

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1736 “Signalgate” and the Real Leadership Lesson

Trump Administration plans to attack Houthi rebels in Yemen ended up in a bad place, namely the phone of Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief for The Atlantic. Goldberg and his publication have long been staunch opponents of President Trump, and are accused of falsifying charges of Trump making disparaging remarks about American soldiers who gave their lives in the liberation of Europe in World War II. The leak of this information has created a firestorm in the media and social media. Whatever the truth is, I think there's a leadership lesson that is being ignored. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next on The Extra Point.

What we know. Pete Hegseth, America's secretary of defense, texted about plans to kill a Houthi terrorist leader in Yemen two hours before the attack was to be carried out.

Jeffrey Goldberg of The Atlantic published screenshots of the chat, proving that he was included in the recipients of the messages.

The reaction is exactly what any follower of American politics would expect. Democrats have demanded that Trump fire the members of his national security team who were responsible for the leak.

Democrat Jim Himes of Connecticut said at a hearing of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, “I think that it's by the awesome grace of God that we are not mourning dead pilots right now.”

Republican Senator Roger Wicker, leader of the Pentagon's oversight committee in the Senate, has asked for an independent probe and said the texts appeared so sensitive that he would have wanted them to be classified.

Administration officials circled the wagons and went into damage control mode. Mike Waltz, national security advisor, took responsibility for the breach as he had created the list of people who would receive communication for

the campaign against the Houthis, using the chat app Signal. There has been no good explanation for how Goldberg could be included in the group. Did Waltz look at his contact list and intend on adding the person above or below Goldberg? Unless the story has been updated and I've not seen the answer on that yet, it's still a mystery.

A day later, Waltz attempted to play down the texts as less of the big deal that Democrats and the media were making of it, posting on X: “No locations. No sources & methods. NO WAR PLANS. Foreign partners had already been notified that strikes were imminent.” They made a point to stress that no classified information had been released.

The texts contained details about the targets of the attacks as well as the timing involved. You can be the judge. Is that sensitive enough to warrant a classified rating?

Predictably, social media exploded. Liberals are claiming that Trump's cabinet is totally incompetent; while conservatives are going after Goldberg and what they claim has been scandalous behavior and lies against Trump.

A few points to make.

1. What would have been the reaction had Waltz said: “Man, did I screw that up. I don't know how it happened but I thank God for the outcome we had. I apologize to my associates in the national security group, to President Trump, and to the American people. I will make sure this kind of mistake never happens again.”

The Democrats and liberal media would still have done exactly what they did. However, Waltz might have scored some points with others, like independents and moderate Democrats. When people show humility and admit their mistakes, as a people we can't wait to give them another chance.

(Con't.)

2. Trump is in a bit of a tough place when you think about it. One of the things he campaigned on is that Joe Biden never fired anybody, regardless of how bad they performed. Well, okay, you brought it up Mr. President. Now what?

3. We are all leaders in some way. Maybe that's a leadership position at work, or at home, in school, church, sports or civic activities. It's likely that somebody, and maybe a lot of somebodies, look up to us and how we deal with truth, and accountability. What will they come to know about our integrity if we blame others, or qualify every mistake we make?

What if the people we care about the most come to be accountable exactly the way we are? Would we be okay with that?

Sometimes, we can draw important lessons from the news of the day. I think this is one of those times.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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