

Trump's acting secretary of defense disarmed D.C. National Guard 48 hours before the fascist assault

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A recently published memo issued by former Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller two days before the January 6 fascist assault on the US Capitol confirms that the leadership of the Pentagon deliberately disarmed National Guard soldiers on the eve of the coup attempt. The memo ensured that soldiers would be unable to protect themselves, much less the Capitol, allowing thousands of pro-Trump neo-Nazis and white supremacists to overwhelm the Capitol Police, who themselves had been deliberately underdeployed.

The memo, dated January 4, 2021, was in response to a request by Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy for D.C. National Guard support. The memo, along with FBI documents that have been reported over the past two weeks, directly contradict claims made by McCarthy after the failed coup that the Pentagon had “no intelligence” showing that the Capitol was the target of a potentially violent attack.

The memo approved the use of only 340 National Guard soldiers and imposed extraordinary limitations. It stated:

This memorandum responds directly to your January 4, 2021 memorandum regarding the District of Columbia request for District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) support in response to planned demonstrations from January 5-6, 2021. You are authorized to approve the requested support, subject to my guidance below and subject to consultation with the Attorney General, as required by Executive Order 11485.

Without my subsequent, personal authorization, the DCNG is not authorized the following:

- * To be issued weapons, ammunition, bayonets, batons, riot control agents or ballistic protection equipment such as helmets and body armor.

- * To interact physically with protesters, except when necessary in self-defense or defense of others.

- * Prohibited from sharing “equipment with law enforcement agencies” or seeking support from any non-DC National Guard units.

- * Forbidden from conducting “searches, seizures, arrests, or other similar direct law enforcement activity.”

- * Forbidden from using “Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance assets” or to conduct “Incident, Awareness and Assessment activities.”

- * No helicopters or “any other air assets.”

This general stand-down order stands in stark contrast to the deployment of federal military police during antipolice violence protests in D.C. on June 1. On that occasion, on the approval of McCarthy, two military helicopters, a BlackHawk and a Lakota with a Red Cross emblem, flew low over protesters across from the White House, whipping up dirt and debris. The dangerous and threatening maneuvers broke several Federal Aviation Administration and international laws that forbid the use of medical helicopters for crowd dispersal.

Miller's directive made clear that the D.C. National Guard chain of command went through McCarthy and Miller and that a 40-person “quick reaction force” was to be deployed only as a “last resort.” If the quick reaction force was deployed, McCarthy was directed to inform Miller immediately.

The leaking of the memo follows a revealing interview last week in which the D.C. National Guard Commander Gen. William J. Walker stated that prior to the January 6 attack on Congress, the Pentagon had stripped him of his normal authority to dispatch troops to the Capitol. Walker told the *Washington Post* that he had to wait for approval from McCarthy and Miller, delaying the arrival of the soldiers for roughly four hours.

Miller was appointed to head the Department of Defense after Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper on November 9 as part of a purge of the top civilian leadership at the Pentagon. Esper drew Trump's ire when he publicly opposed Trump's threat on June 1 to invoke the Insurrection Act and deploy active duty soldiers to major US cities to put down antipolice violence protests, beginning with elements of the 82nd Airborne, which were put on stand-by outside Washington D.C.

Esper, along with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley, argued against Trump's demand to invoke the act, fearful of provoking mass popular protests that the government would not be able to control.

It can hardly be an accident that Trump loyalists installed at the Pentagon shortly after Joe Biden had been declared the winner of the presidential election played a central role in the nearly successful coup of January 6, which was engineered by Trump in an attempt to halt the certification of the Electoral College vote by Congress and unconstitutionally retain power.

The Miller memo is the latest revelation to confirm that the January 6 event was a fascist coup orchestrated by the White House and coordinated with the highest levels of the Pentagon, the police and the Republican Party. It was not, as some maintain, simply a spontaneous action, doomed to fail, of wild-eyed Trump sycophants.

The advanced planning that went into the coup is further underscored by the release of security footage this past Friday showing the suspected pipe bomb culprit in the act. The *Washington Post* revealed surveillance video taken on the eve of the coup, between 7:30 and 8:30 pm, which shows an individual in a light sweatshirt placing two pipe bombs, one at each national committee headquarters of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Significantly, despite numerous reports of potential violence, including an FBI warning that same day, the bombs were not discovered for some 18 hours, at approximately the same time the crowd was breaching the Capitol on January 6. They were found, not by the FBI or the police, but by a civilian. Both bombs had timers and were considered "live" when found.

The use of bombs as a diversionary measure to lure police away from the Capitol is the same tactic that was discussed by far-right Michigan Militia members and Boogaloo Bois who plotted to kidnap and kill Governor Gretchen Whitmer last summer. Their conspiracy was exposed, and the ringleaders arrested in October.

Also over the weekend, video and court filings were released detailing the plan carried out by right-wing militias and vigilante groups in the lead-up to the assault. On January 5, the FBI's Norfolk, Virginia office issued an intelligence report warning of violent activity in connection with the upcoming January 6 event.

The *Washington Post* revealed that these warnings included a detailed map showing the layout of tunnels connecting the Capitol complex, while another map was headlined "CREATE PERIMETER."

The court filings show how several far-right groups, including the Proud Boys, whose leader was outed as a "prolific" federal informant last week, engaged in concerted action to overrun the Capitol Police just before 1:00 p.m. Among those leading the assault were former Army combat veteran Jason Biggs, former Marine Dominic Pezzola and William Pepe. Biggs was seen coordinating Proud Boy actions

on January 6 and was charged with obstruction, entering restricted grounds and disorderly conduct, while Pezzola and Pepe have been charged with conspiracy.

Assistant US Attorney Erik Kenerso wrote that Pezzola's actions showed "planning, determination, and coordination." Kenerson alleges that Pezzola obstructed and impeded police protecting the capitol by removing metal barricades and breaking windows, although Kenerson notes that "Pezzola was not the only person trying to break windows and forcibly enter the Capitol at that time, but he appears ... first to breach a window so successfully that he and other rioters could enter the Capitol through it."

One Oath Keeper facing conspiracy charges is Ohio bartender and Army veteran Jessica Watkins. Prior to storming the Capitol, Watkins was confirmed by Oath Keeper leader Stewart Rhodes in an interview with the *Post* to have played an "important role" in threatening antipolice violence protesters in Louisville last fall.

Every day, new revelations emerge pointing to the coordinated action of police and military personnel in the attempted coup. A recent analysis by CNN found that of the 150 people facing federal charges so far for their role in the Capitol assault, 21, or 14 percent, are current or former members of the military. An ongoing tally compiled by the *Appeal* has confirmed at least 39, but possibly 42, current or former police officers also participated.

Among those seen at the Capitol with a bullhorn was the fascist radio and podcast host Alex Jones. It was revealed over the weekend that Jones, who has hosted Rhodes, Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio and Boogaloo Bois on his show, contributed \$96,000 to help fund the January 6 rally at the Ellipse. At that event, then-President Donald Trump, Donald Trump, Jr., Rudy Giuliani and Republican Congressman Mo Brooks incited the crowd to storm the Capitol. Jones worked closely with major Trump donor and Publix supermarket heiress Julie Jenkins, who donated \$300,000 to the event.



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