

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 26, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

We have followed the announcement of the Trusted Capital Marketplace (TCM) program with great interest. As members involved in the development of the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act (FIRRMA), we remain deeply concerned with the issues surfacing around global economic competition. We are pleased to see the Department of Defense (DoD) take the initiative to address the challenges commercial market participants and the Defense Industrial Base face from adversaries' extensive and creative market disruptions.

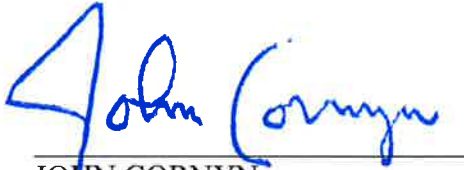
As you know, FIRRMA enables the Executive Branch to leverage the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States process to track and address foreign adversaries' actions in market activity ranging from venture investments to public company acquisitions. However, during our research with private sector investors, start-up company CEOs, and many larger company managers, it became clear that certain companies could be jeopardized simply by adversary affiliates showing interest in technologies, teams, or whole companies.

We believe the TCM initiative builds a capability to fight this malign influence through partnerships between DoD and other government agencies with private capital. These partnerships leverage the best the United States has to offer to address an organized adversary. It is critical that capabilities such as TCM be developed to organize the knowledge within the DoD, law enforcement, and the intelligence community, and apply it to support the development of all stages of research and company financing.

FIRRMA was only the first step in enabling the Executive Branch to compete effectively with our adversaries. We look forward to working with you wherever possible to support the DoD and the Executive Branch in its mission of defending the United States and her interests. We hope more capabilities like TCM will be developed over the coming months as the United States organizes the best in government and industry to compete more effectively in the marketplace.

As you continue your efforts to enhance protections against the widespread theft of dual-use technologies and intellectual property, we strongly urge you to fully utilize the Department's resources to provide an outlet for these evolving technologies. We applaud your efforts on this matter and offer our continued support to advance these urgent national security interests.

Sincerely,



JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator



TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator



TOM COTTON
United States Senator