

January 6 task force whitewashes Pentagon complicity in coup attempt

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On January 15, in the aftermath of the January 6 fascist attack on the US Capitol, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi appointed retired Lt. General Russel Honoré to lead “an immediate review of security infrastructure, interagency processes and command and control.” The mandate of the task forces was to determine what “security failures” enabled the pro-Trump insurrectionists to overrun the building and delay congressional certification of the results of the 2020 presidential election.

On Monday, Honoré held three closed-door meetings with congressional leaders to discuss the findings and recommendations contained in the “Task Force 1-6 Assessment,” which was released that morning.

Among the members on the task force were the new Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Karen Gibson; retired Lt. Gen Jeff Buchanan, who oversaw the government response in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria; retired Maj. Gen. Errol Schwartz, former commander of the D.C. National Guard; and Major Gen. Linda Singh, the former head of the Maryland National Guard.

The recommendations listed in the 15-page report include:

- Increasing the size of the Capitol Police force by 854 officers, nearly a third more than the current figure of 1,800. This includes new intelligence analysts, a dedicated Civil Defense Unit and additional bomb detection dogs.

- More equipment, training and funding, including additional body-worn cameras and mounted horse units.

- Mobile fencing to replace the current temporary

fencing. The report calls for a “fully integrated system of obstacles, cameras, sensors and alarms.”

- Enhanced screening procedures that require “background checks for identification card holders.”

- Expanding the Dignitary Protection Service and offering police protection and home security protection in lawmakers’ districts.

- Revising the Capitol Police Board to allow the Capitol Police chief to request external law enforcement and National Guard support without board approval during emergencies.

The report offers no explanation for the lack of security at the Capitol, despite repeated appeals by then-President Trump for his fascist supporters in various militia organizations to come to D.C. on January 6 to prevent Congress from certifying Joe Biden’s election victory.

It was known well in advance that thousands would descend on Washington D.C. that morning, including armed groups such as the Proud Boys, whom Trump had publicly instructed to “stand back and stand by” in the event his opponent was declared the winner of the November election.

Nevertheless, neither the Capitol Police, the Metro D.C. Police nor the military took any special measures, leaving Congress at the mercy of hundreds of Trump supporters who were able to storm the building with little resistance from the authorities.

The report compiled by Honoré ignores congressional testimony by the commander of the D.C. National

Guard that top Pentagon officials delayed giving him authorization to send troops to remove the far-right attackers for three hours and 19 minutes. It also ignores testimony by former Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund that he pleaded to no avail with Department of Defense officials to send reinforcements.

The task force report can only be seen as part of a cover-up of a deliberate security stand-down ordered at the highest levels of the state, including the White House and the Pentagon. Nor does the report point to the complicity of the Republican Party in the conspiracy.

What took place on January 6 was an attempted coup against the US Constitution, carried out with the aim of overturning the 2020 election and maintaining Trump in power as a de facto dictator. The task force headed by Honoré is part of an attempt, supported by the Biden administration and both big business parties, to conceal this basic fact from the American people.

The report promotes the diversionary claim voiced by police and FBI officials in the course of several congressional hearings over the past two weeks that the lack of security was the result of inadequate intelligence, a claim that is contradicted by the known facts. There was ample intelligence, including from FBI offices and the intelligence division of the Capitol Police itself, which warned days before January 6 that “Congress itself” would be the target of an attack by far-right Trump supporters.

Pelosi and the Democrats chose Honoré to head the task force because he had been lionized by the media during the Hurricane Katrina disaster as the “savior” of New Orleans. Honoré headed up the military relief effort after the massive flooding that destroyed large parts of the city and killed hundreds of people.

The silence of the task force report on the role of Trump-appointed Pentagon officials and Republican politicians stands in marked contrast to what Honoré himself said in the aftermath of the coup attempt. In a January 8 interview with a Fox affiliate in New Orleans, he said, “We knew they were coming. Everybody knew they were coming. Every law enforcement agency in D.C. called the Capitol and said, ‘How many you want?’ ‘Oh, we don’t need no help.’ That’s why it was complicit, and people need to go to jail over that.”

In other interviews, Honoré pointed to the role of

“Trumpsters” in the Capitol Police force, who “allowed their buddies in” the Capitol. He implicated then-Capitol Police Chief Sund in the coup, saying that he had “never seen so much incompetence.” He added, “He should be fired. He should be fired for a total failure, along with the sergeant-at-arms in the Senate and the sergeant-at-arms in the House.”

In a January 11 Twitter post, Honoré denounced Missouri Senator Josh Hawley and Texas Senator Ted Cruz, who jointly led the effort in the Senate to block authorization of the Electoral College vote. Writing of Hawley, he said, “That little peace [sic] of shit with his @Yale law degree should be run out of DC and Disbarred ASAP.”



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