

**Opening Statement for Nathaniel Fick
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Cyberspace and
Digital Policy
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
August 3, 2022**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Committee Members, I am honored to appear before you today as nominee to be the first-ever U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy. Thank you for considering my nomination.

Joining me here are my wife, Margaret Angell, and our daughters, Ella, and Kate. They are constant proof for me that, despite the digital world's importance, life's true rewards are found in the physical one.

I feel as if all the threads of my professional background – from combat service as a Marine Corps infantry officer, to leadership of the Center for a New American Security, to building and leading a cybersecurity software company – come together in this role.

American technology leadership is critical to the credible promotion of our values, to sustaining our economic strength, and to safeguarding our national security. It is the next frontier of American diplomacy.

The infrastructure, standards, norms, and policies that determine how digital technologies are developed, deployed, and used shape our future. We are in a global contest *for* a democratic future in which we can all use technology to reach our full potential and *against* an authoritarian future in which technology is harnessed to repress free expression and destabilize open, democratic societies. Countries such as the People's Republic of China and Russia have a very different vision for cyberspace and the use of digital technologies, which is why American leadership matters in this arena, alongside like-minded Allies and partners.

Recognizing this context and building on the ongoing work of the Department, Secretary Blinken established the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy earlier this year with the strong bipartisan support of this committee and others. If confirmed, I pledge to partner with this Committee and all of Congress to further elevate and integrate cyber and digital policy in U.S. diplomacy – and diplomacy in U.S. cyber and digital policy. And I will continue to build a State Department team that has the expertise and experience to advance national security, economic prosperity, and human rights in this digital age.

There are three key areas where, if confirmed, I would partner with the Committee to make progress. First, we must strengthen adherence to the framework of responsible state behavior that all UN member states have endorsed. This framework affirms that international law applies to state conduct in cyberspace and lays out norms that – although voluntary and non-binding – guide what states should and should not do in cyberspace. And yet, norms are more effective in binding together our allies than they are in dissuading our adversaries. To reduce the frequency and severity of damaging cyber incidents, we must collaborate across the U.S. government and

with partners around the world to deter malicious cyber activity and impose meaningful consequences on states that engage in it and those that willfully harbor cybercriminal organizations.

Second, we must promote a global digital economy that lets U.S. companies and their workers compete on an equal playing field around the world. This includes preserving the free flow of data across international borders – while protecting users’ privacy and the confidentiality and integrity of their data. We must support open, transparent standards and the multistakeholder model of Internet governance that has enabled decades of innovation. And we must promote new innovations such as Open Radio Access Networks and work to ensure the security of the entire telecommunications ecosystem upon which we rely.

Third, we must, at every turn, champion a positive vision for digital freedom and digital inclusion while working to combat digital authoritarianism. This means partnering with civil society, the private sector, and other governments to understand how digital technologies can help people exercise their human rights and reach their full potential. We must harness these technologies to *strengthen* democratic governance instead of allowing them to be used for repression. We must help more people – including those coming online for the first time – build resilience to threats they may face, including abuse or foreign influence operations.

I approach each of these missions with great respect for the dedicated public servants who work at the Department of State who have ably championed U.S. interests as cyber and digital issues have become a foreign policy imperative. If confirmed, I will dedicate time and energy to building the new Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy into a strong institution, with the talent and resources it needs to advance U.S. interests around the world through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programs.

I appreciate the trust President Biden and Secretary Blinken have expressed in asking me to serve in this new role, one so important for the future of the American people and our shared global future. I thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I look forward to your questions.