



May 14, 2018

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warner,

As someone who was and remains very involved in the confirmation process for national security nominees, I understand and support the need for a thorough and deliberate process. I have been involved in the confirmation process since my time as Staff Director for the Senate Armed Services Committee for 14 years from 1983 to 1997 and from the outside since 1997, for 11 Secretaries of Defense, 11 Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and hundreds of senior civilian and military nominees. In my view the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has met this high standard in your consideration to date of the nomination of Gina Haspel to serve as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

At this point, I strongly recommend that you support her nomination for three principal reasons.

When I was the Staff Director of the SASC for Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga), he was also a very senior member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence when David Boren (D-Ok) was Chairman, Bill Cohen (R-Me) was Vice Chairman and George Tenet was the Staff Director. We supported Sen. Nunn in his Intelligence Committee work from the SASC, so I was very involved in that Committee as well. We had experience with a number of directors and administrations, some of whom were quite controversial for the CIA, such as Stansfield Turner under President Carter and William Casey under President Reagan.

I am quite taken by the breadth of Gina Haspel's support from former Directors of Central Intelligence over the years, many of whom I worked with personally and who do not give endorsements lightly. In particular, it is noteworthy that several who would not be considered enthusiastic supporters of the current administration strongly support her nomination. She would also have the confidence of other highly respected leaders, including Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, our current senior military, and Senator Dan Coats, the Director of National Intelligence. I am heartened by the national security consensus around her nomination, particularly in the intelligence field.

One of the reasons she enjoys such broad bipartisan support is because she is a career professional who has proven over the years her expertise, and objectivity under fire. In an era when some criticize our intelligence services, it reassures our dedicated intelligence workforce

to see the President choose such a consummate professional for this position. A number of his predecessors have not taken this approach. As a McLean, Virginia resident for over 40 years, I know many CIA employees from my neighborhoods, schools, and church. To a person, they are all wildly enthusiastic about Ms. Haspel's past leadership and pending position. I have served in combat and been included in questioning of enemy combatants. I vigorously oppose torture and support the Army Field Manual. I am reassured that Ms. Haspel is committed to this approach as well.

If she is not confirmed, you could end up with someone whose most relevant credentials are political with no track record. I attended hearings when Director Casey testified before the committee. When he came across a question he did not want to answer, he would mumble his way through it, to the point where senators began calling him "Director Mumbles." Director Turner moved to dismantle our country's human intelligence capabilities. In the unstable and dangerous world we live in today, it is more important than ever that we avoid such approaches.

Finally, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, like the SASC, continues a strong tradition of addressing difficult and sensitive issues on a bipartisan approach. Chairman Burr has stood tall under pressure in getting the facts on the Russia investigation. I am very concerned that a no vote from you as Vice-Chairman would break that tradition of cooperation, particularly considering Ms. Haspel's superlative qualifications, which in most respects surpass those of all her predecessors. When it comes to national security, former Democratic Sen. Scoop Jackson had it right: politics should stop at the water's edge.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you if you so desire. I can be reached by phone at 703-942-5770 (o); 703-946-5568 (c), or by email at apunaro@punarogroup.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arnold L. Punaro".

Major General Arnold L. Punaro, USMC, (Ret.)
Former Staff Director, Senate Armed Services Committee