Dear Senator:

We write as former ambassadors of the United States to register our serious concern over Gina Haspel’s nomination to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

As career and non-career senior diplomats, we experienced no higher honor than to have represented the American people and their interests and values to foreign governments abroad. We did so while recognizing that foreign audiences—governments and their citizens, friends and foes—rightly look to the senior-most representatives of our government to embody what our nation holds dear. It is for this reason that we cannot support Ms. Haspel’s nomination, given credible information in the public domain.

There remains much we do not know about the specific roles and responsibilities Ms. Haspel held in relation to the CIA’s rendition, detention, and interrogation program generally, and the use of so-called “enhanced interrogation” specifically. Mindful of this, we support calls made by various members of Congress for the CIA to declassify additional information regarding her relationship to the program, commensurate with the need to protect legitimate intelligence sources and methods, so that the American people have a meaningful and accurate understanding of the role that Ms. Haspel played.

What we do know, based on credible, and as yet uncontested reporting, leaves us of the view that she should be disqualified from holding cabinet rank. This includes that, in 2002, she oversaw a secret detention facility in Thailand in which at least one detainee was repeatedly subjected to waterboarding, and that she later strongly advocated for and helped implement a decision to destroy video tapes of torture sessions, including ones she oversaw.

We have no reason to question Ms. Haspel’s credentials as both a leader and an experienced intelligence professional. Yet she is also emblematic of choices made by certain American officials in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001 that dispensed with our ideals and international commitments to the ultimate detriment of our national security.

America’s power in the world is defined in part by the strength of our military, the size of our economy, the prestige of our universities, and the quality of our entrepreneurs. But our influence, and thus our security, is also advanced by the principles and values set forth in our Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and laws and treaties, as well as our adherence to the rule of law, to democratic norms and institutions, and to our willingness to stand up for men and women living under repression.

We have little doubt what lesson governments that rely on torture and other forms of mistreatment to maintain their grip on power will draw from Ms. Haspel’s confirmation. Whether or not she uses the opportunity of her confirmation hearing to reject torture—which we hope she will do—the point will remain that her record of involvement in torture was judged worthy of and compatible with holding the CIA’s highest office. The message inherent in this decision will be understood by authoritarian leaders around the world. They will welcome it, as it
will allow them to proclaim, however cynically, that their behavior is no different from ours. Her confirmation will thus undercut the work of countless diplomats, military service members, and intelligence professionals who continue to engage with their foreign counterparts on why the United States believes that torture and other forms of abuse are not only morally wrong, but strategically shortsighted and legally impermissible. In an era in which the rule of law is under considerable strain around the world, this is a cost we can ill afford.

For all these reasons, we urge you to scrutinize Ms. Haspel’s record with the utmost care. If that record demonstrates that Ms. Haspel played a role in torture or other forms of detainee abuse, or the destruction of evidence relating to such activities, we urge you to reject her nomination.

Sincerely,

Thomas Pickering
Career Ambassador, Former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and former Ambassador to Russia, India, the United Nations, Israel, El Salvador, Nigeria, and Jordan

James R. Jones
Former Ambassador to Mexico and former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives

Daniel Baer
Former Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Rob Barber
Former Ambassador to Iceland

Leslie Bassett
Former Ambassador to Paraguay

Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Former Ambassador to Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein; Member of the U.S. House of Representatives

Jack R. Binns
Former Ambassador to Honduras

Clyde Bishop
Former Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands

James K. Bishop
Former Ambassador to Niger, Liberia, and Somalia

Robert. O. Blake, Jr.
Former Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs and former Ambassador to Indonesia and Sri Lanka and Maldives

Barbara Bodine
Former Ambassador to Yemen

Avis Bohlen
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control and former Ambassador to Bulgaria

Aurelia E. Brazeal
Former Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, Kenya, and Ethiopia

James (Wally) Brewster Jr.
Former Ambassador to the Dominican Republic

Sue K. Brown
Former Ambassador to Montenegro

Edward Brynn
Former Ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ghana
John Campbell
Former Ambassador to Nigeria and Deputy
Assistant Secretary of State for Human
Resources

Carey Cavanaugh
Former Ambassador and Special Negotiator
for Eurasian Conflicts

Luis CdeBaca
Former Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor
and Combat Trafficking in Persons

James F. Collins
Former Ambassador to the Russian
Federation

Elinor G. Constable
Former Ambassador to Kenya

Edwin G. Corr
Former Ambassador to Peru, Bolivia, and El
Salvador and former Deputy Assistant
Secretary of State for International Narcotics
Matters

Ruth A. Davis
Former Director General of the Foreign
Service, Director of the Foreign Service
Institute, and Ambassador to Benin

Robert Dillon
Former Ambassador to Lebanon

Shaun Donnelly
Former Ambassador to Sri Lanka and
Maldives

David Dunford
Former Ambassador to Oman

Harriet L. Elam-Thomas
Former Ambassador to Senegal

Nancy Ely-Raphel
Former Ambassador to Slovenia

Gregory W. Engle
Former Ambassador to Togo

Robert W. “Bill” Farrand
Former Ambassador to Papua New Guinea
and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in
the Bureau of Human Rights and
Humanitarian Affairs

Gerald M. Feierstein
Former Ambassador to Yemen

Robert S. Ford
Former Ambassador to Algeria and Syria

Chas W. Freeman, Jr.
Former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and
former Assistant Secretary of Defense for
International Security Affairs

James I. Gadsden
Former Ambassador to Iceland and former
Deputy Assistant Secretary for European
Affairs

Rufus Gifford
Former Ambassador to Denmark

David N. Greenlee
Former Ambassador to Bolivia and
Paraguay

Michael Guest
Former Ambassador to Romania

Keith Harper
Former Ambassador and Permanent
Representative to the United Nations Human
Rights Council

Douglas A. Hartwick
Former Ambassador to Laos and Assistant
US Trade Representative
Samuel D. Heins
Former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway

Carla A. Hills
Former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and former U.S. Trade Representative with title of ambassador

Heather Hodges
Former Ambassador to Moldova and Ecuador

Henry Allen Holmes
Former Ambassador to Portugal

Thomas C. Hubbard
Former Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and the Republic of the Philippines

Arthur H. Hughes
Former Ambassador to Yemen and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs

Edmund Hull
Former Ambassador to Yemen

Robert E. Hunter
Former Ambassador to NATO

Bonnie Jenkins
Former Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs with title of ambassador

Dennis Jett
Former Ambassador to Peru and Mozambique

Linda Jewell
Former Ambassador to Ecuador

L. Craig Johnstone
Former Ambassador to Algeria

Deborah K. Jones
Former Ambassador to Kuwait and Libya

Richard H. Jones
Former Ambassador to Lebanon, Israel, Kuwait, and Kazakhstan

Ian Kelly
Former Ambassador to the OSCE and Georgia

David T. Killion
Former Ambassador to UNESCO

Jimmy Kolker
Former Ambassador to Uganda and Burkina Faso

John Kornblum
Former Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany

Mark P. Lagon
Former Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

Suzan LeVine
Former Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS)

Carmen Lomellin
Former Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS)

Frank E. Loy
Former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs and former Director of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, with the personal rank of ambassador

Princeton N. Lyman
Former Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs and former Ambassador to Nigeria and South Africa
Jack F. Matlock, Jr.  
Former Ambassador to the USSR and Czechoslovakia

Nancy McEldowney  
Former Ambassador to Bulgaria and Director of the Foreign Service Institute

James D. McGee  
Former Ambassador to Swaziland, Madagascar, the Comoros Islands, and Zimbabwe

Donald F. McHenry  
Former Permanent Representative to the United Nations

William B. Milam  
Former Ambassador to Pakistan and Bangladesh

Richard Miles  
Former Ambassador to Georgia, Bulgaria, and Azerbaijan

Day Mount  
Former Ambassador to Iceland

Thomas Niles  
Former Ambassador to Canada, the European Union, and Greece

Robert M. Orr  
Former Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank

Ted Osius  
Former Ambassador to Vietnam

Maurice S. Parker  
Former Ambassador to Swaziland

June Carter Perry  
Former Ambassador to Lesotho and Sierra Leone

Robert C. Perry  
Former Ambassador to the Central African Republic

Pete Peterson  
Former Ambassador to Vietnam and Former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives

John R. Phillips  
Former Ambassador to Italy

Nicholas Platt  
Former Ambassador to Pakistan, Philippines, and Zambia

Michael C. Polt  
Former Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia, Serbia, and Montenegro

Laurence Pope  
Former Ambassador to Chad and Associate Coordinator for Counter-terrorism

Samantha Power  
Former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Jon R. Purnell  
Former Ambassador to Uzbekistan

Stephen J. Rapp  
Former Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues

Charles Ray  
Former Ambassador to Zimbabwe and Cambodia

Arlene Render  
Former Ambassador to Ivory Coast, Zambia, and Gambia
Peter F. Romero  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs and Ambassador to Ecuador

Edward M. Rowell  
Former Ambassador to Bolivia, Luxembourg, and Portugal, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs

Stapleton Roy  
Career Ambassador, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research and former Ambassador to Singapore, China, and Indonesia

Nancy Rubin  
Former Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights

William A. Rugh  
Former Ambassador to Yemen and the United Arab Emirates

David Saperstein  
Former Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom

Teresita Schaffer  
Former Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives

David Scheffer  
Former Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues

Theodore Sedgwick  
Former Ambassador to Slovakia

John Shattuck  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and former Ambassador to the Czech Republic

Sally Shelton-Colby  
Former Ambassador to Barbados, Grenada, and Dominica and Minister to St Lucia, and Special Representative to Antigua, St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, and St. Vincent

Harry Shlaudeman  
Former Ambassador to Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Nicaragua and former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs

Alan Solomont  
Former Ambassador to Spain and Andorra

Joan E. Spero  
Former Ambassador to the United Nations for Economic and Social Affairs

Ronald I. Spiers  
Former Ambassador to Pakistan, Turkey, and the Bahamas

Sylvia Stanfield  
Former Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam

Kathleen Stephens  
Former Ambassador to the Republic of Korea

Strobe Talbott  
Former Deputy Secretary of State and former Ambassador-at-Large on the New Independent States

Clyde D. Taylor  
Former Ambassador to Paraguay

Patrick N. Theros  
Former Ambassador to Qatar

Alexander Vershbow  
Former Ambassador to NATO, Russia, and South Korea and former Deputy Secretary General of NATO
Kirk Wagar  
Ambassador to Singapore

Edward S. Walker, Jr.  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs and Ambassador to Israel, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates

Alexander F. Watson  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Ambassador to Peru, and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Melissa Wells  
Former Ambassador to Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Mozambique, Zaire, and Estonia

Allan Wendt  
Former Senior Representative for Strategic Technology Policy and former Ambassador to Slovenia

Barry B. White  
Former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.  
Former Ambassador-at-Large for Counterterrorism

Kenneth Yalowitz  
Former Ambassador to Belarus and Georgia

John M. Yates  
Former Ambassador to Cape Verde, Benin, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea and Special Representative for Somalia