

TULSI GABBARD

IMPACT: Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard has repeatedly stated “Islamism” and “radical Islamic ideology” fuel terrorism -- claims that are made by anti-Muslim activists and organizations in support of criminalizing Muslim communities. Gabbard has met with foreign leaders who have been accused of war crimes and fomenting hatred against Muslims.

- Representative Tulsi Gabbard is a Democratic Congresswoman for the State of Hawaii. On **February 2, 2019, she officially launched her campaign for the Democratic nomination for the President of the United States in 2020.**
- In 2003, at age 21, **Gabbard was elected to Hawaii’s house of representatives becoming the youngest woman ever elected to a state legislature.** In 2004, Gabbard volunteered for the Army National Guard and **served in a field medical unit in Iraq from 2004 to 2005. She was deployed to Kuwait from 2008-2009.** She is currently a major in the U.S. Army National Guard. Gabbard’s 2012 election to the U.S. House of Representatives made her the **first American-Samoan and Hindu congresswoman.**
- Gabbard has **referred to herself as a “hawk” on terrorism,** which has made her a favorite amongst right-wing media networks, especially *Fox News*. In a February 2015 interview on *Fox*, Gabbard responded to questions about then-President Barack Obama’s administration’s refusal to use the phrase “Islamic extremism.” She stated, “I think that what’s important is we look at some of these messages and some of these threats that are being posed by different groups...**by identifying the single common element amongst them...groups who are fueled by this radical Islamic ideology then once that’s identified, we understand it, then we can come up with a winning strategy to defeat it both militarily as well as ideologically.**”
- In another February 2015 *Fox News* interview, **Gabbard told Host Neil Cavuto that “radical Islamic ideology” was the “one common element with all of these different radical extremist, Islamic extremist groups** and that we have to identify this in order to actually come up with an effective strategy to defeat them.”
- In a March 2016 interview with *Rediff News* Gabbard denied allegations of Islamophobia made against her. She again **criticized then-President Barack Obama for not identifying ISIS as ‘Islamic’ and ‘Islamic terrorists’ and their ideology as ‘Islamism.’** She stated that it is “critical that we accurately define our enemy and its ideology. The ideology shared by ISIS, Al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist organizations is ‘Islamism.’ Distinct from the religion of Islam, Islamism is a radical political ideology of violent jihad aimed at establishing a totalitarian society governed by laws based on a particular interpretation of Islam.” She clarified her distinction of Islamism and Islam by saying, “the political ideology of Islamism is not the same as Islam, the religion. The vast majority of Muslims who embrace Islam do not adhere to the political ideology of Islamism.” Counter-terrorism expert Marc Sageman argues against such statements as he states terrorism is motivated first and foremost by political issues, not psychological or ideological.
- **Gabbard’s views on “Islamism” or “political Islam” are very similar to the claims made by anti-Muslim activists such as Frank Gaffney, Robert Spencer, and David Horowitz.** Anti-Muslim activists and organizations have claimed the ideology of ‘radical Islam’ promotes violence and thus causes ‘terrorism.’
- A January 2018 article by Kelly Weill in *The DailyBeast* noted that following **Gabbard’s criticisms of the Obama administration’s unwillingness to use the phrases “Radical Islamic Terrorism”/ “Islamic extremism” put her on “the map in conservative media.”** Weill also noted that Gabbard’s views have also earned her “high praise from far-right online personalities,” including white nationalist Richard Spencer.

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- On January 16, 2019 **David Duke, former leader of the white supremacist organization, Ku Klux Klan, tweeted his support for Gabbard's Presidential campaign.** Duke has tweeted his support for Gabbard in the past, to which Gabbard responded: “U didn't know I'm Polynesian/Cauc? Dad couldn't use "whites only" water fountain. No thanks. Ur white nationalism is pure evil.”
- In November 2017, Steve Bannon, then head of *Breitbart* and former chief strategist for President Donald Trump, arranged a meeting for Gabbard and Trump to discuss foreign policy issues. *The Hill* reported that a source close to **Bannon said, “He loves Tulsi Gabbard. Loves her”** and another source said he “wants to work with her on everything,” and that “she gets the foreign policy stuff, the Islamic terrorism stuff.”
- In November 2016, 169 congressional Democrats issued a statement “denouncing [Trump's] nomination” of Steve Bannon as “chief strategist.” Gabbard did not sign on to the statement.
- A 2019 article by Evan Hill in *The Nation* described Gabbard's foreign policy as one “that favors authoritarianism cloaked as counter-terrorism, nationalism cloaked as anti-interventionism, and Islamophobia barely cloaked at all.” Hill revealed that **Gabbard had spoken at a conference of Christians United for Israel, an organization led by John Hagee, who wrote of a “theological war” to prevent the spread of “global shari’a.”**
- Gabbard has **repeatedly praised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.** In 2014, she lauded Modi for his “example and dedication to the people he serves.” Following Modi's election, there were increased reports of violence including lynchings of Muslims by cow-vigilantes and Hindu nationalists. A 2018 article by journalist Rana Ayyub noted that **“76 percent of victims of hate crimes in India over the past 10 years have been Muslims. Ninety percent of these attacks have occurred since Prime Minister Narendra Modi was voted into power in 2014.”**
- In 2013, **Gabbard opposed a House resolution that called for “religious freedom and related human rights to be included in the United States-India Strategic Dialogue.”** The resolution specifically referenced the deadly riots in Gujarat, which occurred under Modi's watch as chief minister of the state and resulted in the deaths of at least 2,000 people, mostly Muslims. In 2014, Gabbard told the press that “there was a lot of misinformation that surrounded the event [Gujara riots] in 2002.”
- A 2019 article by Soumya Shankar for *The Intercept* found that **“dozens of Gabbard's donors have either expressed strong sympathy with or have ties to the Sangh Parivar — a network of religious, political, paramilitary, and student groups that subscribe to the Hindu supremacist, exclusionary ideology known as Hindutva.”**
- In 2017, Gabbard secretly traveled to Syria and met with President Bashar al-Assad. **Assad has been accused of war crimes against the Syrian people**, including the use of chemical weapons against civilians. Gabbard defended her meeting calling it a “fact-finding” mission.
- In 2015, Gabbard **voted in support of the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act or the SAFE Act.** An article in *NPR* found the act called on “the secretary of Homeland Security, the head of the FBI and the director of national intelligence to sign off on every individual refugee from Iraq and Syria, affirming he or she is not a threat.” **Human Rights First stated the act would “would bring the U.S. resettlement of Iraqi and Syrian refugees, which is already moving at a snail's pace, to a grinding halt.** It would leave vulnerable refugees...stranded for even longer in dangerous and difficult circumstances.” In response to criticism regarding her decision, Gabbard issued a press release stating her vote was not a vote “against refugees” but a vote to

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“make sure the program to vet these refugees is sufficient to protect Americans.”

- In 2014, **Gabbard introduced a bill to “suspend from the visa waiver program [for people from] any country that has identified passport holders fighting with an Islamist extremist organization.”** Gabbard stated the legislation would “close a loophole in our visa process, to prevent possible terrorists from entering the U.S. freely.”
- In June 2018, Gabbard called out President Donald Trump’s [Muslim ban](#) on [Twitter](#) for being “arbitrary and useless.” In 2015, Gabbard [co-sponsored](#) a house resolution “condemning violence, bigotry, and hateful rhetoric towards Muslims in the United States.”
- Earlier in her political career, Gabbard was [opposed](#) to same-sex marriage and testified [against](#) civil unions. However, in a December 2011 [post](#) she stated her views had changed following her service in the Middle East: “The contrast between our society and those in the Middle East made me realize that the difference — the reason those societies are so oppressive — is that they are essentially theocracies where the government and government leaders wield the power to both define and then enforce ‘morality.’” Gabbard was stationed in Iraq and Kuwait, neither of which has a theocratic government.