

Army command opposed D.C. request for National Guard presence days before January 6 coup attempt

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On Tuesday, the *Washington Post* revealed that top US Army civilian and military officials drafted a memo opposing a December 31 request from Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser for a small contingent of National Guard troops to help with traffic and crowd control on January 6.

The internal memo obtained by the *Post* adds to the indisputable evidence of involvement at the highest levels of the military in the Trump White House plot to overturn the results of the 2020 election, block the certification of Joe Biden as president-elect and illegally maintain Trump in power.

The conspiracy, months in preparation and backed by the Republican Party, culminated on January 6 in the storming of the US Capitol by a fascistic mob encouraged by Trump to take any and all measures to prevent Congress from officially certifying the Electoral College vote, which Biden won handily, along with the popular vote.

On March 3, Gen. William Walker, commander of the D.C. National Guard, testified before a Senate panel that then-Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and then-acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller delayed approving his 1:49 p.m. request for permission to mobilize his troops to prevent the Capitol from being overrun by the pro-Trump mob for three hours and 19 minutes, giving the OK only at 5:08 p.m.

By that time, the attempt of the militarily trained militia members leading the assault to take lawmakers hostage, in order to block Congress from carrying out its ceremonial function of counting the previously certified Electoral College vote, had clearly failed. Trump had already publicly called on his supporters to vacate the Capitol. In the event, it was not until 5:40 p.m. that 154 National Guard troops arrived at the Capitol.

Tuesday's report by the *Post* underscores the fact that the protracted delay in the Army's approval of D.C. National Guard Commander Walker's emergency request for authorization to deploy his forces on the afternoon of January 6 was not a spur-of-the-moment decision, but rather the implementation of a worked-out plan to overthrow the Constitution and establish Trump as de facto dictator.

According to the *Post*, the draft memo, which was backed by McCarthy, said the 340 National Guard troops requested by the D.C. government should not be needed unless more than 100,000 pro-Trump demonstrators were expected. It also demanded that all

other federal agencies be exhausted before any Guard troops were deployed and that a specific federal agency be named to head the operation.

The Army leadership argued this position in deliberations at the Pentagon the weekend before the January 6 event, the newspaper reported, citing four people "familiar with the discussions" who asked to remain anonymous. According to the *Post*, these sources said the Army ultimately relented and approved the deployment of the requested Guard troops to help with traffic and crowd control, under pressure from Miller and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley. Other press reports have noted that the military insisted that the Guard troops be unarmed and have no contact with the pro-Trump demonstrators.

The *Post* implicitly refuted the Army's contention that it opposed the National Guard deployment out of concern for using the military to perform police functions. The newspaper pointed out that there was no request for the deployment of active-duty troops, but only the National Guard, which, it explained, "is trained to assist law enforcement during large-scale protests and has done so regularly for decades in the District."

While governors control the National Guard in the 50 US states, the D.C. Guard answers to the president, who delegates authority to the defense secretary and the Army secretary.

Underscoring the highly unusual character of the military's opposition to deployment of the National Guard on January 6, the *Post* wrote: "The D.C. Guard, for example, helped with last year's July 4 event and aided the city in handling a march on Washington led by the Rev. Al Sharpton last August. The Guard even deployed to prevent large crowds from gathering and spreading the coronavirus during the 2020 cherry blossom festivities."

"A District official familiar with the security plans on Jan. 6 couldn't recall any historical example of the Defense Department rejecting the city's request to deploy the D.C. Guard."

In his testimony before the Senate earlier this month, General Walker also stressed the extraordinary character of the restrictions placed by Miller and McCarthy on his authority to deploy his troops on January 6. He said a memo issued on January 4 was unlike any other directive he had received in the course of his military career. "It required me to seek authorization from the secretary of the Army and secretary of defense to essentially even protect my Guardsmen," he told the senators.

He added that he had “about 155” soldiers fully equipped and ready to deploy, and their dispatch to the Capitol could have “secured the perimeter” and “made a difference.”

To the extent that the military has even attempted to explain its actions on January 6, the rationalizations that have been given out are absurd. One is concern over the “optics” of mobilizing uniformed soldiers to protect the members of Congress and the vice president, all of whom were assembled in the Capitol, from an armed mob calling for the murder of politicians who refused to go along with Trump’s effort to overturn the election.

Of course, no such scruples prevented the Pentagon from surrounding Washington, D.C., with thousands of active-duty troops last June 1 as part of Trump’s initial attempt to stage a coup. At that time, the top brass ultimately opposed Trump’s threat to invoke the Insurrection Act and deploy active-duty troops to crush anti-police violence protests across the country, fearing the explosive consequences and deeming the move premature and ill-prepared.

Milley and Miller have denied that there was anything unusual in the protracted delay in authorizing the deployment of the National Guard to protect Congress. Milley has characterized the Pentagon’s response on January 6 as “sprint speed.”

The *Post* on Tuesday quoted a former Pentagon official “involved in the events that day” as saying, “We were asked to support the Capitol from a cold start after it already had been overrun and are being criticized for how we fast we responded. We are not like law enforcement units whose job it is to police the streets.”

All of these alibis ignore the historically unprecedented and ominous character of the context within which the events of January 6 unfolded. Trump, the first president in US history to refuse to commit to a peaceful transition of power, had made clear his intention to reject an electoral defeat in his September 29 debate with Biden. At that event he instructed the fascist Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by” should he be declared the loser.

He then escalated the lie that the Democrats were hijacking the election by means of massive vote fraud and mobilized his fascist supporters around the slogan “Stop the Steal.” Two days after Biden had been declared the winner of the presidential election, Trump carried out a purge of top officials at the Pentagon, installing far-right loyalists, including Miller, a former Green Beret and director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

After the state legislatures certified their vote totals in early December, Trump focused his efforts on January 6. Targeting that day as the last chance to block a Biden presidency and maintain Trump in power, he called on his supporters to descend on D.C., promising that the event would be “wild.”

The FBI and other intelligence agencies were tracking social media traffic that bristled with talk of stopping the certification of Biden on January 6, including plans to mobilize armed Trump supporters from around the country. Federal criminal complaints against insurgents arrested in connection with the storming of the Capitol include maps of tunnels beneath the Capitol building and tips on locating the offices of top Democrats such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

In the run-up to January 6, retired Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump’s

former national security advisor, publicly urged Trump to declare martial law and force a revote, under gunpoint, in swing states that had provided the margin of victory for Biden.

Moreover, the military and FBI already had the example of the coup plot in Michigan, which was exposed in early October. Thirteen far-right individuals, including members of fascistic militia groups, were charged in a plot to kidnap and kill the governor of Michigan, storm the state Capitol and publicly execute lawmakers.

In the face of the mountain of evidence establishing the complicity of top officials in the military in the attempted coup of January 6, the Biden administration and the Democratic Party are stepping up their efforts to cover up the extent of the conspiracy and chloroform the public.

In a separate article on Tuesday, the *Post* noted that the Democratic-controlled Congress has held no public hearings on the events of January 6 since March 5, and an upcoming congressional recess will delay any further hearings until mid-April at the soonest. It pointed out that “despite bipartisan appeals,” the Democratic chairs of the Senate Rules and Homeland Security committees, which jointly held previous hearings, have not called for testimony from the Trump officials, including McCarthy and Miller, who oversaw the stand-down of the National Guard on January 6. The *Post* cited unnamed aides who said the committee chairs, Amy Klobuchar and Gary Peters, planned to question other witnesses privately.

The article also cited a letter to lawmakers issued by Pelosi on Monday calling for a “bipartisan” 9/11-style commission to investigate the storming of the Capitol. The letter declared “it is essential that we proceed in a bipartisan way in order to have a respected outcome.” This is a guarantee that any body established on this basis will carry out a complete cover-up, since one of its parties, the Republicans, were complicit in the attempted coup.



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