

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE

BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

BUDGET

INTELLIGENCE

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

March 26, 2025

Kash Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535

Director Patel,

Between March 11 and 15, the Secretary of Defense and other senior Trump Administration officials used a commercial messaging application to communicate information revealing that the United States was preparing to conduct airstrikes against Houthi targets in Yemen. The messages were sent as U.S. pilots were preparing to fly U.S. military aircraft into enemy-controlled airspace defended by surface-to-air missiles in order to strike targets known to change their location. Messages sent by the Secretary of Defense not only revealed, in advance, that the U.S. was planning airstrikes in Yemen, but also disclosed details concerning the timing, sequencing, and weapons to be used. This information could have been used by the Houthis to shoot down U.S. aircraft, thereby endangering the lives of the U.S. pilots, as well as to relocate enemy targets or otherwise disrupt the mission.

Department of Defense policies dictate that information concerning military plans, such as contained in the messages sent by the Secretary of Defense, is classified, and no reasonable process would allow for communication of this information over a commercial messaging application *before* U.S. pilots had completed and safely returned from their mission.

Yesterday you testified that you could not provide information to the Committee concerning this matter because you had only recently been made aware of it.

In other contexts, the FBI has acted promptly to open an investigation when information of a similar nature has been mishandled. As you have now had two days to consider the details of this matter, can you confirm the following:

1. Will you commit to opening an investigation of this matter, if you have not already done so?
2. Will you collect the devices involved, whether government-issued or otherwise?
3. Will you scan those devices for malware or other indications of unauthorized access?

Sincerely,



MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator