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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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March 26, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kashyap Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Director Patel:

I write to you today about the decision by multiple senior members of the Administration to use a commercial messaging application to discuss specific details about impending military strikes in a group conversation that also inadvertently included a journalist. This conduct, which put both intelligence and the lives of service members at risk, likely violates federal criminal and civil statutes that the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have a duty to enforce. You thus have a responsibility to investigate this shocking episode. The American people have a right to know how pervasive this kind of casual breach of national security is and whether political appointees at the DOJ and FBI are similarly putting our national security at risk.

According to news reports published Monday, on March 13, *The Atlantic* editor-in-chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, who does not appear to possess a security clearance, was added to a group chat on Signal—a commercial messaging application—titled “Houthi PC small group,” meant to serve as “a principles [sic] group for coordination on Houthis” in the lead up to the Administration’s strikes against the rebel group.¹ This chat included some of the Administration’s most senior officials, including Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Vice President JD Vance, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director John Ratcliffe, as well as some of their top staff.² It also included various National Security Council officials, White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, President Trump’s Middle East and Ukraine negotiator Steve Witkoff, who was physically in Moscow at the Kremlin when he was electronically added to this Signal conversation,

¹ Jeffrey Goldberg, *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/>; Hanna Rosin, *Jeffrey Goldberg on the Group Chat That Broke the Internet*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/archive/2025/03/jeffrey-goldberg-group-chat-broke-internet/682161/>.

² *Id.*; Jeffrey Goldberg & Shane Harris, *Here Are the Attack Plans That Trump’s Advisers Shared on Signal*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 26, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/signal-group-chat-attack-plans-hegseth-goldberg/682176/>.

and an individual identified by the initials “S M,” who appears to be White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller.³ And of course, it included Mr. Goldberg.⁴

Beginning on March 14, chat members began discussing an attack on the Houthis, an Iranian-backed “armed political and religious group” that has been attacking ships off the coast of Yemen for over a year, whom President Trump has promised to target.⁵ Mr. Goldberg was privy to a series of internal military and national security discussions, which included Vice President Vance’s opposition to the plans and Secretary Hegseth’s expressed “loathing for European free-loading.”⁶ Then, on March 15, at 11:44 a.m., Secretary Hegseth posted an update in the chat that contained “operational details of forthcoming strikes on Yemen, including information about targets, weapons the U.S. would be deploying, and attack sequencing.”⁷ Mr. Goldberg chose not to share the details of this message because the “information contained in them, if they had been read by an adversary of the United States, could conceivably have been used to harm American military and intelligence personnel, particularly in the broader Middle East, Central Command’s area of responsibility.”⁸ Around 2:00 p.m., when Mr. Goldberg saw that Houthis in Yemen had actually been bombed, he realized the chain was “almost certainly real.”⁹ Indeed, on March 24, the National Security Council confirmed the authenticity of this chat.¹⁰

This situation is perhaps one of the most humiliating and dangerous national security breaches in modern American history—one that put the lives of American service members and intelligence officers carrying out military operations abroad at risk and a rupture in national security protocol that almost certainly violates federal criminal and civil statutes. Using a commercial messaging service, which Pentagon regulations state is “NOT authorized to access, transmit, process non-public DoD information,”¹¹ to share specific details about an impending military attack was in reckless disregard of national security and the safety of our military and intelligence personnel. It was also likely a violation of the Espionage Act. As you know, the Espionage Act of 1917 was enacted to prevent unauthorized disclosure and misuse of certain defense information to ensure the safety of the American people.¹² Under the Act, it is a

³ *Id.*; Joanne Stocker & Emmet Lyons, *As top Trump aides sent texts on Signal, flight data show a member of the group chat was in Russia*, CBS NEWS (Mar. 25, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-envoy-steve-witkoff-signal-text-group-chat-russia-putin/>.

⁴ Jeffrey Goldberg, *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/>.

⁵ *Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking Red Sea ships?*, BBC (Mar. 15, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>.

⁶ Jeffrey Goldberg, *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

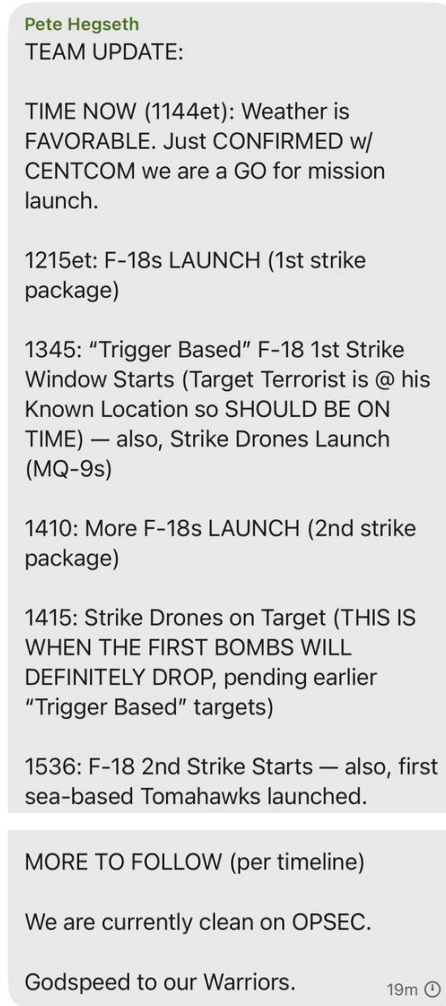
¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Katie Bo Lillis, *Trump’s national security adviser added a journalist to text chat on highly sensitive Yemen strike plans*, CNN (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/24/politics/yemen-strikes-journalist-cabinet-signal-chat/index.html>.

¹² Pub. L. 65-24.

crime to mishandle, misuse, or abuse certain national defense information, lest it fall into the wrong hands.¹³

Despite Trump Administration officials desperately trying to claim now that this detailed account of impending military strikes does not constitute classified material, we know that this chain contained highly sensitive national defense information.¹⁴ Earlier this morning, *The Atlantic* published the entire text of the group chat, barring the name of an active CIA officer.¹⁵ At 11:44 a.m. on March 15, Secretary Hegseth posted a number of operational details, including the type of aircraft that would be used and the timing of the launches, in the chat that included Mr. Goldberg:¹⁶



¹³ 18 U.S.C. § 793.

¹⁴ *Live Updates: Intelligence Officials and White House Deny Classified Material Was Shared in Signal Chat*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 25, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/03/25/us/trump-hegseth-war-plans-leak-signal#82cab663-8650-53b9-a80c-00f65c5fa82e>.

¹⁵ Jeffrey Goldberg & Shane Harris, *Here Are the Attack Plans That Trump's Advisers Shared on Signal*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 26, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/signal-group-chat-attack-plans-hegseth-goldberg/682176/>.

¹⁶ *Id.*

These messages were sent 31 minutes *before* the first warplane launched and two hours and one minute before the beginning of a period in which the primary target was expected to be killed by these American aircraft.¹⁷ If these messages had been received by or leaked to an adversary, the consequences for the American pilots involved in the mission could have been nothing short of catastrophic.¹⁸

Moreover, these actions may have violated another federal law governing the retention of government records. Messages on the “Houthi PC small group” were set to automatically delete—some within one week.¹⁹ This appears to violate the Federal Records Act, which requires that federal agencies and agency heads maintain records documenting their activities, decisions, and functions.²⁰ Under the Federal Records Act, it is unlawful to remove, deface, or alter records.²¹

Given this stunning breach of national security laws, protocol, and common sense, I request written responses, or alternatively a briefing, to address the following questions. I request that this response be submitted, or this briefing provided, by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 28, 2025.

1. Has the DOJ or FBI opened an investigation into these cabinet officials’ breach of national security protocol and how this breach has endangered U.S. national security and U.S. military personnel abroad? Is so, is this investigation looking into possible criminal violations?
2. Is the DOJ or FBI investigating whether there are other instances of political appointees using Signal or other non-authorized commercial messaging applications to discuss classified information?
3. Did any of the participants in the “Houthi PC small group” Signal chat take part in the chat using their personal devices? If so, which participants, and on what type of device?
4. What precautions were taken to make sure that Mr. Witkoff’s participation from the Kremlin did not give Russian intelligence operatives access to the conversation, American war plans, and the devices of the participants?
5. Do any political appointees at the DOJ or FBI use Signal or any other commercial messaging application to discuss official matters? If so, please list the applications and identify:

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

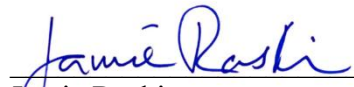
¹⁹ Jeffrey Goldberg, *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/>.

²⁰ 44 U.S.C. § 3101

²¹ 44 U.S.C. § 3106

- a. Whether use of the application is permitted under DOJ or FBI policies and, if so, please provide the relevant policies;
 - b. What type of information is discussed on the application; (e.g., public, non-public, classified, etc.);
 - c. Whether the applications are used to communicate solely within the FBI or DOJ, with other agencies in the federal government, or with individuals or entities outside the U.S. government; and
 - d. Whether you are aware of any use of commercial messaging applications that violates DOJ or FBI policies, federal law, or federal rules.
6. Is the Signal application permitted on any official DOJ or FBI device?
7. Please identify the steps you are taking to ensure that political appointees are not sharing sensitive national security information on commercial messaging services that have not been approved for classified use.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman