

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 1, 2020

The Honorable John Ratcliffe
Director of National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Director Ratcliffe:

Your abrupt decision to cancel previously scheduled election-related briefings, contrary to repeated private and public commitments by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), is an abdication of your responsibility to keep the American people and their elected representatives informed of foreign threats to the 2020 election. It is all the more troubling as it comes only weeks before the American people begin casting votes and within weeks of the Intelligence Community (IC) affirming publicly that our elections and American voters are once again the target of foreign interference.

The IC confirmed publicly on August 7 that only one country—Russia—is actively undertaking a “range of measures” to interfere in the election. Your decision, moreover, comes as the Congress itself is the target of a concerted effort by Russia to launder and amplify disinformation, including through a “pro-Russia Ukrainian parliamentarian” who is spreading false claims “to undermine former Vice President Biden’s candidacy and the Democratic Party.”

Oversight of elections security, foreign malign influence, and election interference is of the highest priority for the U.S. House of Representatives as the 2020 election approaches. As we have repeatedly underscored with the IC, we expect full cooperation and partnership, especially in these final weeks as Americans exercise their right to vote.

Written finished intelligence products are no substitute for intelligence briefings. Only through regular and in-depth briefings can Members of Congress, as the people’s elected representatives, hear directly from our career intelligence professionals, probe and scrutinize the underlying reporting and basis for intelligence assessments, learn what steps the United States is taking to thwart foreign interference, and ensure that the intelligence judgments are not being influenced or skewed for political purposes.

As recipients of your letter announcing your reversal, we expect that ODNI will uphold its August 7 pledge that the IC “has and will continue to provide classified election threat briefings to the presidential campaigns, political committees and all Members of Congress” and ensure parity across both chambers of Congress by:

1. Continuing to provide both the congressional leadership and the intelligence committees with all election-related intelligence reporting and assessments;
2. Reinstating its previously scheduled September 17 briefing to the House Permanent Select committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), which ODNI proactively offered on August 10 and the Committee accepted;
3. Reinstating the series of briefings for all House Members, which ODNI proactively offered and was tentatively scheduled for September 24-25; and

4. Continuing to provide the presidential campaigns and political committees with classified election threat briefings.

This intelligence belongs to the American people, and they have a right to know more about ongoing foreign efforts to influence their votes and interfere in our democratic process. With voting imminent in many states, it is imperative for the IC to disclose as much information as possible publicly—without further delay, conflation, or false equivalency—about our adversaries' aims, activities, and agents, as well as what the IC is doing to expose and thwart this interference.

If you are unwilling to resume election-related intelligence briefings to Congress, we will have no choice but to consider the full range of tools available to compel compliance.

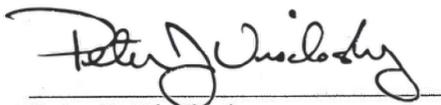
Sincerely,



Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives



Adam B. Schiff
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence



Peter J. Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations

CC: The Honorable Christopher A. Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
The Honorable Gina Haspel, Director, Central Intelligence Agency
The Honorable Paul M. Nakasone, Director, National Security Agency

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
The Honorable Devin Nunes, Ranking Member, Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence
The Honorable Kenneth S. Calvert, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense,
Committee on Appropriations