



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

August 9, 2022

Luz Ortiz  
Agency Records Officer  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
1155 Defense Pentagon Room 3C842  
Washington, DC 20301-1155

Dear Luz Ortiz,

Based on a recent media report, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been made aware of the potential loss of text messages of top Department of Defense (DoD) officials. According to this report, in January 2021, the government phones of former acting Secretary of Defense Chris Miller, Chief of Staff Kash Patel, and General Counsel Paul Ney were wiped after departing their positions.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), NARA requests that DoD look into this matter. The Department must identify and report to NARA whether any government phones and/or accounts that were maintained by DoD lost text messages or any other records as part of the mobile phone migration process. In particular, we are requesting that you focus on the devices and accounts of senior leaders of DoD. This is not limited to text messages that may pertain to the January 6, 2021 inquiry. Additionally, this review should include how DoD manages their text messages and how the process of device migration at the Department complies with federal recordkeeping requirements.

Please provide your final report within 30 calendar days identifying the specific actions taken to investigate this allegation, and the steps taken to mitigate future risk. If more time is needed to complete your investigation, please submit an interim report describing DoD's plan for review and a timeline to complete this review. If the Department determines that federal records were deleted without proper disposition authority, your final report must include a complete description of the records affected, a statement of the exact circumstances surrounding the

deletion of messages, a statement of the safeguards established to prevent further loss of documentation, and details of all agency actions taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

Enclosure

Cc: Christine Condon, Department of Defense, Deputy DoD Chief Information Officer

Darren Irvine, Department of Defense, Director, Executive Services Directorate,



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August 5, 2022

Andrica Dickerson  
Agency Records Officer  
Department of Army  
9301 Chapek Road Building 1458  
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5527

Dear Andrica Dickerson,

Based on a recent media report, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been made aware of the potential loss of text messages of top Department of the Army (DoA) officials. According to this report, in January 2021, the government phones of former Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, Chief of Staff General James McConville, Director of Army Staff Lieutenant General Walter Piatt, and former General Counsel James McPherson were wiped before preserving potential federal records.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), NARA requests that DoA look into this matter. The Department must identify and report to NARA whether any government phones and/or accounts that were maintained by DoA lost text messages or any other records as part of the mobile phone migration process. In particular, we are requesting that you focus on the devices and accounts of senior leaders of DoA. This is not limited to text messages that may pertain to the January 6, 2021 inquiry. Additionally, this review should include how DoA manages their text messages and how the process of device migration at the Department complies with federal recordkeeping requirements.

Please provide your final report within 30 calendar days identifying the specific actions taken to investigate this allegation, and the steps taken to mitigate future risk. If more time is needed to complete your investigation, please submit an interim report describing DoA's plan for review and a timeline to complete this review. If the Department determines that federal records were deleted without proper disposition authority, your final report must include a complete description of the records affected, a statement of the exact circumstances surrounding the

deletion of messages, a statement of the safeguards established to prevent further loss of documentation, and details of all agency actions taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

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LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

Enclosure

Cc: Mark F. Averill, Department of the Army, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army

Joyce Luton, Department of the Army, Alternate Agency Records Officer



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***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

June 15, 2023

Luz Ortiz  
Agency Records Officer  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
1155 Defense Pentagon Room 3C842  
Washington, DC 20301-1155

Dear Luz Ortiz,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received the Office of the Secretary of Defense's (OSD) final report on the allegation of potential loss of text messages of top Department of Defense (DoD) officials. A news outlet reported that government devices used by former acting Secretary of Defense, Chris Miller; Chief of Staff, Kash Patel; and General Counsel, Paul Ney were wiped after their departure in January 2021.

DoD engaged with private mobile communications carriers to recover any potentially lost federal records. Those inquiries confirmed that none of the carriers maintained the content of any relevant text message or voice transaction. Instead, the carriers were only able to provide information about communications occurring on the relevant, DoD-assigned mobile devices. That information generally includes the following: voice transactional data (e.g., connection date/time, originating number, terminating number); text message (short message service (SMS)) transactional data (e.g., connection date/time, originating number, terminating number); and data usage (e.g., connection date/time, originating number, bytes up/down).

Based on the information provided, this case is considered resolved. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence v. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

Cc: Christine Condon, Department of Defense, Deputy DoD Chief Information Officer,

Darren Irvine, Department of Defense, Director, Executive Services Directorate,