

December 4, 2024

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader-Elect
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader-elect Thune and Majority Leader Schumer,

As senior national security professionals who have served in both Republican and Democratic administrations, we welcome the President-elect's intention to nominate Senator Marco Rubio, an experienced public servant, for Secretary of State. However, we are alarmed by the announcement that the President-elect intends to nominate Tulsi Gabbard to be Director of National Intelligence.

As the Director of National Intelligence, Ms. Gabbard would be entrusted with oversight of 18 U.S. intelligence agencies, including the identification and protection of human sources working in the most dangerous settings around the world to defend our national security, and the protection of our most sensitive sources and methods of gathering intelligence.

In light of this extraordinary responsibility, Senators must carefully scrutinize her qualifications as an intelligence professional and her record, including her uncoordinated trip to Syria in 2017 to meet with President Bashar al-Assad. Several of Ms. Gabbard's [past actions](#) call into question her ability to deliver unbiased intelligence briefings to the President, Congress, and to the entire national security apparatus.

Following her trip to Syria, for example, Ms. Gabbard aligned herself with Russian and Syrian officials. She publicly cast doubt on U.S. intelligence reports and overwhelming public reporting that Assad carried out chemical weapons attacks against Syrian civilians, [giving credence](#) to the debunked conspiracy that the attack was staged by agents of the United Kingdom.

In response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine launched in early 2022, Ms. Gabbard similarly [released a video](#) insinuating that U.S.-funded labs in Ukraine were developing biological weapons and that Ukraine's engagement with NATO posed a threat to Russian sovereignty, both arguments initially used by Russia to justify its illegal invasion of Ukraine. Her sympathy for dictators like Vladimir Putin and Assad raises questions about her judgment and fitness.

We also note that Ms. Gabbard, if confirmed, would be the least experienced Director of National Intelligence since the position was created. Prior directors had executive branch experience working on intelligence matters or served on a congressional intelligence committee. Most have also had significant management experience. The Senate must carefully evaluate whether Ms. Gabbard is equipped to effectively oversee an organizational structure as unique and large as the National Intelligence Program and also the effect of her holding this position on the willingness of our closest allies to share intelligence with the U.S.

We ask that the Senate fully exercise its constitutional advice and consent role with respect to this and other nominees, including through appropriate vetting, hearings, and regular order. In particular, Senate committees should consider in closed sessions all information available to the U.S. government when considering Ms. Gabbard's qualifications to manage our country's intelligence agencies, and more importantly, the protection of our intelligence sources and methods.

Sincerely,

Wendy R. Sherman, former Deputy Secretary of State

John Tien, former Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security

Melvin Gamble, Senior CIA Officer (Ret)

Brian P. McKeon, former Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources

The Hon. Rose Gottemoeller, former Deputy Secretary General of NATO

Joel Brenner, former NCIX

Gregory Thielmann, FSO (Ret) Fmr INR/SPM Office Director

Charles Gilbert, CIA Senior Service (Ret)

Anthony Lake, former Executive Director of UNICEF and former National Security Advisor

Thomas M. Countryman, former Assistant Secretary of State

Margaret Henoeh, Senior CIA official (Ret)

Lieutenant General Charles P. Otstott, USA (Ret), former Deputy Chairman NATO Military Committee

David Flucier, Sgt. US Army Special Forces (Separated)

Maj. Gen. Michael Lehnert, USMC (Ret)

Rear Admiral John Butler, U. S. Navy (Ret)

Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, USN JAGC (Ret)

Master Sergeant Susan K. Ritz (Ret)

Brigadier General David R. Irvine, USA (Ret)

Brigadier General Robert J. Felderman, USA (Ret)

Brigadier General Steven M. Anderson, USA (Ret)

Colonel M. Shane Riza, USAF (Ret)

Colonel Stephen C. Platt, USAF (Ret)

Lt. Colonel Amy McGrath, USMC (Ret)

LtCol. Joseph M. Plenzler, USMC, fmr strategic communication advisor to the Commandant of the Marine Corps

Lieutenant Colonel Millicent Wright, USA, (Ret), former Investigator, Department of the Army Inspector General

Victor Peterson, Retired USAF

Donald L "Larry" Sampler, Senior Executive Service, former Assistant Administrator at USAID

Robert Hutchings, former Chairman, National Intelligence Council

Ambassador Anthony Harrington (Ret)

Ambassador Glyn T. Davies (Ret), Former Executive Secretary, National Security Council

Ambassador Ian Kelly (Ret)

Ambassador Robert F. Cekuta (Ret)

Ambassador Steven R. Mann (Ret)

Ambassador Theodore Sedgwick (Ret)

Ambassador William Eacho (Ret), former member, Senior Advisory Group , Director of National Intelligence

Ambassador Eric S. Rubin (Ret)

Ambassador William Hill (Ret)

Ambassador Eric J. Boswell, former Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, and former Assistant Deputy Director for Security, ODNI

Ambassador Judith Cefkin (Ret), Former Ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati , Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu

Ambassador Laura Kennedy (Ret)

Ambassador Thomas B. Robertson (Ret)

Ambassador Robert Bradtke (Ret), former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs

Ambassador David Jacobson (Ret)

Ambassador Ken Brill (Ret), Founding Director of the U.S. National Counterproliferation Center, ODNI

Susan J. Koch, former Director, National Security Council Staff

George W. Look, former Senior Director for Arms Control and Non-proliferation, National Security Council

Kenneth Harbaugh, US Navy (Fmr)

Tom Malinowski, former Member of Congress and Assistant Secretary of State

Dr. Eric Rudenshield, former Director National Security Council

Ambassador Beth Jones, former Assistant Secretary of State

Ms. Jenifer Mackby

Ambassador Cindy Courville (Fmr), First U.S. Ambassador to the African Union and Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Sub Saharan Africa

Ambassador David B. Shear (Ret)

Ambassador James D. Melville, Jr. (Ret)

Ambassador James F. Schumaker (Ret)

Ambassador Larry C. Napper (Ret)

Ambassador John Phillips (Ret)

Ambassador Nancy J. Powell (Ret)

Ambassador Niels Marquardt (Ret)

Ambassador Wendy J. Chamberlin (Ret)

Daniel Kurtzer, former Ambassador to Egypt and Israel

Ambassador Allan Mustard (Ret)

Ambassador Barry B. White (Ret)

Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh (Ret)

Ambassador Carmen Lomellin (Fmr)

Ambassador Charles Ray (Ret), former Ambassador to Zimbabwe

Ambassador Mark D. Gilbert (Ret)

Ambassador Sheila Gwaltney (Ret)

Ambassador Jennifer Brush (Ret), OSCE

Ambassador Alan Solomont (Ret)

Ambassador Kenneth Yalowitz (Ret)

Mr. J. Christian Kessler, Office Dir. Weapons Tech. Export Control, Dept of State (Fmr)

Eric Schwartz, former Assistant Secretary of State

Karin L. Look, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Susan F. Burk, Former Acting Assistant Secretary of State

Bennett Freeman, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Donald C. Stanton, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Annie Pforzheimer, former Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

David Loevinger, Fmr Deputy Assistant Secretary US Treasury

Mark Fitzpatrick, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (acting)

Mary T. Curtin, retired Foreign Service Officer

Thomas J. Navratil, FSO (Ret)

Alex T. Johnson, former Chief of Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Ilya D. Levin, Foreign Service Officer (Ret)

James John Foster, State FSO (Ret)

Julie K. Herr, U.S. Department of State (Ret)

Paul L. Boyd, Counselor, U. S. Foreign Service (Ret)

Stephenie Foster, former Senior Advisor, Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues

Eric Green, former Senior Director for Russia and Central Asia, National Security Council

Dr. Linda S Gallini, Senior Advisor on Nuclear Affairs, U.S. Department of State (Ret)

Michele A. Manatt, former Senior Policy Advisor to three Assistant Secretaries of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

Bruce W. Jentleson, former State Department Policy Planning Senior Advisor

Tony Johnson, former Senior Intelligence Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Defense

Consul General Scott F. Kilner (Ret)

Dr. Jirair Ratevosian, former chief of staff, GHSD, Department of State