

## Tulsi Gabbard



***“It must be our mission, to ensure that the 21st century will forever be known as the turning point in human history, that era in which the world’s great powers chose to abandon the path to confrontation and war and agreed to pursue the path of cooperation, diplomacy, and peace.” — Representative Tulsi Gabbard***

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### **At a Glance**

In 2002, at just 21 years old, Tulsi Gabbard became the youngest person elected to Hawaii’s legislature. She stepped down two years later to deploy with her Army National Guard unit to Iraq, during which time one of her responsibilities was checking the [injury and casualty lists](#) of the war. She served another 12-month tour in Kuwait in 2009, where she [trained counterterrorism units](#). Upon her return, she was elected to the Honolulu City Council and then the U.S. House of Representatives in 2013.

Gabbard is a staunch anti-interventionist consistently challenging U.S. regime change wars, including through her position on the House Armed Services Committee. [Her motivation](#) appears straightforward: “I have seen this cost of war firsthand, which is why I fight so hard for peace.” However, she is [not one to shy away](#) from military intervention targeting “Islamic extremism” – proudly professing herself a hawk “when it comes to the war against terrorists” and even suggesting that torture is worth employing in some scenarios.

The Congresswoman [has vowed](#), “As president, I will lead this country to bring about a bold change in our foreign policy that bends the arc of history away from war and towards peace.” You can find her thoughts, comments, and plans on issues of war and peace below.

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### **Ending Endless Wars**

- Gabbard [states](#) she would “end the wasteful regime-change wars that have taken such a toll on our troops and on the American

people.” Accordingly, in the Democratic debates, she [said](#) that “we can’t keep U.S. troops deployed in Afghanistan,” and vowed to [withdraw them](#) within her first year if elected.

- However, Gabbard does not oppose all military action. She [resolutely believes](#) that “we need to focus all of our efforts and energy on that direct threat [of Islamic extremism].” Accordingly, when asked about her opposition to U.S. involvement in Syria, she was quick to clarify that she was against supporting moderate rebels fighting the Assad government, not those fighting ISIS.
- This position has [led her to](#) praise Russian President Vladimir Putin’s bombing of ISIS in Syria; personally meet with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and denounce his opponents as no different than ISIS; and celebrate the “great courage and leadership” of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in “taking on...extreme Islamist ideology” during a visit to Cairo. She also [favors](#) “surgical strikes” and “limited use of drones” in the fight on terrorism.
- She has [condemned](#) and voted to end U.S. support of “Saudi Arabia’s genocidal war in Yemen,” also [saying](#) we “stop pretending that [the Saudis are] our allies” and [recognize](#) that “they are fueling and funding terrorist groups in Yemen.”

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## **Nuclear Weapons**

- During the first Democratic debates, Gabbard said the [biggest threat](#) facing the U.S. “is that we are at greater risk of nuclear war.”
- She [believes](#) Trump’s withdrawal from the INF Treaty is fueling a “new Cold War” and worsening the “nuclear arms race.”

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## **Iran**

- Gabbard [adamantly opposes](#) a war with Iran, warning that the “cost in money and lives will be catastrophic” and much greater than that of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.

- While voting in favor of the Iran Nuclear Agreement in 2015, Gabbard did so “not because it’s a great deal, or even a good deal” but only because she saw [no better option](#) and found comfort in the fact that the “deal does not prevent the United States from taking unilateral or cooperative action against Iran...Nothing in this agreement limits our ability to enact sanctions, nor does it take the military option off the table.” She also [consistently supported](#) legislation undermining the negotiation process leading up to the deal.
  - Despite saying “the Iran deal is far from perfect,” Gabbard did [critique](#) President Trump’s withdrawal as damaging to U.S. credibility – particularly in regards to negotiations with North Korea – and feared it would increase the chance of Iran restarting its nuclear program.
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### **Pentagon Spending & Diplomatic Funding**

- Gabbard frequently brings up the financial costs of war, [pointing out](#) in the Democratic debates that, particularly in Afghanistan, “we are spending \$4 billion dollars...every single month, rather than ending that war, bringing our troops home and using those precious resources into serving the needs of the people here in this country.”
  - Nonetheless, her [voting record](#) on defense spending bills has been hit and miss, with her supporting numerous bloated budgets for the Pentagon.
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### **Korean Peninsula**

- Gabbard advocates for engagement with North Korea [without preconditions](#), using the 2018 false alarm incident in Hawaii to stress the need for negotiations toward denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.
- She [believes](#) a long history of interventionism by the U.S. “has led North Korea to develop and tighten their grip on nuclear

weapons,” and rightly worries that President Trump’s threats toward Venezuela and Iran undermine the diplomatic process.

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## Israel/Palestine

- While officially supporting a [two-state solution](#) for Israelis and Palestinians, Gabbard spoke at a [2015 conference](#) of Christians United for Israel, an organization that supports Israeli settlement and whose founder John Hagee has taken Islamophobic stances and written about launching a “theological war” against “global shari’ah.” She also supported [2017 legislation](#) that promoted a U.S. veto on issues related to Israeli settlements.
- She [criticized Israel](#) for its use of live ammunition in Gaza in May 2018.
- When the Trump administration cut off aid to the West Bank and Gaza, she [joined in urging](#) the release of withheld assistance.
- This June, she voted for a resolution opposing the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement. When challenged by constituents about her vote [she said](#), “I voted for H.Res.246 because I support a two-state solution...I don’t believe BDS will accomplish that” and said that the resolution “does not in any way limit or hinder our First Amendment rights.” She also cited her cosponsorship of Rep Ilhan Omar’s bill that affirms that Americans have the right to boycott foreign countries.