

the remainder of the 119th Congress: Allison Kent and Dorothea Lay.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in accordance with Public Law 93-618, as amended by Public Law 100-418, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee on Finance, appoints the following Members of the Finance Committee as congressional advisers on trade policy and negotiations to International conferences, meetings and negotiation sessions relating to trade agreements: the Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAPO; the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY; the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN; the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN; and the Senator from Washington, Ms. CANTWELL.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—READING OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the order of January 24, 1901, the traditional reading of Washington's Farewell Address take place on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, following the prayer and pledge of the flag.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### APPOINTMENT OF SENATOR ROGER WICKER TO READ WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the order of the Senate of January 24, 1901, as modified by the order of February 11, 2025, appoints the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. WICKER, to read Washington's Farewell Address on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 12; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume Executive Calendar No. 18 under the previous order; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senators BLUMENTHAL, WARREN, and SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

#### NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to ask my colleagues to join me in a very simple truth: Tulsi Gabbard should not be the next Director of National Intelligence.

It is a simple, unequivocal truth, and it should be so clear to everyone because she is unprepared and unqualified for this role. She lacks the confidence and character, and that has been made crystal clear in the proceedings so far during her confirmation.

I urge my colleagues to consider not just her lack of preparedness but the existential threat her confirmation would pose within the intelligence community that she would have.

Since the Revolutionary War, our Nation's intelligence professionals have served out of the spotlight, never expecting recognition or adulation or award. They serve in some of the most demanding, dangerous posts, in harm's way and hostile environments, far from their families—in many cases, unable to speak to their friends and loved ones for long periods of time and unable to tell them where they are or what they are doing. Others serve in the Nation's most sensitive facilities here in Washington, DC, or elsewhere in this country. Many of them constitute the best mathematicians, the best linguists, the best analysts, and cryptographic minds in the world.

These silent sentinels choose to serve because they believe in the values and institutions that we should cherish and protect: democracy, integrity, the truth. We expect our intelligence professionals to live to the standards personified by one of Connecticut's greatest sons, Nathan Hale, whose dying regret was that he had but one life to give to his country. He served ably and instrumentally during the Revolutionary War. He came to be admired and adulated for his patriotism, his dedication, his willingness to give his life for his country.

That is the tradition of our Nation's intelligence community. They know they are going into some of the riskiest places on the planet. They do it for their country, and they keep it secret. I can't support Tulsi Gabbard to be in charge of them. I can't countenance allowing someone who is this risky to them and to our country having responsibility over their lives and their capacity to contribute to the intelligence that is critical to this country avoiding disasters.

What I have learned in this body is that, very often, the most important

work of the intelligence community is to avoid disaster—a terrorist attack or other kinds of catastrophes—and the country never knows about it because it has been avoided. The history of these last 2½ decades, since 9/11, is we have avoided some of the greatest disasters that might have befallen us because of that intelligence community—their competence and their dedication.

Ms. Gabbard has given a part of her life to the Nation through uniformed service, and I respect her service in that role, but she has given another part of her life to our adversaries—in service to those who would see us become supplicants of ruthless, ruinous powers. Her integrity is, at best, suspect. Her judgment is flawed. Her moral compass is capricious. That is a nice way of putting it. For the last several years, she has made a career of antagonizing the very patriots who serve in the community she now wants to lead. Her disdain for the intelligence community undermines the public's trust in those very Agencies that often serve as our first line of defense and avoid those catastrophic attacks on this country or on our allies and partners and friends around the world. Those Agencies are not just our first line of defense; they are sometimes the line of defense against attacks.

Make no mistake, we are in an age of strife and conflict that demands leaders of principle and determination, leaders who are willing to counter the efforts of anyone who would seek to end all of our democratic and free people. A revanchist Russia is waging an illegal, murderous war against Ukraine. It is hell-bent on establishing itself as a disruptor in Europe for the foreseeable future—a disruptor of democracies. It is using disinformation through social media and tech for spreading lies and dividing democracy, bolstering far-right movements that threaten the fabric of our allies.

Democracy: It isn't just our Nation that is at risk; it is democracies around the world that are at risk from Russia. In the Indo-Pacific, the People's Republic of China is determined to defy the international norms that have maintained security in the region for 60 years. Iranian temerity in the Middle East throws the region potentially into an uncontained religious war, stained by sectarian zeal, and a potential use of nuclear weapons.

We must stop a nuclear-armed Iran at every potential cost, and we should be siding with our ally there—our great friend and partner, Israel—to stop a nuclear-armed Iran. We should support their effort to eradicate terrorism— Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis—proxies of Iran.

The axis of evil that we are seeing now—Russia, China, Iran—is moving against us. They are working together, and they are developing new methods to threaten the United States and our allies around the globe. They are potentially disastrous to our security and

our allies, and the intelligence community stands as a bulwark, seeking information sometimes at great cost, developing human sources of intelligence, using electronic surveillance—all of it depending on secrecy and trust.

The credibility of this Nation will crater if Tulsi Gabbard is confirmed. Ms. Gabbard's confirmation would be a self-inflicted wound.

I don't believe that conflict is unavoidable or inevitable, but we should not do our adversaries' work for them. Confirming Tulsi Gabbard puts in place someone who has been proven untrustworthy throughout her career, potentially an aide to Moscow, Beijing, Tehran, and others. They are waiting for this body to give her control of the intelligence community.

Putin's minions call Ms. Gabbard "dyevuchka nasha"—"our little girl." I am probably mispronouncing the Russian, but I have got the English right—"our little girl." She has routinely parroted the Kremlin's talking points on the war in Ukraine, castigated NATO, and painted Vladimir Putin as a victim. That is exactly how Vladimir Putin wants to be depicted—and Mother Russia—to seek the reestablishment of the Russian Empire, including Ukraine, potentially Poland, and other Eastern European countries. That is his agenda, and Ms. Tulsi Gabbard, apparently, is sympathetic.

As my colleagues in the intelligence community noted, she went as far as meeting with President Bashar al-Assad and upending the Obama administration's efforts to isolate a vicious dictator. For years, she has been one of the most effective apologists for autocracy—exactly what we should be eschewing at this moment when autocracy poses such a threat around the world. Her comments on podcasts were shared millions of times by the Kremlin's media arm in Africa, South America, and Asia. She is a star but not in a good way. She is a star for our adversaries, our enemies, and others who mean us harm.

She is either complicit in Putin's machinations or completely unable to distinguish fact from fiction. Either one makes her unqualified for this highly sensitive and critically important role. We can't let her—the proverbial fox—into the henhouse. We can't let her into a position that demands character, integrity, and sound judgment.

We can't let her be confirmed. I ask my colleagues to join with me in saying no to Tulsi Gabbard.

There are other confirmations that we have opposed. There are other individuals whom I have said are unqualified for positions of high trust in the President's Cabinet.

There is a general deference that should be paid to the President in choosing his team, but this position is one of the most critical in sensitivity and importance, demanding the highest trust and credibility. It should not be occupied by Tulsi Gabbard.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saying and voting no.

I yield the floor to my great colleague from the State of Massachusetts, Senator WARREN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. LUMMIS). The Senator from Massachusetts.

#### NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I thank Senator BLUMENTHAL for his unrelenting work to help protect our Nation and in raising this issue around Tulsi Gabbard as a nominee to be the Director of National Intelligence. I appreciate his work here, and I am proud to be able to follow him in this effort.

I am here today because Tulsi Gabbard's nomination is a national security threat. We are being confronted with a vote that could put all of us at risk.

Look, everybody in the Senate understands the threat that Tulsi Gabbard poses, but I want to make sure that everyone understands the job she would have.

Why do we even have a Director of National Intelligence? The short answer is to prevent another 9/11. The Director of National Intelligence position was born in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on New York that caused the Twin Towers to crash to the ground, that collapsed part of the Pentagon, that led to the deaths of 40 brave passengers on Flight 93. These terrorist attacks together killed almost 3,000 people, and they affected millions of family members, coworkers, neighbors, and people in every State in our country and around the world.

Soon after the attacks, we asked the most obvious questions: How did this happen? Why didn't we see this coming? Why weren't we able to head it off?

It rapidly became clear that our Nation had major intelligence failures. We were gathering intelligence abroad and here at home, but we were not effectively integrating and coordinating foreign, military, and domestic intelligence, and the result of that failure was catastrophic.

That is where the DNI Director comes in. The Director of National Intelligence is the keystone that holds together our intelligence community. This is the person who coordinates across Agencies to make sure that each component of our intelligence system is talking with every other, to make sure that what happened on 9/11 doesn't happen again. This person is the principal adviser to the President on any national security-related intelligence.

The Director of National Intelligence is central to how we make decisions about where our military should be deployed, is central to how we identify our greatest national security threats, and is central to knowing what our enemy is going to do next—all of that.

Tulsi Gabbard is aggressively unqualified for this job, and making her

the Director of National Intelligence will increase the risk of a national security crisis. For starters, she has no experience in the intelligence community, and she has never served as a national security official in the executive branch.

Tulsi Gabbard is also disqualified to be Director of National Intelligence—not just unqualified but actually disqualified. Her disqualifications mean she should be kept far, far away from any part of our government intelligence system.

The problems with Tulsi Gabbard are many. She is an apologist for Vladimir Putin, routinely spreading Russian misinformation and Russian talking points about both Ukraine and Syria. She rejected our own U.S. intelligence that Assad used chemical weapons against Syrian civilians, and she went to Syria to meet with Assad and with a Syrian cleric who had threatened to activate a network of suicide bombers within the United States and Europe.

So let me say this as clearly as I can: Tulsi Gabbard would be the No. 1 person in charge of all of our Nation's secrets—all of them: all of our intelligence, every piece of secret information that we gather from around the world and every secret that our allies around the world might share with us. She would know all of it, and she would have access to all of it, and she would be the one who would fit it all together. Then she would be one of the people responsible for advising the President on when and where to use our military.

I am deeply concerned about Tulsi Gabbard's track record and whether she can be trusted with our secrets, but I am not the only one who is worried. With the history that Tulsi Gabbard has, can we reasonably expect other nations to trust us with the secret information they gather?

Even if Gabbard behaved admirably as DNI, the United States would likely have less access to sensitive information because our allies just wouldn't want to take a chance on her, just wouldn't want to take a chance that information they gathered and passed along—information that could put their own operatives at risk, for example—would not want to take the chance that they would pass that information along to the United States, that Tulsi Gabbard would see it, and then who knows where it goes.

I am concerned that other countries would say, because they don't want to take a chance on her, that it would further undercut national security if Tulsi Gabbard were confirmed as DNI.

What I am saying tonight is not breaking news. There is nothing here that hasn't been said before. Concerns about Tulsi Gabbard have been circulating on Capitol Hill for years. Every single Senator—Democrat, Republican, or Independent—knows that they are putting our national security at risk if they support Tulsi Gabbard's confirmation to head our Nation's intelligence