



7 Things to Know About Trump's Pick to Lead CIA

Josh Siegel

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President-elect Donald Trump has selected a conservative congressman, Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kan., as his Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director.

Pompeo, elected to Congress in the tea party wave of 2010, is considered one of the strongest national security voices in the House as a prominent member of the Intelligence Committee.

He's a vocal opponent of the Iran nuclear deal and a proponent of using the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for interrogation and detention of terrorism suspects.

"I am honored to have been given this opportunity to serve and to work alongside President-elect Donald J. Trump to keep America safe," Pompeo said in a statement. "I also look forward to working with America's intelligence warriors, who do so much to protect Americans each and every day."

The choice of Pompeo, 52, a former Army officer and Harvard Law School graduate, requires confirmation in the Senate, where Republicans will hold a slight majority next year.

Below, learn more things you need to know about Pompeo, and how he might look to lead the nation's chief spy agency.

1. Iran Deal Opponent

Pompeo is a staunch critic of the Obama administration's policy toward Iran. In a recent [interview](#) with The Daily Signal, Pompeo alleged the U.S. government violated federal law when it delivered \$400 million in cash to Tehran on the same day the country freed four American prisoners.

"I want to know what Obama administration employees were involved with this and how long do they serve in prison," Pompeo said. He's advocated for the next administration to enhance enforcement of the nuclear deal, and pursue measures to punish Iran for its non-nuclear misbehavior.

2. Guantanamo Bay Prison Proponent

Trump's selection of Pompeo could be a sign the Guantanamo Bay prison will remain open. Obama has been unable to fulfill his campaign promise to close the prison, although he has dramatically reduced the population. In a 2013 congressional hearing, according to the New York Times, Pompeo described the prison as lawful and humane.

"We are still engaged in a counterterrorism battle all around the globe that continues to need to have a secure location in which to detain captured enemy combatants remains," Pompeo said.

3. Government Surveillance Supporter

Pompeo is an advocate for expanding the federal government's surveillance authority. After the leaks of the former intelligence contractor Edward J. Snowden, Pompeo opposed limits on government surveillance imposed by the Obama administration and Congress.

Most significantly, he opposed the U.S.A. Freedom Act, that replaced the National Security Agency's bulk collection of Americans' phone records with a system in which the government has to get a court order to obtain records from phone companies.

"Congress should pass a law re-establishing collection of all metadata, and combining it with publicly available financial and lifestyle information into a comprehensive, searchable database," Pompeo wrote in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal. "Robust surveillance, drawing on a variety of technical and human intelligence and backed up by rigorous investigation of all leads, is the best way to mitigate the [terrorist] threat."

4. Clinton Critic

As a member of the House Select Committee on Benghazi, Pompeo and Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, wrote a supplement to the majority report that was more critical of Hillary Clinton's State Department and the administration's handling of the 2012 terrorist attack on the diplomatic compound in Libya.

The report alleged that the Obama administration misled the public about what happened in Benghazi.

5. Star Student

Before coming to Congress, Pompeo graduated first in his class at West Point. He was a cavalry officer in the Army. His website says he "served as an officer patrolling the Iron Curtain before the fall of the Berlin Wall."

Pompeo continued his education at Harvard Law School, and worked at Williams and Connolly, a top District of Columbia law firm.

In Wichita, Kansas, Pompeo founded Thayer Aerospace, where he served as CEO for more than a decade, providing components for commercial and military aircraft.

6. Congressional Record

According to CQ, Pompeo has sponsored 48 bills during his six years in Congress. Seven of those bills passed one chamber. One of them became law.

Along with his work on the Intelligence Committee, Pompeo serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

7. Supporting CIA's Counterterrorism Mission

Since the 9/11 attacks, the CIA has focused aggressively on counterterrorism, involving manhunts and targeted killings of terrorist suspects in drone strikes.

Patrick Eddington, a Cato Institute policy analyst in homeland security and civil liberties, sees Pompeo continuing this legacy.

“There is no doubt the counterterrorism aspect has been the No. 1 focus of the CIA in the last 15 years, and I don't see that changing in any shape or form in this administration,” Eddington told The Daily Signal in an interview. “I think you will see an intensification of that. I would expect under this administration a pretty dramatic increase in the use of the CIA for lethal operations against ISIS and the like.”

Trump, in his campaign, called for harsher security tactics. Under President George W. Bush, the CIA created black sites, secret prisons operated in foreign countries where the government used “enhanced interrogation techniques” on terrorist suspects. Obama ended that program.

Pompeo has defended the Bush administration's interrogation techniques.

“These men and women are not torturers, they are patriots,” Pompeo said after the 2014 release of a Senate report on the CIA's detention and interrogation program. “The programs being used were within the law. If any individual did operate outside of the program's legal framework, I would expect them to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”