

In Senate confirmation hearings for FBI and DNI directors

# Democrats offer tepid opposition to fascist Kash Patel, but howl over Tulsi Gabbard's refusal to denounce Edward Snowden

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30 January 2025

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump's nominees for the director of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), Kashyap "Kash" Patel and former Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, faced multi-hour hearings before the Senate Judiciary and Intelligence Committees, respectively.

The hearings, like all the rest for Trump's nominees, were conducted in friendly bipartisan manner. Democrats and Republicans agreed repeatedly in both hearings on the necessity of defending the police and on "national security."

If Patel is confirmed to lead the FBI, he will head an agency with some 38,000 agents, a \$9 billion budget, and a history of attacking the democratic rights of the working class in the United States and internationally for over a century. In the case of Gabbard, she would be in charge of coordinating the work of 18 different intelligence agencies charged with spying on the entire planet.

While Democrats in both hearings made clear they would be opposing both nominees, they were quick to add that this was not a "partisan" issue.

In opposing Patel for FBI director, ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Dick Durbin (Democrat-Illinois) said, "During the time I have served on this committee I have had the opportunity to consider four FBI director nominations. Each one was a Republican and I voted for all of them."

Durbin said he would not support Patel for FBI director because he has "virtually no experience" to lead the "preeminent law enforcement agency." He attacked Patel for characterizing former FBI director Robert Mueller as a "swamp creature" and for his support of Trump's fascist footsoldiers via the promotion of the "January 6 choir."

The "J6 choir" was comprised of several violent participants in Trump's failed coup who put out a recording in which they sang the national anthem while in jail. Throughout his 2024 campaign, Trump frequently played the fascist jingle at his rallies and Patel shared it on his social media accounts. Last week, Trump pardoned all members of the "choir."

Patel has worked for the US federal government for most of the past 20 years, including in both the Obama and first Trump administration. In Wednesday's hearing, Patel boasted he was "most proud" of his "work in national security," including "killing high-value terrorists" as "a joint special operations command civilian, embedded with SEAL team 6 and Delta," during both the Obama and Trump administrations.

To say Patel is a "Trump loyalist" would be an understatement. He is a board member of Trump Media & Technology Group, which owns Trump's social media platform Truth Social. He is also the author of several books of pro-Trump propaganda, including *Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy*. He has also authored a children's book series titled, "The Plot Against the King" which casts himself as a magical wizard protecting the "merchant" Trump from "Hillary Queenton" and the "Russionians."

During the first Trump administration, Patel worked with Rep. Devin Nunes (R-California) to expose the supposed role of congressional Democrats collaborating with elements in the FBI to frame Trump as an agent of Russia. This earned him a place by Trump's side at the National Security Council. He played a critical role in the preparation of Trump's coup, after his electoral defeat in

November 2020. Trump purged Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and replaced him with special forces colonel Christopher Miller as acting secretary, with Patel as his chief of staff and, in effect, White House liaison.

During the attack on the Capitol, Patel slow-rolled the deployment of Pentagon assets to the Capitol as it was under siege and well after members of Congress and D.C. National Guard Commander, William Walker, requested authorization from Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy and Miller.

Despite being interviewed by the January 6 House Select Committee, Patel's name is not mentioned once in the "Final Report" issued in December 2022. This is not a mistake, but underscores the cover-up character of the committee. Its purpose was not to uncover the full extent of Trump's coup, but to instead limit its focus to Trump and conceal the role played by major institutions of capitalist class rule, including the Republican Party, Supreme Court, and the military, police and intelligence apparatus.

This cover-up continued in Wednesday's hearing. While Democrats frequently brought up Patel's books and his subservience to Trump, they did not question him over his actions on January 6 itself. Instead, Democrats focused almost all their objections to Patel on previous social media postings he made threatening to go after Trump's "deep state" enemies, including a list that was printed in the back of his book *Government Gangsters*.

Republicans, including Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah, used their time to allow Patel to rewrite the history of January 6 so as to cast former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser as responsible for the delay in deploying the D.C. National Guard. Patel claimed that the response of the Guard was delayed in part because they did not get a "lawful request from the governing authority which was the mayor of DC and the Speaker of the House."

In fact, as "commander-in-chief" President Trump was the "governing authority" who at any moment could have ordered not only the deployment of the DC National Guard, but any number of military and police units to defend Congress from the far-right mob. That he didn't underscore that the nearly four-hour delay was not a "mistake" but intentional.

While it is likely Patel will be confirmed with Republican votes alone, Gabbard's nomination for Director of National Intelligence is in jeopardy after she refused to condemn National Security Administration (NSA) whistleblower Edward Snowden during

Wednesday's hearing.

Gabbard is one of handful of US politicians that has condemned the treatment of Snowden. In 2013, the former government contractor exposed the illegal surveillance operations of the NSA, CIA and other US spy agencies which target millions in the US and around the world. For over a decade, Snowden has remained exiled in Russia after the US government revoked his passport.

Ranking member of the Senate Intelligence Committee Mark Warner (Virginia), speaking for the intelligence apparatus, said, "I have serious doubts about your judgment... You consistently praised the actions of Edward Snowden. Someone who I believe jeopardized the security of our nation and then, to flaunt that, fled to Russia.

"You've called Edward Snowden, and I'll quote here, 'A brave whistleblower'."

Warner claimed that Snowden "wasn't a whistleblower and in this case, I'm a lot closer to the chairman's words, where he said Snowden is quote, 'an egotistical serial liar and traitor' who quote, 'deserves to rot in jail for the rest of his life.'"

Warner asked Gabbard if she still thought Snowden was "brave." Gabbard did not directly answer the question, stating instead that Snowden, "broke the law" and that she did not agree with how he acted, or everything he released to journalists but that, "the fact is, he also, even as he broke the law, released information that exposed egregious, illegal, and unconstitutional programs that are happening within our government that led to serious reforms that Congress undertook."

Warner repeatedly asked Gabbard to denounce Snowden or recant her previous characterization of him as "brave." Gabbard declined but promised to "protect our nation's secrets" and "prevent another Snowden-like leak."

This was not enough for Warner who replied, "I don't think you are the answer. I agree with Tom Cotton, he's a traitor."



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