

That is the end of his letter. I just want to say how grateful I am both for William Webster's outstanding public service and commitment to our Nation and for his willingness to stand up now and call out the threats posed by Tulsi Gabbard's nomination to DNI.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists echoes these concerns in a piece they published this week entitled "Tulsi Gabbard as U.S. intelligence chief would undermine efforts against the spread of chemical and biological weapons."

Gabbard's confirmation would undermine one of the signature foreign policy accomplishments of President Donald Trump's first term: countering the threat posed by chemical weapons. Following a sarin attack on the Syrian city of Khan Sheikhoun on April 4, 2017, the Trump Administration launched a cruise missile strike against an airbase that U.S. intelligence determined Assad's forces had used to launch the chemical assault. After intelligence agencies determined that Syrian helicopters had conducted a chlorine gas attack on Douma on April 7, 2018, Trump authorized another missile strike, this time along with the United Kingdom and France, against Syrian chemical weapons facilities. Both strikes were effective at deterring further Syrian use of chemical weapons. After April 2017 the Syrian air force did not use sarin and after April 2018 Syrian helicopters stopped dropping chlorine barrel bombs.

Gabbard, however, has repeatedly claimed, including at her confirmation hearing, that the chemical attacks against Khan Sheikhoun and Douma were staged by anti-Assad groups to provoke a Western military intervention. In 2019, Gabbard, then a Democratic presidential candidate, accused Trump of launching the strikes based on flawed intelligence: "Rather than waiting for evidence, Trump acted on impulse and emotion, relying on social media posts and unverified sources originating from within territory held by al Qaeda. In March 2021, Gabbard repeated her unfounded allegation that there is no evidence supporting the Syrian government's responsibility for conducting the 'alleged' chemical attack on Douma. She accused the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, (OPCW), which administers the global treaty banning chemical weapons and investigated the attack, of a cover-up and claimed that Trump's missile strikes on Syria were 'unconstitutional.'"

Gabbard's claims about false-flag attacks, however, ignores intelligence put forward by the Trump Administration and France, an investigation by the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, and multiple investigations by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. These national and international investigations based their conclusions on a compelling combination of signals intelligence, eyewitness testimony, photographs, videos, chemical forensic analyses, medical records, analyses of munitions fragments, satellite imagery, and information provided by third parties. For Gabbard to accuse opposition groups, [who were] the victims of Syria's chemical atrocities, of attacking themselves with chlorine and sarin is a grotesque perversion of the truth.

And yet she continues it.

Instead of relying on reputable sources, Gabbard has repeated Russian and Syrian disinformation and discredited conspiracy theories to call into question the quality of US intelligence, Trump's judgment, and the credibility of the Organization for the Prohi-

bition of Chemical Weapons. In March 2021, Gabbard signed a "statement of concern" about the organization's investigation of the Douma attack that echoed Russian propaganda and was promoted by a group linked to Wikileaks. Gabbard has made her claims about the Syrian chemical attacks despite warnings from the US intelligence community that these types of allegations are a common feature of the Kremlin's disinformation campaigns. Her reliance on these dubious sources demonstrates a dangerously poor lack of judgment for someone seeking the highest-ranking position in the intelligence community.

Gabbard's deeply flawed position on Syria's use of chemical weapons is still highly relevant today. With the fall of the Assad regime last December, the issue of how to secure and destroy Syria's remaining chemical weapons is back on the international agenda. How can Gabbard be trusted to oversee intelligence on this topic if she refuses to believe that Syria used chemical weapons after it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC, that treaty banning chemical weapons, in 2013? Will she provide Trump with intelligence that undermines her own strongly held position on this issue or will she twist intelligence to fit her [own] worldview?

And there is more at stake than just the threat posed by Syria's remaining chemical weapons. Between 2017 and 2020, the Trump Administration found Russia in violation of both the chemical weapons treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention, which bans biological weapons. Trump imposed two rounds of sanctions on Russia for using the Novichok nerve agent to poison a Russian defector. In August 2020, Trump blacklisted three Russian institutes responsible for developing chemical and biological weapons. Since then, the United States has accused Russia of using the chemical weapon chloropicrin, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has confirmed Russia's use of riot control agents on the battlefield in Ukraine, both of which are violations of the chemical weapons treaty. There are also disturbing signs that Russia is modernizing its biological weapons program by building a new maximum containment laboratory in a military facility.

To divert attention from its own chemical and biological weapons, Russia has made a series of unfounded and debunked allegations that the United States and Ukraine are developing and using these weapons. Gabbard came perilously close to endorsing these claims in 2022 and she did embrace other elements of Russian (and Chinese) disinformation about the allegedly nefarious and dangerous activities of US-supported public health labs in Ukraine, including labs built during Donald Trump's first term. How can Gabbard be trusted to advise the president on issues related to the verification of Russia's compliance with chemical and biological arms control?

Based on this track record, it is difficult to see how Gabbard can be relied upon to provide the quality of intelligence and national security advice needed by the commander in chief during these perilous times. For the Senate to confirm Gabbard would be national security malpractice.

And that is the end of the piece.

I am looking to see who else is going to be here.

Just finish up? OK. Just wanted to make sure, because I know what is happening here.

In a relay race, it is always important to know if you have to hand off the baton.

Look, I will conclude with this: National security officials and experts in

intelligence are begging the Senate to exercise their constitutional duty and vote no on Tulsi Gabbard for Director of National Intelligence. We are being asked to vote for someone whose loyalty to this country has been questioned repeatedly and has raised alarms for our allies across the globe. It would be a dangerous mistake to give Tulsi Gabbard access to all of our secrets, and an even greater mistake to trust Tulsi Gabbard to protect this country.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this week, Senate Republicans will force a pair of nominees through the Senate they know perfectly well do not merit confirmation. But Republicans will confirm them anyway because Donald Trump is strong-arming them into submission.

Today, Senate Democrats are here on the floor to oppose one of those two nominees, Tulsi Gabbard. She has been nominated by the President to serve as Director of National Intelligence, the No. 1 intelligence officer of the entire Federal Government.

By now, there is no question about whether or not Ms. Gabbard is qualified to lead America's intelligence Agencies because by any objective measure and by every objective measure as well, she is not qualified.

From the moment she was nominated, both Democrats and Republicans were puzzled by this choice. Of all people Donald Trump could have picked to oversee national intelligence, he picked someone known for repeating Russian propaganda and getting duped by conspiracy theories. Do Republicans honestly think this is the best person for the job of all the other so many qualified people?

Fifty-two Republicans voted last night to advance her, but I know both sides of the aisle still remain troubled by this nominee. I hope—I pray—for the sake of our country, of our security, Republican colleagues think very carefully before casting their vote. I hope they think about the safety of our people, the concerns of our allies, and the threats—the threats—posed by the likes of Putin and Xi and others before casting their vote.

Every single Democrat, I am proud to say, will oppose the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard because we simply cannot in good conscience trust our most classified secrets to someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for conspiracy theories. It is alarmingly dangerous—dangerous—not just bad but dangerous—to trust someone like that. The job of national intelligence is a matter of life and death. The job is to oversee all 18 of the Nation's intelligence Agencies.

DNI would be the top intelligence adviser to the President of the United States. It would be their job to decide what intelligence reaches the President's desk and what does not. Few positions in government carry the burden that DNI will carry every single day.

The person who serves as DNI, therefore, cannot be someone controversial; they cannot be someone who has to literally convince Senators to ignore their checkered past, to ignore their conspiratorial views, and, essentially, ask Senators to hold their nose while they support her. And that is what Tulsi Gabbard has had to do with so many Senate Republicans.

Who is kidding who? Who are our Republican colleagues kidding when they talk about that she is a good choice? It is incredible. It is incredible given her long list of frailties and dishonesty and conspiracies. There should never—never—be a shred of doubt that the DNI is qualified, informed, and shows sound judgment. Tulsi fails to meet—she wouldn't meet a low bar, but this job has a very high bar because it is so important to our security.

The Director of National Intelligence must be fluent in the truth—fluent in the truth. But Ms. Gabbard speaks the language of falsities and conspiracy theories.

Shortly after—listen to this, America. This is who they want to put in. This is who Donald Trump wants to put in, someone who, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, Gabbard infamously spread a false conspiracy theory. She suggested that the U.S. was supporting bioweapon laboratories in Ukraine without a shred of evidence.

You know where this myth came from, Donald Trump? From Russia. It was spread to justify Putin's invasion. That alone is more than enough to be disqualified for anyone seeking to become the top intelligent adviser to the President of the United States.

But the world is inside-out, turned topsy-turvy, upside down by Donald Trump. And it is confounding that America is at this point and even more confounding that our Republican colleagues at this point are going along with someone they know is so patently bad for this Agency. They should be ashamed of themselves. There are certain times when you have to buck up. And with Ms. Gabbard, this is one of them.

The Director of National Intelligence must be strong against America's adversaries. But Ms. Gabbard has spent years sympathizing not with America's allies—oh, no—but with the likes of Putin and Bashar al-Assad. Nobody who plans a secret face-to-face meeting with Bashar al-Assad while in the middle of slaughtering his own people should be in this job. You can't possibly claim to be strong against America's adversaries after Assad used chemical weapons against his own people. This list goes on and on. It is almost fictional, it is so bad.

After Assad used chemical weapons against his own people in 2017 and 2018,

Tulsi Gabbard turned against U.S. intelligence and sided with fringe conspiracy theorists to cast doubt on these two specific incidents.

I want to be clear on how strange and troubling this episode was. On the one side, you had the entire U.S. intelligence ecosystem and the intelligence of the French Government and the organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons all saying the same thing: Assad used chemical weapons against his own people in both 2017 and 2018. These findings were not just conjecture; they were based on satellite imagery, witness accounts, medical experts. In other words, the kind of intelligence data that Ms. Gabbard would be responsible for evaluating on this important job.

And then on the other side, on the other side of all these intelligence experts and all this evidence, you have Tulsi Gabbard relying on the judgment of an individual who had appeared on Russian-funded propaganda outlets. That is who she relied on, someone who appears on Russian-funded propaganda outlets, puts out this crazy theory against all evidence of every intelligence Agency in the U.S. and other countries. And Gabbard goes for it.

She was trying to shield Assad for his inhumane conduct because she met with him. She supported Assad.

I have to say, I have never heard—never heard—of a nominee for any intelligence Agency who was so ready and willing to question the findings of America's own intelligence operations, yet accepts Russian disinformation so easily without the same kind of skepticism.

And, of course, I am deeply troubled by Ms. Gabbard's long record showing weakness against Russia when it comes to Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

On the night Russia invaded Ukraine—a horrible night—and launched the first full-scale invasion of a sovereign nation in Europe since World War II, what was Ms. Gabbard doing? She was on Twitter at 11:30 blaming NATO and the U.S. for starting the war.

This is the head of national intelligence? Give me a break.

She was saying that the war could have been avoided had NATO and the U.S. just accommodated Putin. That is who we are going to have as the head of DNI when we deal with our adversary Vladimir Putin. Russian TV, of course, aired Tulsi Gabbard's comments shortly thereafter.

And now—and now—with all this evidence, Republicans want to make this person the top U.S. intel chief. Who could believe it? Where is all our right-wing friends in the hawkish community? Where are the editorial pages of these rightwing newspapers?

When Ms. Gabbard had the opportunity to repair her image before the Senate Intel Committee and ease the deep worries Senators from both sides of the aisle had about her, she only exacerbated the worries. She refused to

state the very obvious truth about Edward Snowden: that he is a traitor—a traitor—who stole sensitive intelligence and now lives in Russia under the watchful eye of Russian security services. We had so many of our Republican colleagues denounce Snowden, and now they vote for Ms. Gabbard. Incredible.

I can't imagine what our allies were thinking, watching Tulsi Gabbard testifying, refusing to do something as simple as condemning Edward Snowden. I fear the great erosion of trust between the United States and our allies, whose intelligence we rely on to keep America safe. We have a good sharing arrangement with them. I fear that erosion should Gabbard be confirmed.

Senate Republicans know very well that Gabbard has no business advising the President on matters of classified intelligence. They know her judgment is way off the mark—way off the mark. They know her troubling history of pushing conspiracy theories and repeating Russian propaganda.

So deep down, this nominee is about one very simple question: What do Senate Republicans care more about? Doing the right thing for national security, making sure a known conspiracy theorist, a believer in false information, someone who has no fact-based analysis of anything—do they care more about doing the right thing for national security? Do Republicans care more about doing the right thing for national security? Or doing whatever is necessary to keep Donald Trump happy? The American people will know the answer tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:40 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

KIRSTEN BAESLER, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE FRANK T. BROGAN.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SEAN CAIRCROSS, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE NATIONAL CYBER DIRECTOR, VICE HARRY COKER, JR., RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JOHN HURLEY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR TERRORISM AND FINANCIAL CRIMES, VICE BRIAN EDDIE NELSON.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CHARLES KUSHNER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO. WARREN STEPHENS, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF