

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



Post-Hearing Questions for the Record for

Joseph Kent

Upon his nomination to be

Director of National Counterterrorism Center

Questions from Vice Chairman Warner

QUESTION 1: At your confirmation hearing you cited “ongoing litigation” as the basis for your inability to answer questions regarding your participation in the in the group chat that is the subject of The Atlantic article published by Jeffrey Goldberg on March 24, 2025.

- A.** Please provide the case name, court, docket number, and other information sufficient to identify the specific litigation you were referencing.

Answer: American Oversight v. Hegseth, et al., No. 1:25-cv-00883 (D.D.C.)

- B.** Are you subject to a court-imposed gag order or similar legal prohibition that prevents you from answering the Committee’s questions regarding your participation in the group chat? If not, please specify how the existence of such litigation prohibits you from answering the Committee’s questions.

Answer: I am not subject to a court-imposed legal prohibition. Nonetheless, I have been advised that it is appropriate to limit public comment related to pending litigation matters to which ODNI is a party.

- C.** If the existence of such litigation prohibits you from answering questions regarding your participation in the group chat, why are you able to state, as you did at your confirmation hearing, that the group chat contained “no classified information”?

Answer: Leaders throughout the Executive Branch have confirmed that the chat you reference did not contain classified information. It was appropriate, and consistent with my reasonable caution in otherwise addressing pending litigation, to confirm that which so many others have said publicly.

- D.** Has an officer with original classification authority reviewed all the messages in the group chat that is the subject of The Atlantic article and determined whether any of the messages were properly classified at any time before or after the messages were sent? If so, please provide the identity of the officer, as well as the date and outcome of their review. If no such review has occurred, what is the basis for your statement that the group chat contained “no classified information”?

Answer: The Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency are all original classification authorities that have confirmed that the messages you reference were not classified.

QUESTION 2: Unless you can identify a gag order or similar legal prohibition that bars you from answering the Committee's questions, please answer the following questions regarding your participation in the group chat that is the subject of The Atlantic article:

A. Did you use a personal or government device to participate in the group chat?

Answer: I have been advised that it is appropriate to limit public comment related to pending litigation matters to which ODNI is a party.

B. Has any agency or office conducted a forensic examination of the device you used to participate in the Signal group chat? If so, when was the examination conducted and what were its results.

Answer: I have been advised that it is appropriate to limit public comment related to pending litigation matters to which ODNI is a party.

C. Have you participated in any other Signal group chats to conduct official government business?

Answer: Signal is a secure messaging platform and a valuable tool for the Administration to efficiently communicate in real time where access to agency systems is otherwise impracticable. I have appropriately used Signal as one among many valuable tools to help meet the mission of the ODNI.

QUESTION 3: In the group chat you wrote:

There is nothing time sensitive driving the time line. We'll have the exact same options in a month.

The Israelis will likely take strikes & therefore ask us for more support to replenish whatever they use against the Houthis. But that's a minor factor.

I will send you the unclass data we pulled on BAM shipping.

Has an officer with original classification authority reviewed this information and determined whether it was properly classified at any time before or after the message was sent? If so, please provide the identity of the officer, as well as the date and outcome of their review. In addition, please describe the source of the information concerning the Israelis referenced in this message.

Answer: The Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency are all original classification authorities that have confirmed that the messages you reference were not classified.

QUESTION 4: At your confirmation hearing you espoused a conspiracy theory that the FBI and the Intelligence Community were involved in planning and directing the violence that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, and stated that “we ... in the Intelligence Community” are “looking into” that involvement. On December 12, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General (IG) Michael E. Horowitz, issued a report, which determined that “none of [the] FBI CHSs [who were in Washington, D.C., on January 6, 2021] was authorized by the FBI to enter the Capitol or a restricted area or to otherwise break the law on January 6, nor was any CHS directed by the FBI to encourage others to commit illegal acts on January 6.”

A. Why do you disagree with the DOJ IG’s conclusions?

Answer: The DOJ cannot impartially investigate itself; this is why the ODNI is looking into this matter. The DOJ IG investigation identified 26 CHS present on January 6th. As an outside organization, we must investigate their actions and identities to determine whether their actions aligned with law and intelligence policy. I also note that there has been no review on the role of other IC elements in the January 6th incident.

To restore the trust in our intelligence community it is essential that we provide the American people with transparency about the IC’s role in January 6th. This is why the ODNI is investigating this matter.

B. In responses to pre-hearing questions, you wrote: “The American people deserve to see the unredacted reporting from the FBI that explains what their CHSs were tasked to do and what the CHSs reported to their FBI handler.”

Based on your access to classified information as the DNI's chief of staff, have you identified any information in FBI case files to contradict the IG's conclusions? If yes, please provide that information to the Committee.

Answer: We are in the process of requesting and obtaining these files.

- C. Please identify which elements and offices within the Intelligence Community are participating in the "investigation" you cited in your testimony, and the nature of that participation. How many people from each element and office are working full or part-time on the investigation?

Answer: The DNI's Director's Initiative Group (DIG) is leading this effort in conjunction with all relevant elements of the IC.

- D. What is the FBI's role, if any, in the IC's "investigation"?

Answer: The FBI is represented in the DIG.

- E. Please describe the terms of reference of this "investigation," including scope, goals, methodology, and process.

Answer: See attached DIG memorandum and press release.

- F. How long is the "investigation" expected to last? What does the IC intend to do with the results of its investigation in terms of congressional reporting and/or public release?

Answer: The investigation will last up to one year and a report will be publicly released.

- G. The DoJ IG interviewed more than 200 witnesses, including relevant FBI leadership, and reviewed more than 500,000 documents, including "CHS reporting, thousands of tips provided to the FBI, investigative and intelligence records from the FBI case management system, emails, instant messages, and phone records, contemporaneous notes of meetings and telephone calls, chronologies concerning the lead-up of events to January 6..." To what extent is the IC "investigation" replicating the OIG's interviews, document review and other methodological approaches?

Answer: The ODNI investigation will examine the roles of all IC elements in January 6th to ensure alignment with law and policy. It will also determine whether FBI tasked these CHS pursuant to their intelligence authorities and, if so, will look at the actions, taskings and reporting pertaining to the CHSs to ensure compliance with law and intelligence policy.

QUESTION 5: At your confirmation hearing you referred to “the Russia Hoax” and suggested that determinations of Russian intervention in the 2016 election were “widely debunked.” On a unanimous basis, after a years-long investigation, this Committee concluded that “Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the Russian effort to hack computer networks and accounts affiliated with the Democratic Party and leak information damaging to Hillary Clinton and her campaign for president. Moscow’s intent was to harm the Clinton Campaign, tarnish an expected Clinton presidential administration, help the Trump Campaign after Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee, and undermine the U.S. democratic process.”

A. Do you challenge the credibility of the Committee’s 2020 report and these conclusions?

Answer: The Durham Report refutes the idea that President Trump or his campaign team colluded with the Russian government and makes it abundantly clear that this narrative was seeded by the DNC and the Clinton campaign.

B. Which specific sources do you rely on to support your claim that Russian intervention in the 2016 election have been “widely debunked”?

Answer: The Durham Report from May 12th 2023:

“REPORT ON MATTERS RELATED TO INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND INVESTIGATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS.”

Questions from Senators Heinrich and Wyden

DNI Gabbard’s Director’s Initiatives Group (DIG)

On April 8, *The Washington Post* reported that the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) has created a task force, called the Director's Initiatives Group, or DIG, charged with "restoring transparency and accountability to the Intelligence Community." *The Washington Post* reports that the DIG is composed of up to ten people from outside the agency, vetted by the White House, and that its members have been working out of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) headquarters since late February. The DNI's press release on the stand-up of the DIG states that the DIG is "already identifying wasteful spending in real time, streamlining outdated processes, reviewing documents for declassification, and leading ongoing efforts to root out abuses of power and politicization." In your current capacity as an advisor to Director Gabbard, please answer the following questions:

QUESTION 1: Who are the members of the Director's Initiatives Group? What experience or expertise do they bring to their roles as DIG members? What is their specific mandate? What authorities have they been given? Have they been assigned to particular IC entities?

Answer: *The personnel in the Director's Initiatives Group (DIG) are drawn from multiple agencies within the IC, with decades of intelligence and law enforcement experience.*

The DIG operates pursuant to various authorities, including the National Security Act and the transparency and accountability missions found in directions in the Executive Orders President Trump entered in records from January 20, 2025. This includes other initiatives and such tasks as are specifically directed by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

QUESTION 2: What level of clearances do they hold, to what extent are they read into IC compartments, and what specific IC databases and other systems do they have direct access to?

Answer: *All DIG members have a TS/SCI clearance and current polygraph or receive one within 90 days of reporting to the DIG, this is standard across the IC. In the interest of transparency and accountability, DIG personnel are afforded access to any IC system, database, or document repositories essential for task completion. These are National Security Systems operated by elements of the intelligence community, their contractors, or other entities on behalf of IC*

elements. The owners of these systems, databases, or document repositories are responsible for sharing such data with the ODNI when directed to do so by the DNI. In instances where the DIG has needed sub-compartmented access, it has been able to work with the DNI CAPCO office and obtain one-time accesses.

QUESTION 3: Which IC entities and which areas of inquiry is the DIG prioritizing?

Answer: DIG is already hard at work executing President Trump's Executive Orders aimed at rebuilding trust in the IC - starting with investigating weaponization, rooting out deep-seeded politicization, exposing unauthorized disclosures of classified intelligence, and declassifying information that serves a public interest. The DIG is also leading assessments of IC structure, resourcing, and personnel to improve efficiency and eliminate wasteful spending. The DIG will work across all IC entities to ensure transparency and accountability is restored in the IC.

QUESTION 4: Not including claims regarding programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion or climate change, what “wasteful spending” has the DIG identified, and how was such spending determined to be wasteful?

Answer: The DIG is identifying and reporting systems for improvements, consolidations, reductions, or elimination and has identified many wasteful or duplicative spending measures within the ODNI. Such findings include excessive empty desks at an ODNI off-site that would save the IC \$40M per year, duplicative senior staff across Directorates, Centers, and Offices to be measured at \$500k-\$1M per year in savings per office, and duplicative commercial data purchases valued at approximately \$25M.

QUESTION 5: Not including claims regarding processes related to diversity, equity and inclusion or climate change, what “outdated processes” has the DIG identified, and how were such processes determined to be outdated?

Answer: There are many IC programs that have outlived their useful life spans. The DIG has identified multiple outdated processes, such as prohibitive methods within the security screening pipeline for outside entities, process consolidation, and levels of supervisory senior staff to employee ratios. The DIG has reviewed such projects as budget, personnel, and work structures, etc., to determine what should be recommended to IC leadership for implementation.

QUESTION 6: What specific evidence has the DIG found of “abuses of power and politicization”? How, exactly, is it being “root[ed] out”? Have any IC personnel been fired or otherwise disciplined for “abuses of power and politicization”? If yes, please provide details.

Answer: The DIG will seek to conduct fair, fact-based reviews of information via processes that are repeatable and transparent and focused on facts, not outcomes. The DIG uncovered evidence of political bias injected into IC assessments around numerous topics. I understand that no one has been recommended for disciplinary action for abuse of power at this point but our inquiries and investigations are still relatively new. The objective is not disciplinary action, but truth and accountability. Any personnel actions will be recommendations made based on the documented and verified facts acquired.

QUESTION 7: How is the DIG approaching “reviewing documents for declassification”? What specific topics is the DIG and the Director seeking to have declassified?

Answer: Through the DNI’s declassification authority and in response to the President’s Executive Orders, the DIG has begun declassifying the MLK, JFK, and RFK files. All classified topics are subject to oversight, and review, per the laws, DNI policies, and Presidential Executive Orders. The DIG works closely with the ODNI Information Management Office to ensure the declassification processes that exists within ODNI and throughout the IC are still intact. Any information selected for potential declassification is subject to the appropriate process to ensure the DNI and President are fully informed on potential impacts.

QUESTION 8: During her confirmation process, the DNI indicated that she supported the work of the Public Interest Declassification Board (PIDB). Has the DIG consulted with the PIDB about declassification priorities? If not, does it intend to?

Answer: The DIG recently met with the PIDB and appreciates their input.

QUESTION 9: Members of Congress, whose representation of the American people extends to classified work on their behalf, have identified areas for declassification in the public interest. As a current advisor to the DNI, will you help

ensure that the DIG engages with the Committee to identify areas for declassification?

Answer: Yes.

QUESTION 10: During her confirmation process, the DNI stated that she would “prioritize reforms to modernize classification policies, practices, and technologies to reflect the realities of the digital age.” She then enumerated a long list of reforms necessary to modernize, streamline and otherwise improve the declassification system. Besides record-by-record, or topic-by-topic declassification reviews, is the DIG engaged in these urgent and long-overdue reform efforts?

Answer: The DIG operates with a solutions-oriented mindset to enhance public trust through proactive and timely reforms to include modernizing classification reforms to reflect the progress of advanced technologies. The DNI is using the DIG efficiency data and findings to help inform and drive modernization, technology investment and other systemic improvements for the IC.

QUESTION 11: The Committee was not notified in advance of the DIG’s creation or the DNI’s press release announcing the DIG’s stand-up. Will you ensure, as a current advisor to the DNI, that the Committee is kept fully and currently informed of all aspects of the DIG’s work?

Answer: Yes.

Questions from Senator Kelly

QUESTION 1: Following up on my question at your hearing, if the Signal App were available in May 2011, would it have been appropriate for Obama Administration officials to use it to communicate information that U.S. Navy SEALs were taking off in helicopters bound for Pakistan to conduct a raid against Usama Bin Laden’s residence in Abbottabad several hours before the raid was to take place? Would there be any issue with them discussing details like the specific timing of the operation or weapons to be employed on Signal?

Answer: I cannot speculate on hypotheticals.

QUESTION 2: The 2011 UBL raid was a counterterrorism mission. In your judgment as the nominee to be the NCTC Director, would such information have

been classified or unclassified?

Answer: I cannot speculate on hypotheticals.

QUESTION 3: Please provide evidence to substantiate your claims that a number of immigrants with ties to ISIS entered our nation despite NCTC identifying them and that NCTC identified over a thousand Afghan refugees with ties to terrorists that were let into our nation.

Answer: A response to this question will be provided in classified channels.



Office of *the*
Director of National Intelligence



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ODNI News Release No. 05-25
April 8, 2025

DNI Gabbard Establishes Task Force to Restore Trust in the Intelligence Community and End Weaponization of Government Against Americans


WASHINGTON, D.C. - Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard announced the establishment of a new task force charged with restoring transparency and accountability to the Intelligence Community (IC).


Her newly-established Director's Initiatives Group (DIG) is already hard at work executing President Trump's Executive Orders aimed at rebuilding trust in the IC — starting with investigating weaponization, rooting out deep-seeded politicization, exposing unauthorized disclosures of classified intelligence, and declassifying information that serves a public interest. The DIG is also leading assessments of IC structure, resourcing, and personnel to improve efficiency and eliminate wasteful spending.

“In order to rebuild trust in the Intelligence Community and execute the tasks required by President Trump’s intelligence-related Executive Orders, I established the Director’s Initiatives Group to bring about transparency and accountability across the IC. We are already identifying wasteful spending in real time, streamlining outdated processes, reviewing documents for declassification, and leading ongoing efforts to root out abuses of power and politicization.

“President Trump promised the American people maximum transparency and accountability. We are committed to executing the President’s vision and focusing the Intelligence Community on its core mission: ensuring our security by providing the President and policymakers with timely, apolitical, objective, relevant intelligence to inform their decision-making to ensure the safety, security and freedom of the American people,” **said DNI Gabbard.**

Under the direction of DNI Gabbard, the work of the DIG is well underway and has thus far implemented the following actions:

- Reviewing documents for potential declassification — including information related to COVID-19 origins, Crossfire Hurricane, Anomalous Health Incidents, the Biden Administration’s domestic surveillance and censorship actions against Americans, and more.
- Identifying wasteful spending, inefficiencies, and bloated bureaucracy.
- Declassification and release of the JFK , RFK, and MLK assassination files.

Per POTUS’s directive, DNI Gabbard has taken steps to restore trust in the Intelligence Community by revoking security clearances  for individuals who no longer have an active role in national security — including former President Biden, Liz Cheney, and Hillary Clinton.

Further, the Director held employees who participated in sexually-explicit NSA chatrooms accountable, and has begun pursuing unauthorized leaks of classified information within the IC.

See the full list of the related EOs and Presidential actions driving the DIG's efforts below:

- EO 14147 on Ending the Weaponization of the Federal Government
- EO 14149 on Restoring Freedom of Speech and Ending Federal Censorship
- EO 14151 on Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing
- EO 14152 on Holding Former Government Officials Accountable for Election Interference and Improper Disclosure of Sensitive Governmental Information
- EO 14158 on Establishing and Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency"
- EO 14176 on the Declassification of Records Concerning the Assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- EO 14210 on Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative
- EO 14217 on Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy
- EO 14219 on Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Deregulatory Initiative
- EO 14248 on Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections
- EO 14249 on Protecting America's Bank Account Against Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
- Presidential Memorandum on the Immediate Declassification of Materials Related to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation

Read more about the DIG in a Fox News exclusive .

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