

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2201

October 12, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin,

This is a follow-up letter regarding my concerns about the security clearances and responsibilities entrusted to Yousra Fazili, the Chief of Staff for the Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer of the Pentagon. The brief reply sent to me on September 22 by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, Rheanne Wirkkala, did not address my specific questions, nor did it dispel my serious national security concerns.

As I noted in my letter to you on August 17, Ms. Fazili “served as a ‘strategic’ advisor to Meshal Al-Thani, the Qatari Ambassador to the U.S., for over three years, until not long before she rejoined the Pentagon in a senior staff position and then was promoted twice to her current role.”

Nor did Ms. Wirkkala’s response address the fact that Ms. Fazili was working closely with the Qatari Ambassador at the time that her client was targeting prominent Americans in an effort to silence Qatar’s critics, including the then-Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ed Royce, and the former acting head of the Central Intelligence Agency, Michael Morell.

This matter is even more urgent now in light of the unprecedented terrorist attacks launched on October 7 targeting Israel—with over 1,200 murdered as of this writing, including at least 22 American citizens—by Hamas’ leadership who are currently overseeing the slaughter of men, women and children from inside luxury residences provided by Ms. Fazili’s former client, the State of Qatar.

As you are surely aware, Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 7 issued a statement that echoed Hamas’ own messaging, stating that it “holds Israel solely responsible.” And Al Jazeera, the propaganda outlet owned and ultimately controlled by the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, has served as Hamas’ de facto media arm, broadcasting shockingly positive coverage of the barbaric terrorist attacks and kidnappings, which it calls “the resistance.”



There is little doubt that the Pentagon—including the office of the Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer—will be playing a central role in the U.S. response to the savage brutality carried out by Hamas.

Ms. Wirkkala's September 22 reply provides little comfort that the Pentagon has properly vetted Ms. Fazili's openly acknowledged relationship with one of the two primary sponsors of Hamas, or that Ms. Fazili will be firewalled from involvement in the U.S. handling of Israel's necessary self-defense against Hamas' current terrorist campaign.

As such, I respectfully request, again, the following information:

1. "[T]he results of the Pentagon's due diligence regarding Ms. Fazili's work for and relationship with the State of Qatar"; and
2. "[W]hat safeguards have been put into place to prevent her from influencing decisions or policies related to the Persian Gulf region, if any."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Bergman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress