

Questions surround role of presidential adviser Stephen Moore

Trump calls Whitmer “dictator” as evidence emerges of involvement of Wisconsin militia in Michigan coup plot

Eric London
15 October 2020

President Donald Trump continued to denounce Democratic Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer Thursday, calling her a “dictator” and legitimizing the actions of the fascist militiamen who plotted to kidnap and kill her.

“Michigan, she [Whitmer] has to open up,” Trump said on Fox Business. Whitmer “wants to be a dictator in Michigan and the people can’t stand her,” he said, insisting that people “want to get back to work ... the schools have to open, the businesses have to open.”

This effective endorsement of the plot against Whitmer confirms that Trump is still plotting an attempt to ignore the results of the election on November 3 and use far-right forces in a bid to stay in power.

His thinly veiled threats also highlight the critical role played by the far-right militias as the spearhead of the ruling class’ policy of “herd immunity.” Fascists are being mobilized to threaten violence against officials responsible for implementing even the most mild lockdown measures in order to force the entire country back to work.

Trump’s statements came as Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel announced that a 14th person had been arrested and charged in the broadening conspiracy against Whitmer. The individual is Brian Higgins, a 51-year-old man from Wisconsin.

Nessel told CBS, “I don’t know that they will be associated necessarily with this particular group. But certainly, do I expect further charges related to this series of groups that seem to be operating together not just in the state of Michigan but across several states in many jurisdictions? Yes, I do.”

A transcript of a preliminary hearing held Tuesday in the federal case against conspirators Adam Fox, Ty Garbin, Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta makes clear that only a fraction of the details of the plot have been exposed.

FBI special agent Richard Trask’s testimony reveals that the plotters were only one part of a much broader conspiracy involving many militia groups from multiple states.

It is apparent from Trask’s testimony that the June 6 meeting that took place in Dublin, Ohio was not an informal gathering but more closely resembled a congress of conspirators. Trask testified, “It was a meeting of individuals from multiple states to discuss possible directions heading forward and to discuss possible scenarios for planning. All of them were multiple militias from different states and were also initially tied to this plan.”

Trask said that different militias from various states sent “representatives” to the gathering, and that there were “at least four to five” states with representation at the meeting. Trask specifically mentioned Wisconsin as one of these states.

The FBI agent further testified that various training sessions held by the plotters involved dozens of people, indicating that the group was raising a small army. The following exchange took place between a defense attorney and Trask regarding the June 28 Wolverine Watchmen military training session in Munith, Michigan:

Q: It was attended by a lot of people; is that correct?

A: Correct.

Q: Any estimation? Forty, 50 people?

A: I don’t have that current number.

Q: You’ve seen some videos of it; is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: And there are many, many people above and beyond the people that you’ve identified in this Complaint; is that correct?

A: That’s correct.

Another exchange took place regarding a separate military training session in Cambria, Wisconsin from July 10-12.

Q: Again there are multiple people, 50-plus people at these events?

A: I don’t know that there were over 50, but, yes, there were multiple people.

Q: There were a lot more people than are named here; is that right?

A: That’s correct.

The increasingly central role played by Wisconsin groups in the Michigan plot and Thursday’s charges against Wisconsin resident Higgins raise further questions as to the plotters’ possible connections to the Trump administration there.

Aside from the Cambria training, it was in Wisconsin where the

conspirators planned to take Whitmer for trial and execution. The group purchased a silencer to bring to Wisconsin. At least one Wisconsin resident traveled to Michigan to help spy on Whitmer's vacation house but has not been charged. The name of the state appears no less than 19 times in the transcript of Trask's testimony.

Wisconsin is a battleground state with split control—Republicans control the legislature; Democrats control the governorship. The other battleground states with split control are Michigan, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. It is in these states where Trump has focused his plans to use the far-right to appoint alternate elector slates to steal the election.

The possible connections between the far-right militias in Wisconsin and the Trump administration stem from an April 24 "freedom rally" held in the state capital, Madison, against lockdown measures implemented by the state's Democratic governor, Tony Evers.

Many armed members of Wisconsin's fascist militia attended the rally, which took place just days after militia first descended on the state Capitol in Lansing, Michigan. Those active in promoting the Wisconsin rally included the Three Percent militia, the Oath Keepers and the fascist Midwest Defense Tactical Team. Thomas Leager, a fascist blogger with ties to various militia groups across the state, was a main organizer of the anti-lockdown rally, according to a contemporary report in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*.

On April 14, top Trump economic adviser and coronavirus reopening taskforce member Steven Moore participated in an interview on a right-wing YouTube channel. Though the video has received little attention, the exposure of part of the Michigan plot now places the video in full focus.

During the video, Moore admits to surreptitiously helping plan the April 24 rally. "I am working with a group in Wisconsin," he said, that "is going to shut down the capital. Shhh! Don't tell anybody!"

"This is great," Moore added. "We have one big donor in Wisconsin. I'm not going to mention his name. And I told him about this and he said, 'Steve, I promise I will pay the bail and legal fees for anyone who gets arrested.' This is a great time for civil disobedience."

This raises questions of profound importance. Moore is a major figure in the Trump administration. In 2019, Trump nominated Moore for a seat on the Federal Reserve, though Moore later withdrew his nomination. He was a member of the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board and co-founder and president of the Club for Growth.

Did top Trump adviser Moore have personal interaction with Wisconsin fascists or militiamen? Did he coordinate the April 24 rally with them through an intermediary? Who is the "big donor in Wisconsin" with whom Moore was in contact? What was his or her connection to the militias? What do the at-large Wisconsin plotters have planned for election day?

All of this raises yet another question: Why have federal officials only charged one person from Wisconsin in the conspiracy, when the FBI agent in charge of the investigation admits that the plot included dozens of Wisconsin residents and the state is where the ultimate crime—Whitmer's execution—was slated to take place?

Moore's involvement in planning the April 24 rally in Madison is critical because the testimony of FBI agent Trask makes clear the demonstrations were not protests, per se, they were used by the plotters to meet and plan the next stages of their deadly conspiracy.

Referring to one such rally in court on Tuesday, the federal prosecutor asked Trask, "I want to go back to June 18, which is just about a week and a half after that Dublin, Ohio meeting" at which

militias from at least four or five states, including Michigan and Wisconsin, were present. "There was a Second Amendment rally at the state Capitol, correct?" Trask answered, "Yes."

Q: And that was another one of those things where groups got together with assault weapons at the state Capitol?

A: That's correct.

Q: Did [plot leader Adam] Fox meet with some of the Wolverine Watchmen leadership at that rally?

A: Yes, he did.

Trask answered affirmatively when asked whether the Michigan conspirators discussed "an invitation that they had received to participate in another one of those public demonstrations at the Capitol," as election day drew nearer. Adam Fox told other plotters that the proposal was to "meet up at the Capitol this Sunday full kit at 3 pm for a meeting." The plotters decided not to attend this meeting for risk of attracting public attention.

More questions also arise in relation to the owner of the property in Cambria, Wisconsin where the July 10-12 training took place. The property is owned by Michael H. Jung, who describes himself as "second in command" of the Wisconsin chapter of the fascist Three Percenters. His Twitter profile reads: "Belong to both Oath Keepers and III%ers. We are here to honor our countries [sic] Constitution and keep it the law of Our Country. What about you? MAGA Trump Patriot."

Jung was interviewed by Milwaukee CBS affiliate 58 News and acknowledged the training took place on his property. When asked by a reporter "did the FBI come to talk to you?" Jung replied, "Nobody has talked to me."

What is emerging is a national conspiracy closely linked not only to Trump's election strategy but also to the ruling class' policy of forcing workers back to work no matter the health risks on behalf of Wall Street. It is not accidental that Wisconsin is now the national hotspot in new coronavirus cases. This plot must be exposed and opposed by workers everywhere.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact