

Trump Names John Ratcliffe as CIA Director

Ratcliffe served as director of national intelligence during the first Trump term.

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Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-Texas) testifies before a Senate Intelligence Committee nomination hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on May. 5, 2020. Andrew Harnik/Pool via Getty Images



President-elect Donald Trump has announced he has selected John Ratcliffe as director of the CIA.

“I look forward to John being the first person ever to serve in both of our Nation’s highest Intelligence positions. He will be a fearless fighter for the Constitutional Rights of all Americans, while ensuring the Highest Levels of National Security, and PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH,” Trump wrote in a message sent on the evening of Nov. 12, the latest in a flurry of Tuesday evening appointments.



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Ratcliffe, an attorney, served as director of national intelligence



during the first Trump term. He was previously a Republican congressman from Texas and an anti-terrorism and national security



chief for Eastern Texas.



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Originally from Illinois, Ratcliffe earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame before obtaining a law degree from Southern Methodist University. He was later U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas and, from 2004 until 2012, mayor of Heath, Texas, a community in metro Dallas-Fort Worth.

While in Congress, he was a member of the House Intelligence Committee and the House Judiciary Committee.

During Trump’s first term, Ratcliffe made a name for himself as a staunch Trump loyalist.

Trump dropped an early attempt to elevate Ratcliffe to the director of national intelligence position in 2019. But the following year, he renewed the effort, [nominating him](#) in May against the backdrop of the COVID-19 response.

Ratcliffe won approval that same month.

While still in Congress, Ratcliffe was among the lawmakers questioning the foundations of the FBI’s counterintelligence

investigation against the Trump campaign in the summer of 2016.

In late 2020, Ratcliffe said that the elections that year were marred by foreign interference—a claim with which some other intelligence officials disagreed.

He also informed Congress in a 2021 letter of his assessment that China [tried meddling](#) in those same elections. Ratcliffe’s [letter](#) quoted the ombudsman for the intelligence community, Barry Zulauf, who in a report found that China analysts “appeared reluctant to have their analysis on China brought forward because they tended to disagree with the Administration’s policies.”

After serving as DNI, Ratcliffe remained a consistent defender of Trump, including against Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg’s indictment of Trump, unsealed in the spring of 2023.

“Legitimate law schools will forever use this indictment to teach the concept of prosecutorial abuse of discretion,” the former DNI [wrote on X](#).

That same year, Ratcliffe testified before Congress that a lab leak in China, once dismissed as a debunked conspiracy theory, constituted “the only explanation credibly supported by our intelligence, by science, and by common sense” for the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ratcliffe’s nomination has already sparked responses on X.

“John Ratcliffe is someone with both a keen understanding of the threats our country faces and the integrity to clean up political bias within the CIA,” former congressman and Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows [wrote on X](#).

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