As Biden pleads for unity, Senate Republicans overwhelmingly back Trump in impeachment trial

Jacob Crosse
27 January 2021

On Monday evening, Democratic House managers officially presented an article of impeachment to the Senate, formally initiating the trial of Donald Trump on charges of inciting the fascist mob that overran the US Capitol on January 6.

The next day, Senate Republicans made clear their contempt for constitutional norms and democratic rights by voting overwhelmingly to back Trump in a procedural motion put forward by far-right Kentucky Republican Rand Paul.

Among those voting for Paul's motion seeking to scuttle the impeachment trial as unconstitutional was Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, the object of lavish praise in recent days from President Joe Biden for his supposed fidelity to constitutional principles. In reality, McConnell, then the Senate Majority leader, played a central role in Trump's conspiracy to overturn the results of the presidential election, refusing for weeks after Biden's substantial victory in both the popular and Electoral College vote to oppose Trump's bogus claims of a stolen election.

Joining McConnell were 44 other Republican senators, leaving only five Republicans voting in favor of holding the trial, along with all 50 Democrats.

Paul, a right-wing libertarian, argued that the impeachment trial was unconstitutional because Trump was no longer president. After the vote, which made clear that the Democrats would fall far short of the 17 Republican votes needed to convict Trump and set the stage for barring him from holding public office in the future, Paul declared the impeachment trial "dead on arrival."

Substantive proceedings in the trial are set to begin on February 9, but the procedural vote already shows that the Democrats are heading for yet another impeachment debacle.

Biden's ceaseless appeals for "unity" and "healing," which began two days after the January 6 coup attempt when he argued for maintaining a "strong Republican Party," have emboldened the fascistic forces promoted by the Republican Party and Trump, who, though out of office, remains the dominant figure in the GOP.

Republican leaders and officials at the federal and state levels know they have nothing to fear from the new administration. They and their co-conspirators in the military, the police, the intelligence agencies and the corporate-financial oligarchy, who were part of the plot organized from the White House, know they will not be held accountable and can continue their efforts to develop a fascist movement directed against the working class.

A total of 147 Republican lawmakers in the House and Senate voted to overturn the election results in the hours following the January 6 attack on Congress. The fascist insurrectionists mobilized by Trump came within minutes of taking hostages and likely killing House and Senate members, and even Trump's former ally Vice President Mike Pence, in order to block the certification by Congress of the November 3 vote and, in one way or another, overturn the election.

The same Republicans who provided the political cover for the fascist mob would have undoubtedly supported its demands on the Democrats, in the name of "saving lives." And the Democrats would have undoubtedly made enormous concessions.

Only 10 of the 211 House Republicans voted in favor of the article of impeachment passed by the House on January 13. That article, now before the Senate, charges Trump with knowingly inciting the mob during his speech at the Ellipse to attack Congress and carry out sedition.

Those voting for Paul's resolution include Republicans who led the effort to block congressional certification of Biden's win, including senators Josh Hawley (Missouri), Ted Cruz (Texas) and Tommy Tuberville (Alabama).

House Republicans who backed the White House plot include Ohio's Jim Jordan, prominent "#StopTheSteal" organizers Andy Biggs and Paul Gosar from Arizona, and Alabama Representative Mo Brooks, as well as open proponents of the fascist QAnon conspiracy theory, Colorado Representative Lauren Boebert and Georgia's Marjorie Taylor Greene.

On Tuesday, CNN reported that Greene had posted multiple comments on her personal Facebook page in 2018 and 2019 supporting the execution of Democratic politicians. In one January 2019 post, Greene "liked" a comment that called for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to get "a bullet to the head."

Biden and the Democrats have already made it clear that the Senate trial will be a hollow and token exercise. He has repeatedly refused, even when prompted by reporters, to give his opinion on whether Trump should be convicted, declaring that to be a matter for Congress to decide.

He did not mention the impeachment trial at a press conference on Monday, his first since his inauguration. On Monday evening, after the House managers had presented the article of impeachment

© World Socialist Web Site

to the Senate, Biden told CNN he thought the trial "has to happen," but the Democrats were unlikely to obtain the 17 Republican votes needed to convict.

Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer has stated that the trial will be brief and has refused to say whether the Democrats will even bother to call witnesses.

Biden and the Democrats are engaged in a massive coverup of the fascist attack on the Capitol, an event without any precedent in US history, and the months-long attempt to subvert the election results in order to install Trump as dictator.

The Democrats' coverup and Republican defiance coincides with new revelations that underscore the vast scale of the conspiracy and the involvement of critical agencies of the state and high-ranking officials. They make clear that this was not just a right-wing mob that got out of control but a coordinated operation directed from the White House.

The coup attempt was well funded, with the Center for Responsive Politics reporting that the Trump campaign paid more than $2.7 million to entities responsible for organizing the January 6 rally on the Ellipse, where Trump urged his followers to walk to the Capitol and "fight like hell."

A *Washington Post* report published Tuesday pointed to high-level coordination between the Pentagon and Trump in carrying out the attempted coup. In a stunning interview, D.C. National Guard Commander General William J. Walker revealed that the Pentagon on January 5 stripped him of his authority to dispatch troops to secure the Capitol.

"All military commanders normally have immediate response authority to protect property, life, and, in my case, federal functions—federal property and life. But in this instance, I did not have that authority," Walker told the *Post*. Instead, Walker had to wait for approval from Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, as well as recently appointed acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller.

Miller, a far-right former Special Operations commander, who participated in the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, was installed by Trump as part of a wide-ranging purge of civilian leaders in the Pentagon following Trump's defeat in the November 3 election. Among those removed was Mark Esper, the secretary of defense who had opposed Trump's attempt to mobilize active duty troops in June to crush the protests against police violence.

In his interview with the *Post*, Walker made clear that his Pentagon superiors prevented him from dispatching forces to protect the Capitol for hours.

This revelation comes on top of a recent *New York Times* report which revealed that Trump was seeking to oust Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen after Rosen refused to pressure the Georgia state legislature to reverse the certification of the November 3 election and award the state's electoral votes to Trump. Trump was set to appoint Rosen's subordinate, Jeffery Clark, in his stead, but the prospect of mass resignations within the department scuttled the plot.

These revelations follow further reports of members of the military and police participating in the fascist insurrection. An ongoing tally compiled by the *Appeal* has identified at least 39 law enforcement officials who participated in the rally, one of whom has been charged with threatening to kill Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

What is driving Biden and the Democratic Party's refusal to hold Trump and his co-conspirators accountable? The fact is both parties are beholden to the same financial oligarchy, which is in the grips of an immense economic, social and political crisis, intensified by its homicidal herd immunity policy in response to the pandemic. Both parties look with well-founded fear at the prospect of a massive growth of working class opposition, as indicated by strike actions taken by produce workers at Hunts Point in New York and teachers in Chicago and Montgomery,Alabama.

When Biden calls for "unity" in order to "build back better," he is actually calling for unity within the ruling class and the capitalist state in order to take on the working class.

A policy of unity with the Republicans stands diametrically opposed to any serious investigation of the coup. Both parties are aware that any genuine public accounting and exposure of the facts—including texts, emails and communications between the police, Wall Street, the Pentagon and the White House—would undermine the Republican Party and radicalize large sections of the working class and youth, fueling social and political opposition. This is what the Democrats fear, far more than the threat of fascism or dictatorship.

No confidence can be placed in the Democratic Party, the Biden administration or any faction of the ruling elite and its political representatives to hold accountable the criminals responsible for the events of January 6.

It is not just a question of a Senate conviction of Trump, which in the end would have little practical impact. Trump and his co-conspirators must be removed from office, arrested, criminally prosecuted and put in prison.

This can come about only through the mass, independent intervention of the working class, fighting to defend democratic rights on the basis of a socialist program. This fight must be linked to the demand for a full and open investigation into Trump's conspiracy and the January 6 coup attempt, with televised and live-streamed hearings, in which names are named and the political motives and financial backers of the conspirators exposed.

This will strengthen the working class in the struggle against the Biden administration, the fascist menace and the capitalist system which gives rise to military-police dictatorship.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site