

US Army covered up role of Flynn's brother, a general, in January 6 coup response

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21 January 2021

The US Army has covered up the role of Lt. Gen. Charles A. Flynn, brother of Trump loyalist and former National Security adviser Gen. Michael Flynn (ret.), in the events of January 6, 2021, when fascists assembled by Trump stormed the US Capitol and sought to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, the *Washington Post* reported Thursday.

Charles Flynn is a high-ranking Army commander, serving as deputy chief of staff for operations, plans and training. His brother was also a lieutenant general, rising to head the Defense Intelligence Agency before he was fired in 2014 by President Barack Obama in a dispute over Mideast policy.

Michael Flynn emerged a year later as the top military endorser of Trump and a frequent surrogate in the Republican presidential campaign. After the 2016 election, Trump named Flynn his national security adviser, but fired him only three weeks into the new administration for lying about his contacts with the Russian ambassador during the period of transition from Obama to Trump.

Targeted by the Mueller investigation, Flynn initially cooperated and pled guilty to two counts of perjury, before reversing himself, withdrawing the plea, and seeking—with the support of Attorney General William Barr—to have the charges dropped. The judge in the case resisted, and eventually Trump intervened with a full pardon for Flynn.

Since then, Flynn has come forward as a public spokesman for fascistic groups like the QAnon conspiracy theory, appearing at “Stop the Steal” rallies in Washington and calling for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act and order a revote in closely contested states, under the supervision of the military—in all but name, a Trump-led military dictatorship.

These rallies set the stage for the January 6 assault on

the US Capitol, when at least some of the attackers aimed to take hostages among congressmen and senators and trade their lives for a decision by Congress not to certify the electoral votes that would seal Trump's defeat by Democrat Joe Biden.

All this was known to the military brass when they met on January 6 to respond to an urgent appeal from Capitol Police for military reinforcements. Because the District of Columbia is federal territory, the D.C. National Guard was under the control of Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy rather than the city's mayor, and a group of military and civilian officials gathered to hear the call pleading for help. These included General Charles Flynn.

The Army did not immediately grant the request of the Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund and acting Washington D.C. Police Chief Robert Contee III, who reported that attackers had breached the police lines outside the Capitol and entered the building. According to their accounts, at least one military officer on the call, Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt, director of the Army Staff, raised objections. “I don't like the visual of the National Guard standing a police line with the Capitol in the background,” he reportedly declared.

The *Post* account described Chief Contee as “flabbergasted by the Army's reaction,” which came after Chief Sund “had stressed that the Capitol had been breached by protesters and told those on the call that he had reports of shots being fired on the scene.”

It is not known whether General Flynn contributed to the telephone discussion, because several officers spoke and not all were identified. The *Post* reported, “It was at times difficult for the participants of the call to discern which top Army official was speaking.”

The accounts of the participants themselves are highly contradictory. Flynn told the *Post*, “I entered the

room after the call began and departed prior to the call ending as I believed a decision was imminent from the Secretary, and I needed to be in my office to assist in executing the decision.”

McCarthy, for his part, denied even being at the meeting. General Piatt denied making the comments reported by the police officials.

It is clear, however, that the Army’s concern for the “visual” impact of troops arrayed at the US Capitol also extended to the “optics” of the brother of a leading fascist supporter of Trump participating in the decision not to oppose the fascist attack.

The *Post* reported, “Army officials, before and after that interview, denied that Flynn appeared during the call. ‘HE WAS NOT IN ANY OF THE MEETINGS!’ one Army official said on Jan. 12 in an email to The Post.”

Only after reporters for the newspaper had obtained accounts of the meeting from at least five participants did the Army finally send a statement admitting General Flynn’s participation but refusing to comment further.

What is evident here is that both civilian and uniformed military officials have plenty to hide and ample motivation to cover up. By dragging their feet in the face of a mob attack on the seat of Congress, they were acting as accomplices, witting or unwitting, to the overthrow of the US government.

McCarthy left office on January 20 along with most Trump appointees. But the Pentagon remains under the leadership of David Norquist, Trump’s deputy secretary of defense and brother of Grover Norquist, a prominent right-wing figure and longtime Republican operative and anti-tax activist.

These family relationships only underscore the connections between the military leadership and the ultraright, which constitutes one of the gravest threats to the democratic rights of the American people.

There is no doubt that military officers not only stalled in providing aid to the Capitol police, but some actually participated in the attack themselves. According to *Post* columnist David Ignatius, who enjoys close connections with the Pentagon, “Senior military officials tell me they have already identified 30 individuals among active-duty personnel, National Guard forces and veterans who might have been active in the Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol.”

While Ignatius writes as an advocate of the top brass and presents them as hostile to the fascists, his column was published under the extraordinary headline, “Joe Biden’s fundamental challenge is to root out the domestic insurgency.”

In reality, Biden and the Democrats have no intention whatsoever to “root out” the conspiracy against democracy that came to the surface on January 6. That is demonstrated by Biden’s incessant pleading for cooperation by his “Republican colleagues” and “Republican friends,” even though a majority of congressional Republicans voted for the bogus challenges to Biden’s electoral votes, only hours after the fascist attackers had been cleared from the Capitol.

There is every indication that the impeachment trial of ex-President Trump, if it actually takes place, will be an instrument to whitewash this conspiracy, allowing the Republicans to posture as opponents of the violence they incited, and even, as in the case of Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, condemning Trump now, although they supported his effort to subvert and overturn the election right up until January 6.

As for the corporate media, it has almost entirely dropped the question of the Capitol insurrection and its fascist participants, even though arrests continue around the country.



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