

Top US intelligence official resigns over Iran war

Patrick Martin
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A top US intelligence official, Joe Kent, director of the National Counterterrorism Center and principal deputy to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, publicly resigned his position Tuesday with a blast at the Trump administration's justifications of the war against Iran.

In a letter sent to Trump Tuesday, Kent wrote that he could not "in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran." He continued, "Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby."

The first part of that statement is absolutely damning, confirming that the US war on Iran is illegal under both US and international law. The second part is a gross distortion, reversing the actual relationship between American imperialism and its Israeli attack dog, and catering to far-right anti-semitic conspiracy theories.

The supposed Iranian threat to the United States is the fiction employed by the White House and Pentagon to justify Trump's decision to attack Iran. Trump has gone so far as to claim, on several occasions, that Iran was on the brink of launching missile strikes with nuclear warheads against the US mainland, even though Iran has neither ICBMs nor warheads.

Trump ordered the military onslaught under conditions where there was no possibility of Iran attacking the United States, and while Iran was actually engaged in negotiations with the US over its nuclear program and US economic sanctions. The US-Israeli sneak attack murdered much of the Iranian leadership, and has since escalated into a saturation bombing campaign targeting the entire infrastructure of the country, including oilfields, desalination plants and major cities.

Kent's declaration that Iran posed no imminent threat

adds to the evidence that the US war with Iran is illegal. Those who are directing it—Trump, Vance, Hegseth, Rubio—are guilty of war crimes, particularly "crimes against peace," i.e., launching wars of aggression, for which the top Nazi leaders were tried, convicted and hanged at Nuremberg.

At the same time, his claim that Israel directs American foreign policy is a blatant lie, whose purpose is to cover up the leading role of American imperialism in fomenting violence all over the world, not just in the Middle East. Washington works its will through local collaborators, including Israel in the Middle East, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Australia and the Philippines in the Far East, the various NATO powers in Europe, and an assortment of ultra-right regimes in Latin America.

While these collaborators are not mere instruments—the Israeli attack dog may bite back on occasion—it is the American ruling elite that is the decisive and directing force. If Trump goes to war against Iran, it is in the interests of Wall Street. If the Israeli regime joins in and even spearheads this attack, it must be pointed out that the Israeli military machine could not operate for even a week without the bombs, missiles, warplanes and other aid provided by Washington.

Kent's denunciation of the war sent shock waves through the US capital, signaling that a sizeable faction of Trump's fascist base was in disagreement with his foreign policy. Kent has been a ferocious advocate for domestic repression, once suggesting that all the leading figures of Black Lives Matter should be arrested as terrorists.

While spending much of his career as an Army Ranger and CIA operative in the Middle East, Kent entered right-wing politics openly in 2022. He ran in

the Republican primary in the 3rd Congressional District of Washington state, opposing incumbent Jaime Herrera Beutler, one of ten Republican House members who voted to impeach Trump after the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol.

Kent defeated Beutler, a result over which Trump gloated at the time, but went on to lose the general election narrowly to right-wing Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez. In 2024 he ran against Perez again, losing by a wider margin.

The Trump administration went into damage control immediately after Kent's resignation. Trump himself called Kent "a nice guy," but said, "I always thought he was weak on security, very weak on security." This remark hardly squares with Trump's decision last year to appoint him to one of the top national security jobs in the administration. Vitriol then followed, with Kent labeled a "loser" and an "egomaniac"—presumably because he had publicly disagreed with the egomaniac-in-chief.

DNI Tulsi Gabbard issued a carefully worded statement that her office "is responsible for helping coordinate and integrate all intelligence to provide the President and Commander in Chief with the best information available to inform his decisions. After carefully reviewing all the information before him, President Trump concluded that the terrorist Islamist regime in Iran posed an imminent threat and he took action based on that conclusion."

She went on say, "The only person who can determine what is and is not an imminent threat is the president." Gabbard repeated this formulation in an appearance before the Senate Intelligence Committee Wednesday, where she was flanked by CIA Director John Ratcliffe and FBI Director Kash Patel.

Gabbard deviated from her prepared remarks, which said that Iran had made "no efforts" since last June's US bombing of nuclear facilities "to try to rebuild their enrichment capability." This flatly contradicts the current line of the White House, so Gabbard said that Iran was "trying to recover" from the impact of the bombing.

The *Washington Post* subsequently reported that Vice President JD Vance met with Kent the day before his resignation, with Kent presenting his letter of resignation. "The VP encouraged him to speak to White House chief of staff and POTUS [Trump] before

making any final decisions," a White House official told the *Post*.

The leading "left" apologist for the Democratic Party, Senator Bernie Sanders, posted online his agreement with Kent's evaluation of the war against Iran. The post reads: "Joseph Kent, a top counterterrorism official under Trump, just resigned. Kent and I don't agree on much, but he is right: 'Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby'."

With this statement, Sanders makes common cause with the fascist right, while covering up for the primary responsibility of American imperialism for the war. Joining him in this stance are such figures as commentator Glenn Greenwald, who have advocated a "red-brown" alliance of the "left" and sections of the ultra-right, on the basis of supposed common opposition to war.



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