

THE CLASSIFIED INFORMATION JOHN RATCLIFFE, PETE HEGSETH, AND MIKE WALTZ SENT TO JOURNALIST JEFFREY GOLDBERG

If you're like me, you'll keep checking when reading this story about how Mike Waltz added journalist Jeffrey Goldberg to a Signal chat of top Trump officials planning war strikes on Yemen to see if it's the Onion.

But it's not.

It's real.

Mike Waltz really did add a journalist to a chat (including Marco Rubio, who was a big player in the Butter Emails fun) planning war strikes on Yemen.

To make things easier to understand the risk of all this, I wanted to pull out what kinds of highly classified information these people shared with a journalist.

First, CIA Director John Ratcliffe sent the identify of a currently serving intelligence officer.

One more person responded: "John Ratcliffe" wrote at 5:24 p.m. with the name of a CIA official to be included in the group. I am not publishing that name, because that person is an active intelligence officer.

Then, Ratcliffe sent what sound like sources and methods.

Then, at 8:26 a.m., a message landed in

my Signal app from the user “John Ratcliffe.” The message contained information that might be interpreted as related to actual and current intelligence operations.

Then, Whiskey Pete Hegseth (who says trans service members are not fit to serve, but thinks he himself is fit to run DOD), sent operational details of the strikes on Yemen about to start.

At 11:44 a.m., the account labeled “Pete Hegseth” posted in Signal a “TEAM UPDATE.” I will not quote from this update, or from certain other subsequent texts. 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. What I will say, in order to illustrate the shocking recklessness of this Signal conversation, is that the Hegseth post contained operational details of forthcoming strikes on Yemen, including information about targets, weapons the U.S. would be deploying, and attack sequencing.

Finally, Waltz sent what sound like the immediate results of the operation.

I went back to the Signal channel. At 1:48, “Michael Waltz” had provided the group an update. Again, I won’t quote from this text, except to note that he described the operation as an “amazing job.”

Miek Waltz is the one who added Goldberg to the chat. He also set at least some of them to auto delete.

Waltz set some of the messages in the Signal group to disappear after one week, and some after four. That raises questions about whether the officials may have violated federal records law: Text messages about official acts are considered records that should be preserved.

Finally, Goldberg notes that by definition, they could not have had their phones in a SCIF, so all were sharing information outside the security guidelines mandated for this kind of information.

Normally, cellphones are not permitted inside a SCIF, which suggests that as these officials were sharing information about an active military operation, they could have been moving around in public. Had they lost their phones, or had they been stolen, the potential risk to national security would have been severe.

I guess this is what we should expect from an Administration led by a guy who stored nuclear documents in his bathroom.

Not a single one of the people involved in this thread exhibits the least competence for the job.