

January 24, 2018

Senator John McCain, Chairman
Senator Jack Reed, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

We write regarding the upcoming hearing “Global Challenges and U.S. National Security Strategy.”¹ The Electronic Privacy Information Center (“EPIC”) was established in 1994 to focus public attention on emerging privacy and civil liberties issues. EPIC supports many of the goals set out in the White House National Security Strategy,² particularly the protection of democratic institutions and fundamental rights. We seek assurances that those goals will remain priorities for this administration.

Cybersecurity must also be a top priority for the United States. The National Security report states the “government must do a better job of protecting data to safeguard information and the privacy of the American people.”³ Strong encryption keeps the information of the American people secure, which by extension makes the nation secure. And perhaps it is a firewall and not a border wall that the United States needs to safeguard its national interests at this moment in time.⁴

The United States should stand for the protection of democratic institutions, the rule of law, an independent judiciary and the protection of fundamental rights. Our national security strategy should reflect these values.

We ask that this letter be entered in the hearing record. EPIC looks forward to working with the Committee.

Sincerely,

/s/ Marc Rotenberg

Marc Rotenberg
EPIC President

/s/ Christine Bannan

Christine Bannan
EPIC Policy Fellow

¹ U.S. Senate Comm. On Armed Services, *Global Challenges and U.S. National Security Strategy* (Jan. 25, 2018), <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/18-01-25-global-challenges-and-us-national-security-strategy>.

² White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Dec. 2017), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905-1.pdf>.

³ *Id.* at 13.

⁴ Garry Kasparov (@kasparov63), “If the US is serious about stopping a real danger from abroad, it should build a better firewall, not a bigger border wall.” (12:34 PM - 22 Jan 2018), <https://twitter.com/Kasparov63/status/955539139121819649>.