

December 18, 2020

The Honorable Chairman Ron Johnson  
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Ranking Member Gary Peters  
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

cc: All HSGAC Committee Members

Dear Chairman Ron Johnson and Ranking Member Gary Peters,

As a bipartisan group of 33 cybersecurity experts and leaders from around the country, we write to express our support for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) nominee, Alejandro “Ali” Mayorkas. We echo a diverse litany of others in national security, law enforcement, and public safety to urge the U.S. Senate to swiftly schedule the confirmation hearing and approve his appointment without delay.

In light of the recent attack on SolarWinds, Mr. Mayorkas’ nomination comes at a time when the cyber and digital threats we face to our critical infrastructure—vital systems such as health care, elections, emergency management, education, telecommunications, utilities, and banking—are more complex than at any point in American history. Likewise, the threat actors who plan and attempt attacks are growing more diverse and sophisticated by the day.

From collective experience, we have seen that cyber threats aimed at our nation’s critical infrastructure have come in many forms: attempts to hack water or energy systems, stolen personal information or assets, foreign attempts to intervene in our democracy, and spreading of misinformation on vital topics, just to cite a few. Yet new cyber vulnerabilities have emerged as workers, businesses, and students adapted to telework or remote learning due to COVID-19. During this unprecedented pandemic, we have seen threats targeted at hospitals, medical facilities, COVID-19 vaccine supply chains, and schools, putting American lives and livelihoods in jeopardy.

Mr. Mayorkas is exceptionally well-positioned to meet these and future cyber challenges. He served with distinction as DHS Deputy Secretary under President Obama, and brings with him an immediate understanding of the vast complexities of the DHS Enterprise. Notably, his efforts advancing the Department’s cybersecurity mission represented a key priority during his tenure. Well-known and well-respected across the cyber community, Mr. Mayorkas possesses the intelligence, integrity, and skills to assume leadership and protect our homeland assets—physical and cyber in nature—on day one.

History has shown the U.S. Senate to act quickly and without bias on the confirmation of national security nominees. As we know, nefarious actors, particularly those in the cyber domain who wish to do Americans harm, do not concern themselves with political timelines or party affiliations. For this reason, we again urge such swift action characterized in past precedent to approve Mr. Mayorkas, a seasoned cyber advocate and leader, as our next DHS Secretary.

Sincerely,

Jeff Moss  
Founder, Black Hat and DEF CON

Jason Healey  
Former Director for Cyber Infrastructure Protection, President George W. Bush White House

Frank Cillufo  
Member, Homeland Security Advisory Council

Alexander Klimburg  
Director, Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace Initiative  
Secretariat and Director, Cyber Policy and Resilience Program, Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Chad Sweet  
Former Chief of Staff, Department of Homeland Security

Steve Adegbite  
Member, Homeland Security Advisory Council

Pablo Martinez  
Former Deputy Special Agent in Charge, United States Secret Service

Alan Paller  
President, SANS Technology Institute

Melissa Hathaway  
Former Cyberspace Policy Review, President Barack Obama White House  
Former Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative, President George W. Bush White House

Ann Barron-DiCamillo  
Former Director of US-CERT, Department of Homeland Security

Christopher Inglis  
Former Deputy Director, National Security Agency

Suzanne Spaulding  
Former Under Secretary for Cyber and Infrastructure, Department of Homeland Security

General Frank Taylor  
Former Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security

Chris Cummiskey  
Former Acting Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security

Jake Braun  
Executive Director, Cyber Policy Initiative, University of Chicago

Mark Weatherford  
Chief Strategy Officer, National Cybersecurity Center  
Former Deputy Under Secretary for Cybersecurity, Department of Homeland Security

General Keith B. Alexander  
Former Director, National Security Agency  
Former Chief of Central Security Service  
Former Commander, United States Cyber Command

Luke McCormack  
Former Chief Information Officer, Department of Homeland Security

Gregory J. Touhill  
Former and first U.S. Government Federal Chief Information Security Officer

Robert Knake  
Former Director for Cybersecurity, President Barack Obama White House

Philip Reitingner  
Former Deputy Under Secretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate, Department of Homeland Security

Dr. Andy Ozment  
Former Assistant Secretary for Cybersecurity & Communications, Department of Homeland Security

Dr. Phyllis A. Schneck  
Former Deputy Undersecretary, Cybersecurity and Communications, Department of Homeland Security

Richard A. Clarke  
Former Special Advisor to the President on Cyberspace  
Former National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counter-terrorism, National Security Council

Michael Daniel  
Former Cybersecurity Coordinator, Executive Office of the President, President Barack Obama White House

Robert Rodriguez  
Chairman and Founder, Security Innovation Network

Katie Moussouris  
Founder and CEO, Luta Security

Jeanette Manfra  
Former Assistant Secretary for Cybersecurity and Communications, Department of Homeland Security

Bryan S. Ware  
Former Assistant Director Cybersecurity Division, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security

Tony Scott  
Former U.S. Government Federal Chief Information Officer

Michael Beland

Former Chief of Staff and Senior Counselor, Office of Infrastructure Protection, Department of Homeland Security

Christian Marrone  
Former Chief of Staff, Department of Homeland Security

Matthew Travis  
Former Deputy Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security