

YnetNews Sept 19, 2019

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Whistleblower Complaint of Trump promise to a leader of Russia, North Korea, or Qatar

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Benny Gantz vows to form a liberal unity government of deliberate negotiations

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Gantz's party has 33 seats and Netanyahu has 31 – 4 undecided

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Unidentified warplanes strike Iran & Iraq militias in Syria, near Iraq

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Netanyahu Lost, Gantz Won, but no majority demands repeat elections in 2020

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09.19.19
Benny Gantz vows to form a liberal unity government of deliberate negotiations

Gantz: I will form a broad, liberal unity government
Blue and White leader says as head of largest party it is up to him to put together next government, says unity is the people's choice and **vows to conduct careful and deliberate negotiations to achieve it** ; Liberman calls on Netanyahu to end his 'political shticks and tricks'

Yuval Karni and Agencies|Last update: 09.19.19, 16:27

Israelis have voted for a unity government, Blue and White leader **Benny Gantz** said Thursday, adding that he intend to be the one to achieve this as head of the party that **apparently has the most number of seats in the next Knesset.**

Gantz said unity was the people's choice and stressed that he would conduct careful and deliberate negotiations to achieve it.

"After an election campaign forced upon the citizens of Israel, the people went to the polls, voted, and made a clear decision - the people chose unity, the people chose Israel before all," he said.

"We will not concede to anyone. I will conduct the negotiations with responsibility and judgment in order to achieve the best for the citizens of Israel in the political circumstances that have been created," the Blue and White leader said.

"It will **require determination and adherence to our principles,**" he said. "There will be no shortcuts. The government that I establish must be **effective and capable** of real action and governance."

The former IDF chief turned politician was speaking hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued his own online video appeal for Gantz to join him in a unity government.

Gantz made no mention of the prime minister and said he himself would head a "liberal" coalition, political shorthand for one **that excludes Netanyahu's long-time ultra-Orthodox allies.**

But he then left it to Moshe Ya'alon, a fellow former IDF chief and Blue and White leader, to deliver a stinging rejection of a partnership with Netanyahu, citing looming corruption charges against the prime minister, who has denied any wrongdoing.

"We will not enter a coalition led by Netanyahu," Ya'alon said, echoing a position Gantz had taken throughout the election campaign and appearing to suggest that an alliance with Likud would be possible if it dumped its veteran leader.

"The time has come for you to tell Netanyahu, 'thank you for all you've done'," Ya'alon urged Likud members - who have shown no sign so far of rebellion.

In his video earlier, Netanyahu insisted he would be the one to form the next government.

"During the elections, I called for the establishment of a right-wing government. But unfortunately, the results of the elections show that this is not possible," Netanyahu said.

"Now I say to you, MK Benny Gantz: Benny, we must establish a broad unity government today. The people expect us, both of us, to show responsibility and work to cooperate."

A senior Blue and White official said that the unity call by Netanyahu was a political exercise.

"Bibi (Netanyahu) has decided to go with a third election and is already trying to push the blame onto us," the official said. "If he steps aside, there will be a unity government within a day."

Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor Liberman also blasted Netanyahu on Thursday for what he called his "political exercises, shticks and tricks."

"Let's sit down - you, Benny Gantz and myself, and establish a broad, liberal national government for the future of the State of Israel," Liberman said.

"In fact, Netanyahu is operating simultaneously on two channels," he said.

"On one hand, he is trying to numb the system as he calls for unity and on the other hand continues his attempts to persuade MKs from other parties to join him and the bloc he established yesterday in order to reach a majority of 61 (Knesset) seats.

"If he fails to get that majority, he will lay the blame for the failure of a unity government on Gantz and on me, and take the State of Israel into another election campaign."

With 96.5 percent of the vote counted Thursday, Blue and White was on track to win 33 seats in the 120-strong Knesset, while Netanyahu's Likud trailed slightly behind with 31 seats.

09.19.19

Gantz's party has 33 seats and Netanyahu has 31 – 4 undecided

With 96.5% of vote counted - Blue and White leads Likud by 2 seats

Gantz's centrist party has 33 seats and Netanyahu's right-wing Likud has 31 as Central Elections Committee tallies ballots from 'double envelopes', including votes cast by diplomats abroad, soldiers and hospital patients

Amir Alon, Yaron Druckman|Published: 09.19.19 , 12:23

The Blue and White party has won 33 seats to the Likud's 31, according to an update from the Central Elections Committee on Thursday morning, with 96.5% of the vote in Tuesday's elections counted.

The results include a partial count of the so-called "double envelopes" – ballots cast in special polling stations by voters unable to reach a regular polling station, primarily IDF soldiers, diplomats abroad, hospital patients and prison inmates.

The count of these ballots began at 1am Thursday morning, with the latest data released some eight hours later. Some 280,000 of these ballots have been counted so far. The incomplete results show 1,035,635 people voted for Blue and White compared to 1,010,246 votes for Likud.

Unlike a standard vote, where the envelope containing a paper ballot is placed directly into the ballot box, these ballots are inserted into a second sealed envelope on which a voter's information is recorded to ensure that he or she has not voted twice.

Unlike regular ballot envelopes, the double envelopes are not counted at the polling station where voting took place but are transferred to the Central Election Committee's headquarters at the Knesset.

Only after verifying that a voter has not cast two ballots is the ballot slip removed from the second named envelope and the original unmarked envelope is mixed in with other ballots to ensure anonymity of the voters.

In the April elections, a total of 240,783 people voted using double envelopes. This amounted to about 5.5% of the total votes cast – which translates to between 6 and 7 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

The double-envelope count in April, saw the Likud receive another seat and United Torah Judaism lose a seat.

The election count will likely continue through Thursday evening. Only after the double envelopes are counted will they be added to the other votes cast, and the process of calculating the final number of seats per party mandates will begin.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday called on Blue and White Chairman Benny Gantz to meet with him to form a broad unity government.

Neither the centrist Blue and White or the right-wing Likud appears to be able to muster the 61 MKs needed to form an outright majority.

Netanyahu said Wednesday that he had a bloc of 55 MKs from the right, far-right and religious Jewish parties - six short of what is needed.

09.19.19

Unidentified warplanes strike Iran & Iraq militias in Syria, near Iraq

Iraqi official: Unidentified warplanes strike Syrian militia base near Iraq border
Security source says five killed, nine hurt in attack; Iranian-backed militias now taking precautionary measures due to ongoing strikes - preventing large gatherings and deploying heavy weapons at security sites
Daniel Salami|Published: 09.19.19, 10:12
Advertisement

Airplanes, apparently unmanned, had attacked positions of Shiite militias in the Syrian city of Al-Bukhmal near the Iraq-Syria border on Wednesday afternoon, an Iraqi security official told Sky News late Wednesday.

The source said five people were killed in the attack and another nine were wounded.

The official added that militia forces have begun to take precautionary measures in light of the ongoing strikes, preventing large gatherings and deploying heavy weapons at security sites in the event of further attacks.

Al-Bukhmal border crossing is located near a key bridge on the Euphrates River. It is an important - perhaps the most important - section of the land corridor Iran is operating through Iraq to the Syria and Lebanese coasts.

Logistical supplies and missiles from Iran are believed to be delivered to Hezbollah through this route, as well as to the additional front against Israel that the Revolutionary Guard has established in Syria.

A source from Deir al-Zor military council said that the attack was carried out by an UAV, which he believes belongs to the international coalition or to Israel, and that the attack targeted bases belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Lebanon's Hezbollah organization and other Iraqi factions.

Beirut-based newspaper Al Akhbar said the sites belonged to Hezbollah.

The report comes a day after another attack at one of the sites in the area. A few hours later, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Syrian opposition organization based in the United Kingdom, reported that at least 10 people were killed in the attack.

At noon, the pan-Arab Al Mayadeen network reported another assault in the area, with no casualties.

According to the Observatory, the base was used by Iranian and Iraqi militias backed by the Iranian regime and was attacked from the air by planes of unknown origin.

The target was reportedly a missile depot. The Al-Hadath TV channel quoted an Iraqi government source as saying that there were loud explosions at the site during the night.

Observatory director Rami Abdul Rahman said that, "Israel is behind the attack on Iraqi militias and Revolutionary Guard in the al-Bukhmal area."

Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi said Wednesday that the investigation into recent attacks on Iraqi territory is ongoing. He said Iraq had not turned to the UN Security Council over the issue as there is no hard evidence that one particular agent is operating on its territory.

"We need solid evidence and cannot rely solely on media reports," he said. As such, he added, Iraq is working to improve its air defense systems.

09.16.19

Iran attack on Saudi oil, stopped sweet crude processing needed for transport

Energy prices spike after Saudi oil attack, U.S. blaming Iran

The damage to Saudi Arabia's largest oil refinery causes the worst disruption to world supplies on record with a barrel of Brent crude oil spiking from \$6 to \$66.28 on Monday; Iran calls allegations that it was behind the attack 'maximum lies'

Associated Press | Published: 09.16.19 , 09:02

Global energy prices spiked on Monday after a weekend attack on key oil facilities in Saudi Arabia caused the worst disruption to world supplies on record, an assault for which President Donald Trump warned that the U.S. was "locked and loaded" to respond.

U.S. officials offered satellite images of the damage at the heart of the kingdom's crucial Abqaiq oil processing plant and a key oil field, alleging the pattern of destruction suggested the attack on Saturday came from either Iraq or Iran - rather than Yemen, as claimed by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels there.

Iran for its part called the U.S. allegations "maximum lies."

But actions on any side could break into the open a twilight war that's been raging just below the surface of the wider Persian Gulf in recent months.

Already, there have been mysterious attacks on oil tankers that America blames on Tehran, at least one suspected Israeli strike on Shiite forces in Iraq, and Iran has shot down a U.S. military surveillance drone.

Benchmark Brent crude gained nearly 20% in the first moments of trading Monday before settling down to 10% higher as trading continued. A barrel of Brent traded up \$6 to \$66.28.

U.S. benchmark West Texas crude was up around 9%. U.S. gasoline and heating oil similarly were up over 8% and 7% respectively before markets opened in New York.

Saturday's attack halted production of 5.7 million barrels of crude a day, more than half of Saudi Arabia's global daily exports and more than 5% of the world's daily crude oil production. Most of that output goes to Asia.

At 5.7 million barrels of crude oil a day, the Saudi disruption would be the greatest on record for world markets, according to figures from the Paris-based International Energy Agency. It just edges out the 5.6 million-barrels-a-day disruption around the time of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, according to the IEA.

Saudi Arabia has pledged that its stockpiles would keep global markets supplied as it rushes to repair damage at the Abqaiq facility and its Khurais oil field.

Trump said the U.S. had reason to believe it knows who was behind the attack - his secretary of state had blamed Iran the previous day. He assured his Twitter followers that "we are ... locked and loaded" depending on verification and were waiting to hear from the Saudis as to who they believe was behind the attack and "under what terms we would proceed!"

The tweets followed a National Security Council meeting at the White House that included Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

A U.S. official said all options, including a military response, were on the table, but said no decisions had been made Sunday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the internal deliberations.

Trump's "locked and loaded" comment mirrors similar remarks he made following Iran shooting down a U.S. military surveillance drone in June. However, the president said he pulled back from retaliating against Iran at the last minute.

U.S. officials also offered highly detailed satellite photos of the Saudi sites that show damage suggesting the attack came from the north, where Iran or Iraq are, rather than from Yemen to the south. Iraq's prime minister has denied the attack came from his country, where Iranian-backed Shiite rebels operate.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Sunday dismissed the U.S. allegations as "blind and futile comments."

"The Americans adopted the 'maximum pressure' policy against Iran, which, due to its failure, is leaning toward 'maximum lies,'" Mousavi said.

The U.S. satellite photos appear to show the attack on Abqaiq may have struck the most-sensitive part of the facility, its stabilization area. The Washington-based Center for

Strategic and International Studies has said the area includes "storage tanks and processing and compressor trains - which greatly increases the likelihood of a strike successfully disrupting or destroying its operations."

Stabilization means processing so-called sour crude oil into sweet crude. That allows it to be transported it onto transshipment points on the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, or to refineries for local production.

The attack "damaged five to seven spheroids and five out of ten stabilization towers," said Fernando Ferreira, the director of geopolitical risk at the Washington-based Rapidan Energy Group.

Five "or so stabilization towers appear to be destroyed and will have to be rebuilt - this will take many months," Ferreira said. "The sophisticated attack now seems likely to reduce Abqaiq's 7 (million barrels of crude oil a day) capacity for an indefinite period" measured in months.

09.19.19

Iran warns any strike will be all-out war, blaming Yemen for attacks on Saudi

Iranian foreign minister: 'Military strike against Iran would result in 'all-out war'
Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif 'Iran won't blink in defending itself; Iranian oil minister blames U.S. for using oil as weapon against the Islamic Republic and claims economic conditions worse than in Iran-Iraq war

Reuters|Published: 09.19.19 , 20:58

Any U.S. or Saudi military strike against Iran would bring "all-out war", Tehran said on Thursday, keeping up a drumbeat of warnings to its adversaries after they accused the Islamic Republic of a strike on Saudi oil facilities.

"I am making a very serious statement that we don't want war; we don't want to engage in a military confrontation ... But we won't blink to defend our territory," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif told CNN in an interview.

Asked what the consequence of an American or a Saudi military strike on Iran would be, Zarif said "an all-out war".

The United States has been discussing with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies possible responses to an attack on Saudi oil facilities on Saturday which they blame on Iran, and which U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described as an act of war on the kingdom.

Zarif had earlier warned on Twitter that what he described as the B team - including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman - was deceiving U.S. President Donald Trump into a war against Iran.

The attack was claimed by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi group.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said that Washington and Riyadh had accused Iran "because they don't believe the oppressed Yemeni nation has reached such a capability," the state news agency IRNA reported.

Meanwhile, the semi-official news agency ISNA quoted Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari as saying Iran's adversaries would regret any aggression against it.

MANY OPTIONS SHORT OF WAR

Trump struck a cautious note on Wednesday. He said there were many options short of war with Iran, which denies involvement in the Sept. 14 strikes that initially halved Saudi oil output. He ordered more sanctions on Tehran.

Zarif also said in a tweet on Thursday that Pompeo was trying to delay issuing visas for the Iranian delegation to the upcoming United Nations General Assembly.

Trump said he is not looking to meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during a U.N. event in New York this month.

Separately, Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh accused the United States of using oil as a "weapon" and said economic conditions were harder under the current U.S. sanctions than during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq.

"Now the situation has become more difficult economically than during the war," Zanganeh was quoted as saying by the Iranian oil ministry's SHANA news agency.

"At the time of the war, we would sell our oil and get our money and buy whatever we wanted, but now the conditions are very complicated," Zanganeh said, referring to banking sanctions which make it hard for Tehran to receive its oil income.

Referring to the effect of attacks on Saudi oil installations, Zanganeh said: "I don't think it's an important issue, and soon the balance will be restored in the market."

Oil prices, which soared after the attack, steadied after Riyadh vowed to restore full output by the end of September.

09.19.19

Netanyahu Lost, His Enemies Won, but no majority repeats elections in 2020

IS ISRAEL UNGOVERNABLE?

Netanyahu Lost. His Enemies Won. But Who Can Govern Israel?

“Netanyahu lost,” says former prime minister Ehud Olmert, who foresees another round of elections in early 2020.

Noga Tarnopolsky

Updated 09.19.19 3:56AM ET Published 09.18.19 8:30PM ET

Jack Guez/AFP/Getty

The strangest episode of Israel’s raucous election—the second in six months—flickered by almost unnoticed, one clip among the 30 videos Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted to his YouTube channel in the final two days before Tuesday’s vote.

Lush with images of sleek Israelis surfing off Tel Aviv beaches and sipping coffee and cocktails in a succession of inviting bars and cafés, it almost looked like a product of the tourism ministry—until the part where you see a woman’s toes peek beyond a blanket, reaching out to tease the toes of the man sharing the bed with her, and those manly toes turning away.

“Right-wing voters have to wake up!” the caption blared. “On Tuesday, you have to go out to vote Likud, and bring family and friends!”

The Likud is Netanyahu’s party, and the ad was meant as a counter-incentive. Netanyahu’s pitch can be summed up thus: Don’t sleep with your hot girlfriend. Don’t go to the beach. Don’t enjoy Tel Aviv’s great cafés. Go out and vote for me!

If Netanyahu was concerned about voter fatigue, he needn’t have worried.

Turnout was a few points higher than it was in the April 9 vote, despite fresh memories of the night six weeks later in which Netanyahu acknowledged he’d failed to form a coalition government and—instead of returning the mandate to Israel’s President, Reuven Rivlin—dissolved the parliament and sent Israel into second elections.

On first glance it looks like Israelis returned a second inconclusive verdict, this time with gusto.

The apparent draw between Netanyahu’s Likud and the main opposition party, Blue and White, led by former army chief of staff Benny Gantz—each claim about 33 seats out of the parliament’s 120—seems to indicate that Israelis have no idea what they want.

On second glance, it is clear that Netanyahu, who has dominated Israeli politics for decades and has served as prime minister for the last 10 years, lost—if only because all of his perceived enemies won.

Netanyahu ran his campaign as if he was besieged in a bunker, regularly taking aim at sham nemeses.

He deemed Avigdor Lieberman, a hardline secular nationalist best known for advocating the death penalty for terrorists, “a leftist.”

Lieberman, Netanyahu’s former defense minister, triggered both the elections of 2019, first by resigning in December 2018, and then by refusing in May to join a coalition beholden to the demands of ultra-orthodox Jewish parties.

RELATED IN WORLD

"Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives to chair the weekly cabinet meeting at his office in Jerusalem, on June 30, 2019."

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Lieberman’s wager paid off, and he has come close to doubling the number of seats his party holds in the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, to a projected eight or nine.

Yohanan Plesner, the president of the Israel Democracy Institute, in Jerusalem, said “Lieberman is the ultimate kingmaker. Netanyahu does not have a government without Lieberman. Lieberman can really dictate the makeup, to a certain extent, of the next government.”

Official elections results are expected on Sept. 25, after the certification of the ballot counts, which is conducted by hand.

Netanyahu attacked the media from the start to the end of his campaign, complaining, in his 3 a.m. Wednesday not-concession speech delivered before a largely empty hall, that the press had forced him to contend with "the most difficult, the most biased campaign ever."

But the press got it right this time, forecasting that he would be left without room to maneuver ahead of the Oct. 2 hearing at which his attorney general, who announced his intention to indict Netanyahu on a raft of corruption charges last February, will lay out the evidence against him.

HOUSES OF CARDS

Netanyahu, Facing Indictments, Rains Scorn on His Enemies

Noga Tarnopolsky

Such is Netanyahu’s predicament that on Wednesday, he canceled his participation in next week’s United Nations General Assembly, one of his favorite events of the year.

Gantz vows to pursue peace with the Palestinians, to institute term limits, and, has unrelentingly promised his supporters that he will never join a government including Netanyahu while he remains a criminal suspect.

This stance seems to rule out a possible government of national unity, in which Blue and White would sit together with the Likud.

This electoral dead end is leading observers to envisage what was once unthinkable: a unity government in which Likud would be led by someone else.

In the event the party, hungry to hold on to power, ousts Netanyahu as its leader, “a new chairman of the Likud might be able to form a government with Blue and White, and then we will probably witness an outcome of a rotation of the position of the Prime Minister between Mr. Gantz and whoever the Likud will elect,” Plesner says, predicting that Israel is “about to enter a period of political uncertainty.”

Throughout his campaign, Netanyahu reserved his most vicious, most uncompromising, and finally most unhinged attacks for Israel’s Arab minority, 20 percent of the population and about 16 percent of the voting public, whose participation in the last vote sunk to an historic low. He accused Arab politicians of supporting terrorism. He accused his opponent, Gantz, a decorated general, of conspiring with Arab leaders to name them ministers.

Netanyahu also accused Gantz of concealing the fact that Iran had hacked his phone, obtaining sleazy photographs proving sexual misbehavior—an accusation that appears to have been invented out of whole cloth.

In the campaign’s frenzied final week, Netanyahu tried to rush through the Knesset a law allowing his party to hide cameras in Arab polling places—as it did, illegally, in April, causing an uproar. The bill failed. And he became the first head of government to be sanctioned by Facebook for hate speech, when his page sent out messages warning that “Arabs want to annihilate us all – women, children and men.”

“Netanyahu was defeated, he lost, and as far as we can see, there is no feasible way he could form a new coalition.”

— Ehud Olmert

The Joint List, a majority-Arab party, that ran as several disparate factions in April, mobilized a major get-out-the-vote operation, apparently surging to 13 seats and becoming Israel’s third largest party, after the Likud and Blue and White.

With an Arab, Joint List chairman Ayman Odeh, who exulted late Tuesday that “incitement didn’t work!” and a “leftist,” Avigdor Lieberman, poised to play kingmakers, the election results constitute a Netanyahu nightmare.

“Netanyahu was defeated,” Ehud Olmert, a former prime minister and Likud elder, told The Daily Beast in an interview, “he lost, and as far as we can see, there is no feasible way he could form a new coalition.”

But since it looks “doubtful that any possible coalition would achieve the support of 61 Knesset members,” Olmert said, “it is likely there will be another round of elections in early 2020.”

For Israel to once again have a stable government, the only solution Olmert sees is another round of elections “very soon.”

But unlike Netanyahu’s opponents, who have spent the past year admonishing the public about the danger the prime minister poses to Israeli democracy, Olmert is sanguine.

“The country’s democratic foundations are very stable,” he said, “and there is no real fear they are being undermined.” Not only that, he said, mentioning the political crisis in the United Kingdom, “the difficulty of ruling a state is not just an Israeli phenomenon... These are relatively common phenomena and Israel is no exception.”

09.19.19

Whistleblower Complaint of Trump promise to a leader of Russia, North Korea, or Qatar

WHISTLE

Whistleblower Complaint Being Suppressed by Trump or Someone ‘Close’ to Him, Schiff Says

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) says the inspector general’s complaint is being held from Congress under the direction of either President Trump or someone in his camp.

Scott Bixby

National Reporter

Updated 09.19.19 5:11PM ET Published 09.19.19 4:07PM ET

REUTERS

Following a closed-door briefing with the intelligence community’s inspector general on Thursday, members of Congress told reporters that they learned no substantive details about a whistleblower’s complaint that reportedly involves President Donald Trump making a “promise” to an unknown foreign leader—but were told that the complaint’s subject “relates to one of the most significant and important of the DNI’s responsibilities to the American people.”

Only minutes after that briefing's conclusion, The New York Times reported that Michael Atkinson, the intelligence community's inspector general, told members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence that the complaint related to "multiple acts," far beyond the scope of a single alleged conversation with a foreign leader.

But specifics of the complaint—and even public confirmation that it concerns actions by the president—are still being withheld from Congress, committee members said.

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) told reporters after the briefing that he believes the details of the complaint—which would normally be shared with Congress—are being suppressed, either by President Trump himself or someone "close" to him and "above the pay grade" of acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire.

"I don't think this is a problem of the law," Schiff, chair of the House Intelligence Committee, said. "The problem lies elsewhere. And we're **determined to do everything** we can to determine what this urgent concern is, to make sure that the national security is protected and to **make sure that this whistle-blower is protected.**"

Fellow House Intelligence member Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA) told reporters after the whistleblower briefing that "we've got a very grave situation on our hands. The standard that has to be met by the IG... urgent, is talking about fire, as he referred to it."

"This whistleblower has done everything according to the book," Speier said. "And the **potential for reprisals for this whistleblower are great**"

The complaint in question, first filed with Atkinson's office in mid-August and reported by the Washington Post, **reportedly concerns a "promise" made while Trump was speaking with another world leader.** In the five weeks preceding the complaint's filing, **Trump had conversations with at least five foreign leaders,** including President Vladimir Putin of **Russia,** **North Korean** dictator Kim Jong Un, and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the emir of **Qatar.**

Legally, such a **complaint must involve mismanagement, waste, abuse, or a danger to intelligence operations or public safety,** or relate to an intelligence activity that violates U.S. law.

—With additional reporting by Sam Brodey.

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National Reporter

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Got a tip? Send it to The Daily Beast here.

09.18.19

Wreckage of the missile & drones that attacked Saudi Arabia may be from exposition

RO BITS

The Clues Hidden in the Drones That Attacked Saudi Arabia

The drones used to attack Saudi Arabia sure look a lot like an Iranian model and the components Iran uses to make their drones. But are they the same?

Adam Rawnsley

Updated 09.18.19 5:05PM ET Published 09.18.19 4:18PM ET

Saudi Arabia says the drones and missiles used to attack its energy industry were made in Iran. But just because the Kingdom says it, doesn't make it so. So who's right? There are a few hints in the wreckage shown off in a Wednesday press briefing—similar components and a mirror image drone at an Iranian exposition—that points towards Tehran-made weapons but is it enough to say the attack was pulled off by Iran? Read along as we dive through the bits of missile and drone to see what points to Iran and what doesn't.

Welcome to Rabbit Hole.

The Saudi guess: We got a hint of what the Saudis think made the drones used to attack their oil facility in Abqaiq from a brief slide shown off during the press briefing. Col. Turki al-Maliki showed the wreckage of what he said were the delta-wing drones used to hit liquefied natural gas containers at the Abqaiq facility. In the right hand corner of the slide, left unexplained, is a picture of a similar looking drone on a stand in an exposition somewhere.