Foreign and security policy, like all other sectors, has firmly entered the digital age. Technology is increasingly affecting geopolitics, human rights, security policy and global development with new opportunities as well as risks emerging. As a reaction, the rise of technological diplomacy (TechPlomacy) acknowledges the key role that data-driven innovation and tech giants play in today’s society. It is about reshaping the way we think and do diplomacy in the 21st century by creating new avenues for dialogue and collaboration between tech industry, government and civil society. Alliances where size and influence are matched by equal levels of responsibility and joint action.

TechPlomacy as a foreign policy ‘experiment’

Diplomacy is a craft that has existed for hundreds of years. Traditionally, diplomacy is defined as the exercise of influence between sovereign nation states, and to some extent multilateral institutions and organizations. However, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the rapid digitalization at its core is in many ways challenging our traditional concepts of power both on a national, regional and global scale.

Two key trends seem to be at the centre of this transformation:

• Emerging data-driven technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) are already moving the needle of geopolitics and will have fundamental impact not only on sectors such as health care, education, transportation and the labour market, but also on the landscape of international relations, bringing with it new challenges and opportunities.

• The growing size and influence of a number of multinational tech-companies. With their global reach, billions of users, and annual revenues that exceed the GDPs of two-thirds of the world’s countries, some of the leading tech-companies today match or even surpass sovereign states in terms of international influence. This, in turn, demands a
corresponding degree of responsibility in helping to identify solutions to some if the challenges of the digital 21st century.

Recognizing that these two inter-linked trends affect Denmark’s ability to navigate in the world, the Government of Denmark decided in 2017 to elevate technology and digitalisation to a new foreign policy priority. To spearhead the effort, Denmark created a new diplomatic post as Tech Ambassador and established a global tech-representation with offices in Silicon Valley, Beijing and Copenhagen. Together with his team, Tech Ambassador Casper Klynge works to build strategic partnerships and engage in a frank and open dialogue on a broad range of topics directly with the tech-industry. The initiative also helps to bring home information on emerging tech-trends, which then feed into policy formulation domestically, in the EU and globally.

Denmark is the first country to systematically look at diplomacy through a technology ‘lens’ and to appoint a dedicated ambassador to technology. From the onset, this has been a de facto foreign policy experiment, redefining the traditional notion of diplomacy in the process.

Guiding questions
For the purpose of the Stanford Summit, we propose to view TechPlomacy as a concrete example of the second wave of ‘policy prototyping’. Design thinking may provide valuable insights into how governments and industry can jointly close the current tech policy gap.

In particular, we suggest framing discussions around some of the hard but important dilemmas and challenges often encountered when trying to bring technology, society and governance closer together. Below are some examples of questions which may be used as inspiration for discussions on technological diplomacy/foreign policy in the digital age at the Stanford Summit:

General questions

• How can foreign policy and international diplomacy, which is traditionally known as a complex and behind closed doors discipline, benefit from a policy prototyping?

• How do create a common ‘language’ on opportunities and challenges, both seen from the perspective of tech companies, states and institutions? What does the value proposition look like from different sides of the table?

• ‘Fail fast’ sounds good on paper but often does not work well in a government setting. So how do we get regulation right in a fast-paced digital age? Can agile governance be implemented in foreign policy? And what would it look like?

• Can/should TechPlomacy be scaled? Do we need more Tech Ambassadors or is one enough? What are the arguments for and against.

• Similarly, if government’s have Tech Ambassadors, should companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Alibaba then have a ‘foreign policy’? What can (and should) we expect from industry players?
**Thematic questions**

- The United Nations (UN) has served as the backbone of international collective problem solving for decades. But the UN is challenged. Antonio Guterres has therefore established a High-level Panel for Digital Cooperation. What does the UN first and foremost need to do to remain effective and relevant in the digital age?

- The Cambridge Analytica case, a number of other data and security breaches, as well as the entry into force of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has raised concerns on data ethics and the protection of personal data. What role should data ethics play going forward? Can “good” data ethics become a competitive edge in the 21st Century?

- Human rights are significantly affected by technology - both positively and negatively. Tech companies often find themselves in front of hard choices and difficult balancing acts between e.g. freedom of speech vs. fighting false information and hate speech. While most agree that international human rights law ‘offline’ equally applies ‘online’, it might be difficult for tech actors to understand and apply international treaty text to a fast paced tech scene. How can we “translate” human rights law and principles into tangible action points for tech?