an underprepared public health infrastructure and an overreliance on foreign production, especially from China, for critical medical supplies. In addition, the SolarWinds attack made clear that our cybersecurity posture is not anywhere close to the standard we should expect.

Yet 2020 also had bright moments for the future of United States' technological leadership. In the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021, Congress enacted a historic slate of proposals related to artificial intelligence (AI), including the establishment of the National AI Initiative, which was modeled off of my bipartisan *Artificial Intelligence Initiative Act*. The NDAA also included my bipartisan *National AI Research Resource Task Force Act*, which lays the groundwork for the creation of a national cloud computer, and will revolutionize how we view research and development for science and technology.

As these events unfolded you diligently continued your valuable work, and did so virtually, no less – to say that your report is important is an understatement. In fact, it directly touches on the key topics which gripped the attention of the American people over the past year.

Many of the technologies and topics discussed in this report, from quantum computing, to artificial intelligence seemed to be limited only to the realm of science fiction just a few decades ago. But our scientific breakthroughs, both big and small, have been numerous, and their numbers grow more each day. Such an acceleration of innovation is not merely unprecedented, but a testament to our unique brand of ingenuity that has developed in line with American values. Yet, ensuring that these technologies are used in ways that also align with those values remains a challenge. Navigating the implications these technological changes have for the prosperity and competitiveness of the United States continues to be our work as policymakers.

ROB PORTMAN
OHIO

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE
FOREIGN RELATIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
JOINT ECONOMIC

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Thanks to the report by the GeoTech Commission, policymakers have a helpful guide with which to navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Thank you again for your service and hard work to make the GeoTech Commission a success.

Sincerely,



Rob Portman
U.S. Senator

312 WALNUT STREET
SUITE 3425
CINCINNATI, OH 45202
PHONE: (513) 684-3265

1240 EAST 9TH STREET
SUITE 3061
CLEVELAND, OH 44199
PHONE: (216) 522-7095

448 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
PHONE: (202) 224-3353

37 WEST BROAD STREET
SUITE 300
COLUMBUS, OH 43215
PHONE: (614) 469-6774

420 MADISON AVENUE
SUITE 1210
TOLEDO, OH 43604
PHONE: (419) 259-3895