

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 1, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Avril Haines
Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, DC 20511

Dear Director Haines:

I write to urge you to issue a declassified public assessment or report on the Intelligence Community's (IC) review of the publicly-reported allegation that Unit 29155 of the Russian military intelligence service (GRU) offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants for killing U.S. servicemembers and coalition forces deployed to Afghanistan.

While any intelligence assessment on this matter is understandably sensitive, the American public, and Gold Star Families in particular, have a pressing need to know if there is any truth to these claims – and I believe such a finding may be presented while protecting classified information.

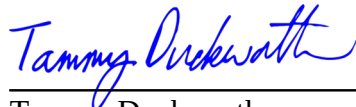
In June 2020, public reports emerged alleging that the GRU paid Taliban-linked militants to murder U.S. troops and coalition forces. Further, these reports indicated the existence of evidence that first raised suspicions of the existence of such GRU bounty payments; may have resulted in payments to Taliban-linked militants who killed U.S. servicemembers or coalition forces; and may have inspired or incentivized deadly attacks against U.S. servicemembers and coalition forces.

Yet, despite my persistent attempts to bring transparency to these alarming reports, the Trump administration failed to provide an official response to basic questions: did the United States Government or our partners assess the likelihood of the existence of the GRU bounty payment activity, and did the United States Government find evidence indicating correlation or causation between GRU bounty payments and deadly attacks on U.S. troops by Taliban-linked militants?

I was pleased that one of President Biden's first actions after becoming our Nation's Commander in Chief was to task you with leading a comprehensive IC review of alleged Russian malign activity, including the publicly-reported GRU bounty payment activity. Upon completion of this work, I request that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence prepare an unclassified assessment or report that will provide urgently needed transparency on this grave matter.

I urge you to take action where the prior administration failed. Thank you in advance for considering my request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator