

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

June 5, 2025

Ms. Tamara A. Johnson  
Acting Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community  
Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
1500 Tysons McLean Drive  
McLean, VA 22102

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I write with grave concern regarding a serious and ongoing attack on the independence of the office of the Intelligence Community Inspector General (IC IG). The Committee has been notified by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) has appointed, on dubious legal authority, a “senior advisor” to the IC IG, creating “significant independence issues” for the office. The “senior advisor” purportedly sits in IC IG’s offices and attends IC IG meetings but reports to Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard. The Committee has also learned that ODNI last month placed the IC IG’s Acting General Counsel on involuntary administrative leave as she was working to address independence issues between the ODNI and the IC IG. We further understand that ODNI intended for this newly appointed “senior advisor” to assume the duties previously held by the IC IG’s Acting General Counsel. Please provide further information to the Committee regarding the appointment of the “senior advisor,” the termination of the Acting General Counsel, and how these actions might affect ongoing investigative work and the independence of the IC IG.

On April 29, 2025, the Committee requested that the IC IG undertake a comprehensive investigation into the alarming widespread use of the Signal messaging application by senior national security officials to discuss classified information concerning U.S. military operations (Signalgate).<sup>1</sup> DNI Gabbard was implicated in this serious national security scandal. Committee Democrats seek assurances from your office that DNI Gabbard’s ongoing attacks on the independence of the IC IG have not compromised any efforts to establish oversight, transparency, and accountability with respect to Signalgate.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Acting Inspector General Steven Stebbins, Department of Defense, and Principal Deputy Inspector General Tamara Johnson, Office of the Inspector General Intelligence Community (Apr. 29, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-oversight.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-04-29.gec-to-dod-and-ic-ig-re-signal.pdf>).

The purported appointment of the IC IG “senior advisor” heightens existing concerns about politicization and improper conduct at ODNI, including the subordination of competence and accountability at the agency to political fealty to President Trump.<sup>2</sup> As Committee Democrats understand, the individual named as “senior advisor” to the IC IG, Dennis Kirk, co-authored a chapter on central personnel agencies for The Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025 and was reportedly involved with the first Trump Administration’s adoption of Schedule F, which sought to make the jobs of tens of thousands of career civil servants subject to unilateral political purges directed by President Trump.<sup>3</sup>

The appointment of a highly partisan advocate for prioritizing personal loyalty to President Trump above independence and professionalism in the federal government—and one who apparently answers to DNI Gabbard rather than to you—in a senior role within IC IG raises troubling questions about the independence of the IC IG and whether there exists a need for Congress to strengthen protections for the IC IG’s independence. Accordingly, I request further information from your office to determine the following:

1. Whether any legal authority exists for the purported appointment of Mr. Kirk as “senior advisor” within the office of the IC IG, and if so, identify any such authority;
2. Any stated reasons for ODNI’s placement of the IC IG’s Acting General Counsel on involuntary administrative leave;
3. Where Mr. Kirk’s position as “senior advisor” exists within the IC IG’s organizational structure;
4. The identity of any agency officials to whom Mr. Kirk reports in his role as “senior advisor;”
5. A detailed description of Mr. Kirk’s job duties as “senior advisor;” and
6. Whether (a) Mr. Kirk’s purported role relates to any actual or potential investigation, inquiry, or analysis by the IC IG concerning the use of Signal or any other unofficial application or platform by national security officials and/or other individuals to discuss matters relating to U.S. military operations and/or U.S. national security, (b) whether Mr. Kirk has taken or intends to take any steps or actions with respect to any such investigation, audit, inquiry, or analysis,

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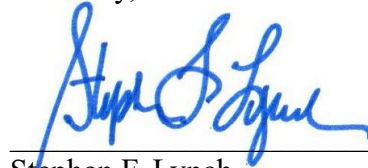
<sup>2</sup> *Gabbard Fires Intel Officials Who Oversaw Memo Contradicting White House Claims on Venezuelan Gang*, NBC News (May 14, 2025) (online at [www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/gabbard-fires-intel-officials-oversaw-memo-contradicting-white-house-c-rcna206918](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/gabbard-fires-intel-officials-oversaw-memo-contradicting-white-house-c-rcna206918)).

<sup>3</sup> *The Many Links Between Project 2025 and Trump’s World*, New York Times (Oct. 22, 2024) (online at [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/politics/project-2025-trump-heritage-foundation.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/politics/project-2025-trump-heritage-foundation.html)); Press Release, *Project 2025 Publishes Comprehensive Policy Guide, “Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise,”* The Heritage Foundation (Apr. 21, 2023) (online at [www.heritage.org/press/project-2025-publishes-comprehensive-policy-guide-mandate-leadership-the-conservative-promise](https://www.heritage.org/press/project-2025-publishes-comprehensive-policy-guide-mandate-leadership-the-conservative-promise)).

including, but not limited to, preventing or discouraging the commencement of any such investigation, audit, inquiry, or analysis, and (c) a detailed description of any such steps or actions.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding these requests, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen F. Lynch", is written over a horizontal line.

Stephen F. Lynch  
Acting Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman