

U.S. Capitol Police inspector general testifies police leadership withheld crowd control weapons during January 6 coup

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On Thursday Capitol Police Inspector General Michael Bolton confirmed key elements of his still unreleased “flash reports,” concerning the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. Bolton confirmed in his testimony that Capitol Police leadership refused to deploy commonly used crowd control munitions even as the Capitol was being overrun by violent Trump supporters and fascist militia groups.

Bolton stated to House Administration Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren that heavier, less lethal devices, such as 40mm grenade launchers and sting ball grenades, were not used on the orders of an “assistant deputy chief of police,” whom Bolton refused to identify. No one on the committee pressed Bolton to name the officer.

He stated that the reason given by the assistant deputy chief of police for forbidding the use of such devices, which are routinely deployed against peaceful demonstrators protesting unending police murder, was out of concern that “they could potentially cause life-altering injury and/or death, if they were misused in any way.”

The same thing could be said about literally every single piece of police equipment that every officer carries, from pepper spray, to a taser, a baton or a radio. Police routinely, and without consequence, “misuse” tasers and foam and bean bag rounds by aiming them at protesters’ heads and faces causing permanent brain damage and loss of eyesight.

That no one on the committee further pressed Bolton as to why this order was given and by whom testified to the general character of the hearing. Despite some damning testimony, the hearing was hamstrung by the fact that in the interests of “bipartisanship” and furthering their shared class agenda of imperialism war

abroad and ruthless exploitation at home, neither party wants to truly reveal the depth of “insider” state involvement in the attempted coup.

In describing the effectiveness of such devices, Bolton admitted that while “[I]t would be very difficult to say absolutely it would have turned the tide, but ... it certainly would have helped us that day to enhance our ability to protect the Capitol.” He added that when D.C. Metropolitan Police showed up to assist Capitol Police and began deploying sting ball grenades, he personally witnessed “individuals were turning around and leaving,” noting that sting balls are “very painful” and that they “would have helped us.”

In that respect, Bolton’s testimony mirrored that of former D.C. National Guard Commander William Walker, who testified in March that had the Pentagon leadership approved his request to deploy “about 155” soldiers to the Capitol, they could have “secured the perimeter” and “made a difference.” In both instances, high ranking leadership prevented on-the-ground police and military forces from aiding besieged lawmakers.

Further demonstrating that a general demobilizing of the police force in preparation for the coup was ordered by police leadership, Bolton confirmed to New Mexico Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez in a revealing exchange that even though the Capitol Police were in possession of several intelligence reports warning of violence against Congress on January 6, none of the rank-and-file officers were briefed on the potential insurrectionary threats.

“Based on our interviews, no, the basic line officers, rank and file, were not briefed on the intelligence they had,” Bolton told Leger Fernandez. He recommended that more police be given security clearances in order to

have access to more sensitive documents. However, this does not explain why frontline police were not briefed prior to their shift to begin with.

The lack of communication from police leadership to the frontline even as the attack on the Capitol was under way was highlighted in a recent article by the *Washington Post*, which reported Thursday on the radio communications of D.C. police commander Robert Glover, who led a team of besieged police in front of the Capitol on January 6.

The *Post* reported that once Glover's team made contact with the crowd at 1:13 p.m., he requested backup at least 17 times in the next 78 minutes. His repeated calls were answered by receiving only a single platoon of Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) officers.

As police lines were being overrun, the *Post* wrote that "between 2:13 and 2:25 p.m., Glover requested guidance on a fallback position four times.

"I need a command official from Capitol so we can coordinate where they want us to pull back to," Glover said, referring to a commander from the U.S. Capitol Police. "We cannot hold this without more munitions or manpower."

Glover "never received a response to his request for a fallback position on the radio recordings," per the *Post*.

Continuing her line of questioning, Rep. Leger Fernandez described the department's disinterest in repelling the crowd with less-lethal options as "concerning." Leger Fernandez asked Bolton if he thought the level of violence on January 6 warranted less lethal force and if so, how many "grenadiers" were needed?

Disputing claims by Trump-supporting lawmakers, such as Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson who said that the crowd assembled outside the Capitol on January 6 was mostly peaceful, Bolton acknowledged, "looking at the videos, they are extremely violent. They came prepared and planned to do what they were going to do." He refused to say how many grenadiers should have been deployed to repel the crowd, but stated that "three grenadiers is not adequate" and that more needed to be "trained and properly equipped."

During the June 1 demonstrations in D.C. against police violence, peaceful protesters were pummeled with thousands of rubber bullets and bombarded with flashbangs and sting balls. However, on January 6, Bolton confirmed to Lofgren, "civilians were placed"

to assist officers in resupplying gear and equipment because they were so underprepared for the events of the day.

Bolton said that there were no "pre-planned" ammunition and resupply caches inside the Capitol, which forced unarmed civilians to ferry equipment to police while attempting to avoid the crowd.

Also, he testified that he was "dismayed" to discover during his review that a "decontamination area," established for police who had been exposed to chemical agents, was "cases of water brought to the officers."

"That is not a decon area," he added.

So far, Bolton has provided testimony and two private reports to Congress, detailing the obvious failures of the Capitol Police department during the January 6 attack. What has been revealed in the reports, coupled with the release of the internal Pentagon document last weekend showing the Pentagon refused requests from lawmakers and the Vice President to "clear the Capitol," demonstrates the need for the entire Capitol Police and Pentagon leadership to be subpoenaed and questioned as to their roles in carrying out the coup.

However, as was made clear multiple times by Republican and Democratic lawmakers alike throughout the hearing, the purpose of the review was not to blame a single entity within the government or "politicize" the events. This is affirmation from all involved that everything will be done to limit the fallout from the investigation in order to prop up the Republican Party and the state.

This is despite the fact that a majority of Republican congressmen and seven senators supported the overturning of the election even after the attack. To expose the role of senators such as Josh Hawley, Ted Cruz, Tommy Tuberville or Representatives Mo Brooks, Andy Biggs, or Paul Gosar would likewise uncover substantial sections of the police, intelligence and military apparatuses in the plot.



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