

# Pentagon Will Review Hegseth's Use of Signal

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**By Helene Cooper and John Ismay  
New York Times**

The Pentagon's acting inspector general will review Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's [disclosure](#) on the Signal messaging app of the timing of U.S. fighter jets' airstrikes against Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen, the Defense Department's watchdog agency announced Thursday.

"The objective of this evaluation is to determine the extent to which the secretary of defense and other DoD personnel complied with DoD policies and procedures for the use of commercial messaging application for official business," the acting inspector general, Steven Stebbins, said in a notification letter to [Mr. Hegseth](#).

Mr. Stebbins started the review in response to a joint bipartisan request last week from Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the Republican chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and the committee's ranking Democrat, Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island.

The statement from Mr. Stebbins, who took over as acting inspector general after Mr. Trump's [firing of Robert Storch](#), notably called the review an evaluation and not an investigation.

"Our evaluation will be objective, independent and thorough, and we will release the unclassified portions of our evaluation when it is complete," said Mollie Halpern, a spokeswoman for the inspector general's office.

The difference, Ms. Halpern said, is that investigations may involve allegations of civil or criminal wrongdoing, while "evaluations" are focused more on operations, policies and programs.

Mr. Reed took issue with [Mr. Hegseth's semantic argument](#) that he did not disclose [war plans on the Signal group chat](#) that inadvertently included the journalist and editor of The Atlantic, Jeff Goldberg. "Those were sensitive and detailed bits of information that if they had fallen into the hands of the Houthis would have caused them to move in offensive weapons against our pilots," he said in a telephone interview with The New York Times just after he and Mr. Wicker called for the investigation.

Mr. Goldberg was mistakenly added to the text chat by Michael Waltz, the national security adviser. It was an extraordinary breach of U.S. national security intelligence.

Mr. Goldberg said he was able to follow the conversation among senior members of President Trump's national security team in the two days leading up to the strikes in Yemen on March 15. The Signal group also included Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"Our service members put their lives on the line every day to protect our nation and deserve better than officials who would risk their safety just so they can text each other congratulations," said Representative Gerald E. Connolly, Democrat of Virginia, who also requested an inspector general investigation, in a statement Thursday. "This blatant breach of security protocol and violation of law demands a fulsome, free and fair investigation."

Separately on Thursday, Democratic Senators Adam Schiff of California, Andy Kim of New Jersey, Ruben Gallego of Arizona and Elissa Slotkin of Michigan wrote a letter asking Susie Wiles, the White House chief of staff, for new information to determine any damage to national security done by the administration's use of commercial apps.

On Monday, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said a White House review of the leak had been closed after steps were taken to "ensure that something like that can obviously never happen again."