# Pentagon turmoil under Pete Hegseth sparks rare Fox News criticism of Trump administration



Amid mounting turmoil within the Pentagon, the Trump administration is encountering critical scrutiny, remarkably from Fox News, regarding the current state of the Defence Department under Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. The situation has escalated to a point where five senior officials have resigned in recent weeks, coinciding with reports of intense infighting and a widening internal power struggle.

National Security Advisor Mike Waltz appeared on Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures programme, hosted by Maria Bartiromo, to address concerns about the Pentagon's ability to maintain operational effectiveness during this period of upheaval. Bartiromo directly questioned whether the Defence Department, described by some as "chaotic" and "weakened," could effectively pursue peace negotiations in Ukraine given the ongoing leadership crisis.

Waltz responded firmly, defending the administration's focus and leadership, stating: “100 days ago, we were more worried about DEI and climate change nonsense. Now we’re focused on lethality and winning. That’s been, in just over three months, the change.” He praised Hegseth's leadership, saying he “couldn’t be prouder” of the Defence Secretary and dismissed reports of chaos as a media narrative that the department will "power through."

The turmoil reportedly centres on Hegseth, a former Fox News weekend host whose appointment to the Pentagon was confirmed by a historically narrow Senate vote, requiring Vice President Kamala Harris to break the tie. Hegseth’s tenure has been marked by controversial revelations, including sharing sensitive military information about strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen in private messaging groups extending beyond official channels. Some chat participants included cabinet officials and inadvertently, an editor from The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg. Waltz was reported to have created the initial group chat thread where this information was shared.

Additional reports have emerged that Hegseth also circulated strike information in a personal group chat with family members and his lawyer, raising concerns about the security protocols within the Defence Department. In response, Hegseth’s office has been investigating the source of leaks, with at least nine leak inquiries underway. Sources reveal that Hegseth’s Chief of Staff, Joe Kasper, who recently departed, advocated bringing in the FBI and conducting polygraph tests on staff amid these suspicions. These measures include polygraph threats and reports of dismissals of Hegseth’s perceived allies, further contributing to an atmosphere of uncertainty.

The Guardian reported that the recent ousting of three senior Pentagon staffers may be linked to an investigation into the leak of a classified document outlining strategic options for reclaiming the Panama Canal. One of the dismissed officials, Dan Caldwell, denies the allegations, accusing the investigation of being politically weaponised—a sentiment echoed in an interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

Meanwhile, Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire has been openly critical of Hegseth’s leadership, describing him as unqualified and a source of departmental dysfunction during her appearance on CBS’s Face the Nation. She stated, “The fact is, Pete Hegseth was not qualified to take the job as Secretary of Defense, and he has shown that time and again.” Shaheen further condemned Hegseth’s leadership style, claiming he is “not the kind of role model, not the kind of leader that we need at this time.”

In contrast, Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell defended the current administration, suggesting that “chaos” was more pronounced during the previous government, referencing the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and issues attributed to a "divisive DEI culture" that, he claimed, eroded service member morale. Parnell attributed recent global crises—the Russian invasion of Ukraine, attacks by Hamas in Israel, Houthi assaults on maritime vessels, and the surge of transnational criminal gangs crossing the southern US border—to “weak leadership” predating the current administration.

Furthermore, CBS News has also raised questions about unusual security anomalies at the Pentagon, reporting a system that might allow Secretary Hegseth’s office to access Signal messages, bypassing standard Defence Department security protocols. The department, however, has refuted claims that Signal is actively used in the office.

The cumulative effect of these developments paints a picture of a Defence Department grappling with internal instability, leadership disputes, potential security breaches, and a broader debate over accountability and management style. While the administration projects confidence in its new direction and leadership ethos focused on "lethality and winning," opposition figures and some within the Pentagon express concern over the operational capacity and the long-term impact of ongoing investigations and staff turnover. The unfolding situation continues to attract both media attention and political debate as it shapes the administration's defence policy and public perception.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://www.businessinsider.com/pentagon-staffers-are-dropping-left-and-right-heres-why-2025-4> - This source elaborates on the mass resignation of Pentagon staffers, ongoing investigations into leaks, and internal turmoil including the sidelining of teams, which supports claims about the chaotic environment and security concerns within the department.
* <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/04/18/defense-secretary-chief-of-staff-joe-kasper-departure-00299508> - This article covers the departure of Joe Kasper, Hegseth’s Chief of Staff, and the ongoing leak investigations, including the use of polygraph tests and FBI involvement as part of the probe into internal security breaches.
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* <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2025-04-25/pentagon-advisers-hegseth-17579680.html> - This article details the firing and resignation of senior Pentagon staffers within a short timeframe, highlighting the leadership challenges faced by Secretary Hegseth.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/pentagon-signal-messaging-security-concerns/> - CBS News reports on Pentagon security anomalies regarding the potential access to Signal messages by Secretary Hegseth’s office in ways that may bypass normal Department protocols, supporting the claims of potential security breaches.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/fox-news-pete-hegseth-pentagon-b2740501.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data