

Emily Murphy
Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Murphy,

We write to urge you to promptly name Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as the apparent President-elect and Vice President-elect under the Presidential Transition Act (the “Act”). We are former national security, senior military, and elected officials, including officials from the Trump Administration and other administrations of both parties. We reiterate what a bipartisan group of four former Secretaries of Homeland Security have already [stated](#): delaying the transition further poses a serious risk to our national security.

As you know, the GSA plays a pivotal role in ensuring a smooth transfer of power from one president to the next. The access and resources guaranteed to the President-elect and the Vice President-elect under the Act only become available once the Administrator of General Services “ascertain[s]” the identity of the “apparent successful candidates” of a presidential election. That includes access to critical information needed to address pressing national security issues, such as the President’s Daily Brief and pending decisions on possible uses of military force. The Act also permits the President-elect’s transition team to obtain security clearances, in advance of the inauguration, for individuals who will hold high-level national security positions in the new administration. The access provided by the Act is essential to ensure continuity of government from one administration to the next, and each day the Administrator delays is another day that the Biden team will be without critical information to prepare to combat the threats that the nation faces.

Our nation’s recent history demonstrates how important it is that you make the required determination as soon as possible. The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the “9/11 Commission”) found that the 36-day delay in transition owing to the contested 2000 election led to a six-month delay in fully staffing the national security apparatus under the Bush Administration, which left our country more vulnerable to foreign adversaries. For that reason and against the backdrop of the contested election in 2000, the 9/11 Commission recommended that transitions should strive to “minimize as much as possible the disruption of national security policymaking.” That recommendation carries all the more force amidst a once-in-a-century pandemic.

The time has come for you to recognize that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are the apparent victors of the presidential election and are therefore the President-elect and Vice President-elect. Although counting is still ongoing in some states, the math makes apparent what will soon become official: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have clearly prevailed. Nor has any evidence been presented in any forum that raises any realistic possibility of changing that result.

Further, it must be noted that your ascertainment that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are the “apparent successful candidates” will not impact President Trump’s ability to pursue any valid legal claims or his efforts to contest the results of the presidential election.

In this moment of uncertainty, we must put politics aside. Further delaying the Biden team’s ability to access the President’s Daily Brief and other national security information and resources compromises the continuity and readiness of our national leadership, with potentially immense consequences for our national security.

Sincerely,

(Note: All titles are former positions.)

Sandy Adams, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

Javed Ali, Senior Director for Counterterrorism, National Security Council; former Deputy National Intelligence Officer, National Intelligence Council

Wendy R. Anderson, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Defense

Robert Andrews, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations; Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army; National Security Advisor to Senator John Glenn; Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Counterintelligence; National Intelligence Officer, CIA

Ricardo Aponte, Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force; Director, J7 U.S. Southern Command

Jamie Barnett, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

Marisa W. Barthel, Senior Operations Manager, CIA

Jeff Bialos, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Industrial Affairs

Jason M. Blazakis, Director, Counterterrorism Bureau, State Department

Andrew Borene, Associate Deputy General Counsel, Department of Defense; Intelligence and Special Security Officer, U.S. Marine Corps

Peter Bridges, Ambassador to Somalia

Zachery Tyson Brown, Intelligence Officer, Department of Defense

Steven A. Browning, Ambassador to Malawi and Uganda

Bruce Butterworth, Director of Civil Aviation Security Operations, FAA

Daniel Byman, Professor, Georgetown University

Piper Campbell, Ambassador to Mongolia; Charge, U.S. Mission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Co-Chair, Women Ambassadors Serving America

Kevin Carroll, Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Homeland Security

Rod Chandler, Deputy Director, Weapons Intelligence, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Center (WINPAC); Senior Intelligence Service, CIA

Ann Mei Chang, Chief Innovation Officer, USAID

Wesley Clark, General, U.S. Army

Eliot A. Cohen, Counselor, Department of State

Herman Cohen, Ambassador

Carrie Cordero, Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for National Security

Gary Corn, Staff Judge Advocate (General Counsel) for U.S. Cyber Command

Thomas Countryman, Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation

Michael Daniel, Special Assistant to President Obama and Cybersecurity Coordinator; Chief, Intelligence Branch, Office of Management and Budget

Glyn T. Davies, Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand; Executive Secretary of the National Security Council

Dirk Debbink, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

Greg Delawie, Ambassador

Charlie Dent, U.S. Representative, 2005-2018; Chair, House Ethics Committee, 2015-2017

Richard T. Devereaux, Major General, U.S. Air Force; Director of Operational Planning, Policy, and Strategy, U.S. Air Force Headquarters

Larry Diamond, Senior Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority

Eileen Donahoe, Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council

John W. Douglass, Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force; Assistant Secretary of the Navy

Dave Durenberger, U.S. Senator, 1978-1995

Mickey Edwards, U.S. Representative, 1977-1993; Chair, House Republican Policy Committee, 1989-1993

Susan M. Elliott, Ambassador

Anthony Fainberg, Department of Homeland Security; SES, Federal Aviation Administration

Gerald Feierstein, Ambassador to Yemen; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs

Jeffrey Feltman, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs

Mark Fitzpatrick, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation

Michael Franken, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

Larry Garber, Senior Official, USAID

Glenn Gerstell, General Counsel, NSA

Karen Gibson, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army

James K. Glassman, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Kevin P. Green, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

Jim Greenwood, U.S. Representative, 1993-2005

Jennifer A. Gregg, Senior Intelligence Service Officer, CIA

Ken Gross, Ambassador

Anne Gruner, Deputy Director, WINPAC; Senior Intelligence Service, CIA

Nina Hachigian, Ambassador

Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense; U.S. Senator, 1997-2009

Morton H. Halperin, Director, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State; National Security Council Staff

Janice M. Hamby, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

James Harris, Chief, China Division, Chief, Strategic Assessments Group, CIA

Luke Hartig, Senior Director for Counterterrorism, National Security Council

Michael V. Hayden, General, U.S. Air Force; Director, CIA; Director, NSA

Jason Healey, Director, Homeland Security Council

Gail Helt, Intelligence Officer, CIA

Margaret Henoch, Senior Intelligence Service Officer, CIA

Paul Hollingsworth, Senior Director for Intelligence Programs, National Security Council

Rush D. Holt, U.S. Representative, 1999-2015; Chair, Select Intelligence Oversight Panel

Vicki Huddleston, Ambassador

Cameron Hume, Ambassador

Gordon J. Humphrey, U.S. Senator, 1979-1991

Paul D. Humphries, CIA; U.S. Army

Carol W. Humphries, CIA; Captain, U.S. Navy Reserve

Charles G. Ikins, Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps; Foreign Affairs Specialist, Department of Defense

William Inboden, Senior Director for Strategic Planning, National Security Council

Chris Inglis, Deputy Director, National Security Agency

Arlen Jameson, Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force

Dennis Jett, Ambassador to Peru and Mozambique

Beth Jones, Ambassador to Kazakhstan; Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia

Deborah K. Jones, Ambassador to Kuwait and Libya

Yvonne Keeler, CIA Counterproliferation Officer

Payton Knopf, Foreign Service Officer

Jim Kolbe, U.S. Representative, 1985-2007

Jimmy Kolker, Ambassador; Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services

David J. Kramer, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights & Labor

David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for National Security

James C. Lawler, Senior Intelligence Service, CIA

J. William Leonard, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Security and Information Operations; Director, Information Security Oversight Office

Andy Liepman, Former Deputy Director, National Counterterrorism Center; Senior Intelligence Service, CIA

George Little, Press Secretary, Pentagon; Spokesman, CIA

Hugo Llorens, Ambassador to Honduras; U.S. Special Charge d'Affaires in Afghanistan

Lewis Lukens, Ambassador

Randy Manner, Major General, U.S. Army

Sarah Margon, Special Envoy, Department of State

Edward Marks, Ambassador

Carlos Martinez, Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force

Michael McFaul, Ambassador to the Russian Federation

C. Steven McGann, Ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu

James McIlmail, Executive Director for Operations, Defense Intelligence Agency

Joseph V. Medina, Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps

Thomas O. Melia, Assistant Administrator, USAID; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Christopher K. Mellon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

John Mitnick, General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security

Kyle Murphy, Director on National Security Council staff; Senior Intelligence Officer, Defense Intelligence Agency

Joseph (Jody) Myers, Director for Counterterrorism, National Security Council

Elizabeth Neumann, Assistant Secretary, Counterterrorism and Threat Prevention, Department of Homeland Security

John M. Norris, Representative for Director of National Intelligence George Tenet to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

Suzanne Nossel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

J. Scott O'Meara, Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps

Rick Olson, Ambassador

Christopher Painter, Coordinator for Cyber Issues, Department of State

Elizabeth Rindskopf Parker, General Counsel, CIA; General Counsel, NSA

Anne Patterson, Ambassador to El Salvador, Colombia, Pakistan, and Egypt

Eric Pelofsky, Special Assistant to the President; Senior Director, National Security Council

Tom Perriello, U.S. Representative, 2009-2011; U.S. Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes

William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense

Larry Pfeiffer, Chief of Staff, CIA; Senior Director, White House Situation Room

Annie Pforzheimer, Minister Counselor, Department of State

Randal Phillips, Senior Intelligence Service, CIA; Chief of Station, Beijing

Thomas R. Pickering, Under Secretary of State; Ambassador to the United Nations, Russia, India, Israel, El Salvador, Nigeria, and Jordan

William Piekney, Senior Operations Manager, CIA

Steven Pifer, Ambassador to Ukraine

Gale S. Pollock, Major General, Acting Surgeon General, U.S. Army

Marc Polymeropoulos, Senior Intelligence Service, CIA

Samantha Power, Ambassador to the United Nations

Erik Prentice, Bio Issue Manager, Senior National Intelligence Service, CIA

Stephen Preston, General Counsel, Department of Defense; General Counsel, CIA

Greg Rattray, Director of Cybersecurity, National Security Council; Colonel, U.S. Air Force

Spencer Roach, Brigadier General, U.S. Army

Thomas B. Robertson, Ambassador to Slovenia

Harold L. Robinson, D.D., Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

Todd Rosenblum, Deputy Under Secretary of Intelligence, Department of Homeland Security

Paul Rosenzweig, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Department of Homeland Security

Nilmini Rubin, Director, National Security Council

Joel Rubin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Robin Sanders, Ambassador to Nigeria and Congo; Africa Director, National Security Council

Claudine Schneider, U.S. Representative, 1980-1990

Stephen A. Seche, Ambassador to Yemen

Robert B. Shanks, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Department of Justice

Nick Shapiro, Deputy Chief of Staff, Senior Advisor to the Director, CIA

Wendy R. Sherman, Acting United States Deputy Secretary of State; Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs

Douglas A. Silliman, Ambassador to Iraq and Kuwait

John Sipher, Senior Intelligence Service, CIA

Suzanne Spaulding, Under Secretary, Department of Homeland Security; Assistant General Counsel, CIA

Madelyn E. Spirnak, Senior Foreign Service Officer

Alan Steelman, U.S. Representative, 1973-1977

Miles Taylor, Chief of Staff, Department of Homeland Security

Robert S. Taylor, Principal Deputy General Counsel, Department of Defense

Francis Taylor, Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force

Colin Thomas-Jensen, Senior Advisor to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations

Harry Thomas, Jr., Director General, Foreign Service

Susan Thornton, Acting Assistant Secretary of State, East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Kurt Tong, Ambassador; U.S. Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau

Olivia Troye, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Advisor to Vice President Mike Pence

Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs;
Ambassador to NATO, Russia and South Korea

Edward S. Walker, Jr., Ambassador to Egypt, Israel, UAE and U.S. Mission to the United Nations

Thomas Warrick, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counterterrorism Policy, Department of Homeland Security

Earl Wayne, Ambassador to Mexico and Argentina; Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs

William Wechsler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combatting Terrorism

Pamela A. White, Ambassador

Michael Wilson, Major General, U.S. Air Force

Gregory P. Wilson, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Financial Institutions Policy, U.S. Treasury Department

Jonathan M. Winer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, International Law Enforcement; U.S. Special Envoy for Libya

Douglas H. Wise, Senior Intelligence Service, CIA; Deputy Director, DIA

Tamara Cofman Wittes, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs

David T. Wolfson, Senior Foreign Service Officer

Stephen N. Xenakis, M.D., Brigadier General, U.S. Army

Dov Zakheim, Under Secretary of Defense and Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Defense.