



Chuck Hagel a Committed Internationalist

The confirmation vote for Republican former senator of Nebraska Chuck Hagel (shown) to replace outgoing Leon Panetta as secretary of defense was postponed by another week after Hagel failed to meet the expectations of his former Republican colleagues during last week's Senate confirmation hearings. Even more troubling than Sen. Hagel's performance in the hearing is his record on defense issues, as well as his questionable ties to certain organizations.



The secretary of defense is second (only to the president) in the military chain of command and directly oversees the Department of Defense and the nation's armed forces. This makes the selection of this Cabinet-level position of the utmost importance concerning national security, thus requiring a scrupulous vetting of the nominee.

As a member of the Senate, Hagel voted in the following manner on defense issues:

- NAY on separate barracks for males and females in basic training;
- YES to kill an amendment that called for sanctions on commercial fronts of the Communist Chinese military;
- YES in support of China's membership in the World Trade Organization;
- YES on the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty to reduce U.S. nuclear stockpiles in parity with Russia.

On May 14, 1998, Sen. Hagel voted to table (kill) the Hutchinson Amendment (S.Amdt.2387) to the National Defense Authorization Act of 1999. This amendment would have required the president of the United States to "compile a list of persons who are Communist Chinese military companies and who are operating directly or indirectly in the United States or any of its territories and possessions," and to "publish the list of such persons in the *Federal Register*."

The amendment would have also given the president the authority to invoke sanctions against front corporations of China's People's Liberation Army, which is the military arm of Communist Party of China. Although the amendment and bill passed the Senate, it was subsequently referred to the House Committee on National Security, where no action was taken on it, and thus it failed to pass Congress.

In addition to his voting record above, in 2000, Senator Hagel endorsed President Bill Clinton's decision to "not deploy a limited national missile defense system." Hagel explained that missile defense "must move forward on four parallel tracks — technology, Congress, our allies, and the Russians."

While Hagel believes that a U.S. missile defense system should only be deployed with the cooperation of Russia, he does not consider such cooperation from Russia as important when it comes to reducing nuclear weapons. He has called for "sharply reducing the number of U.S. nuclear weapons, possibly without equivalent cuts by Russia," according to the Associated Press.

Hagel is also an advocate of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face the planet



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and has worked with Global Zero, an organization dedicated to the same goal. If confirmed, Hagel would be the first incoming Secretary of Defense to be on record calling for the reduction and eventual abolition of the U.S. nuclear stockpile.

Hagel's soft stance on Communist China and Russia and advocacy for total nuclear disarmament has earned him recent [words of praise from the Communist Party USA](#) (CPUSA). The CPUSA's official newspaper [People's World](#) described Hagel as one who does "represent the more sober elements who have called in our national discourse for rejection of the old cold war tactics, the unilateralism and the continual push for wars all over the world."

Joe Wendland, the editor of the CPUSA's theoretical journal *Political Affairs*, described Hagel as a "[real Republican maverick](#)," in an article published on June 2, 2008. Past issues of *Political Affairs* have touted Hagel, along with some Democratic senators, for opposing the Iraq War and supporting immigration reform, or amnesty.

Phyllis Bennis, of the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Policy Studies, wrote an article for *The Nation* magazine, published online on January 8, 2013, entitled "[Will Chuck Hagel's Appointment Actually Help the Anti-War Left?](#)"

While acknowledging Hagel as a "conservative Republican," Bennis wrote, "At the end of the day, this isn't about Hagel versus anybody. This is about what President Obama is signaling by his nomination of Hagel as Secretary of Defense." She further explained, "Obama is not prepared to allow either the pro-Israeli lobbies or the hard-core neoconservatives, in and outside of Washington, to determine whom he could and could not choose as Secretary of Defense."

Bennis went on to applaud Hagel for his past remarks about the defense budget. "And then there's the Pentagon budget. Hagel has called it 'bloated,' pretty amazing for a future Secretary of Defense.... [A] Pentagon chief who actually believes his agency's budget should be cut — that's new." Her endorsement of Hagel concluded:

Standing to the left of President Obama's center-right military policy is not a very high bar. But again — standing up to AIPAC, the defense industry (and members of Congress accountable to them) and the still-powerful neocons makes the Hagel appointment a good move for Obama. And it gives the rest of us a basis to push much farther to end the wars, to close the bases, to cut the Pentagon funding, to tax the military profiteers.

This Institute for Policy Studies' endorsement of Hagel is significant, considering that [Secretary Panetta also had ties with the IPS](#) during his early years in Congress. It should be noted that during the Cold War era, both the IPS and the Communist Party USA acted as front organizations for the KGB and the Soviet Union. Even today, the IPS continues to work with Marxists within the United States to bring about their desired brand of social changes.

Phyllis Bennis also carries communist affiliations of her own. She was a former member of the pro-Soviet Line of March, which was an "Oakland based Maoist organization founded in 1970," according to [KeyWiki's online database](#) of communists, socialists, and Marxist subversives. In 2008, Bennis was voted to the steering committee of United for Peace and Justice, where she worked alongside CPUSA leaders Judith LeBlanc and Libero Della Piana.

United for Peace and Justice is also listed on the IPS website as one of its "[Partner Organizations](#)." Another IPS "Partner Organization" of note is the George Soros-funded Ploughshares Fund, which has Chuck Hagel as a board member. Hagel shares membership on the Ploughshares board with:



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- John Hoyt, who also serves on the Organizers' Forum Board of the Democratic Socialists of America-run magazine *Social Policy*;
- Cynthia Ryan, who has also served on the board of self-admitted communist Van Jones' Green for All.
- Kennette Benedict, the executive director and publisher of the leftist anti-military *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*;
- David Holloway, former member of the Board of Editors for the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

On January 9, 2013, the [Ploughshares Fund applauded and congratulated](#) President Obama's decision to nominate Hagel as defense secretary. The Ploughshares Fund, like Global Zero and the IPS, also advocates vast cuts to military defense spending and the reduction of U.S. nuclear weapons, without an adequate missile defense system in place to defend the country from potential ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) attack.

In addition to sitting on the board of the Ploughshares Fund, Hagel is also the chairman of the Atlantic Council. In its early years, according to the Atlantic Council's website, it worked with various luminaries from the one-world-government-promoting Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), such as Secretaries of State Dean Acheson, Dean Rusk, and Lucius Clay. It should also be noted that Hagel is also a member of the CFR, according to the [2012 CFR membership roster](#).

Since its founding in 1961, the Atlantic Council has worked toward greater interconnectivity and cooperation with Europe when dealing with issues of global concern. Today, the Atlantic Council works to deepen the relationship between the United States and the European Union on global matters.

In 2011, Hagel wrote an article entitled "Defining A New World Order" that appeared on the Atlantic Council's website. In the article, Hagel discusses the limitations of U.S. foreign policy and the need to engage foreign nations through diplomacy in order to advance the growth of democracy abroad. Concerning Egypt, Hagel wrote, "Continued long-standing U.S.-Egyptian military-to-military relationships will be vital to U.S. policy and Egypt's democratic transition."

Hagel's article, in accordance with the Atlantic Council, does not consider American exceptionalism as a factor in world events, but rather views the United States as a leading partner among other states in the promotion of world democracy. It is Wilsonian in its tone and reveals the former senator's internationalist worldview, which is alarming considering that he may in fact take charge of the U.S. armed forces and policy planning at the Pentagon.

As an internationalist, Hagel is deeply committed to the goals, success, and expansion of the United Nations. In his 2008 book [America: Our Next Chapter](#), Hagel wrote:

The United Nations can play a central and critical role in forging connections. The global challenges of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, hunger, disease, and poverty require multilateral responses and initiatives. The United States should therefore take every opportunity to help strengthen global institutions and alliances, including the UN.... No international conflict is simple or easy to deal with, but each requires attention and the United Nations is the only international organization that can help bring the consensus that is indispensable in finding solutions and resolving crises.

In a recent [written response](#) to whether he supported U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, Hagel stated:

I support in principle additional contributions of U.S. military personnel to key positions in UN



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peacekeeping operations where the mission is a strategic priority for the Department and the United States and where our servicemembers can add significant value to the mission effectiveness and efficiencies.

Hagel went on to clarify that he would likely look to increase the number of U.S. personnel participating in UN peacekeeping efforts overseas:

The success of UN peacekeeping operations is important to the United States. I believe that the U.S. should continue to provide military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, especially for key staff positions that help shape the direction and success of the mission. Such support must be practicable and weighed against the potential costs and competing demands for military commitments. If confirmed, I will carefully evaluate the costs of requested UN support against the potential positive impacts and U.S. interests.

A Hagel Defense Department would likely be one dedicated to fundamentally transforming the U.S. armed forces from focusing on military defense to one of increased nation-building and UN peacekeeping operations, in order to make the world “safe for democracy” — as President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed in 1917 — while also pursuing greater flexibility toward Russia in U.S. nuclear disarmament.

Considering his voting record, affiliations, and key endorsements, Hagel is unfit for the responsibilities expected of a secretary of defense, and his nomination may have grave implications with regard to the defense of our country and the very policies that affect the brave men and women of our nation’s armed forces.

Those wishing to send a pre-written e-mail to their U.S. Senator opposing the confirmation of Hagel as Secretary of Defense can do so by clicking [here](#).

This article is slightly adapted and expanded from an earlier version originally posted on [JBS.org](#).

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