

House hearing exposes complicity of FBI and Pentagon officials in January 6 coup attempt

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On Tuesday, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform held its second hearing on “Unexplained Delays and Unanswered Questions” regarding former President Donald Trump’s attempted coup on January 6. The hearing featured stunning revelations related to the refusal of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to issue an intelligence bulletin or threat assessment prior to January 6, despite having received detailed reports on plans for violence at the Capitol from the social media company Parler.

In addition to taking testimony from FBI Director Christopher Wray, the committee questioned two top generals who, in the midst of the violent attack on Congress, ignored multiple appeals from besieged lawmakers, as well as then-D.C. National Guard Commander William Walker and then-Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, for authorization to deploy National Guard forces to clear the mob from the Capitol.

Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt, director of the Army staff, and Gen. Charles Flynn, currently the commanding general of the US Army Pacific, testified before the committee for the first time. Piatt acknowledged that he received “frantic requests” for help as hundreds of Trump supporters, led by Proud Boy, Oath Keeper and III Percenter militia members, rampaged through the Capitol looking to kidnap and/or kill Democratic lawmakers as well as then-Vice President Mike Pence.

They nevertheless sought to justify the nearly four-hour gap between the first appeals for help, at about 1:30 PM, and the actual arrival of D.C. National Guard troops at the Capitol complex at 5:20 PM. Both made the absurd claim that no standing plans existed to defend the center of the US government from attack, making it impossible to more quickly dispatch National Guard troops to prevent the overthrow of the elections and establishment of a de facto presidential dictatorship under Trump.

In the course of the more than three-hour hearing, no

one mentioned that Gen. Charles Flynn is the brother of retired Army Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump’s one-time national security adviser and vocal supporter of the ex-president’s drive to nullify the election of Joe Biden. In the run-up to January 6, Michael Flynn advocated the military occupation of swing states that voted for Biden and the holding of new elections under gunpoint. Flynn continues to back Trump’s claims of a “stolen election.” On May 30, he spoke at a meeting in Dallas of several hundred QAnon and other far-right forces and voiced support for a Burma-style coup against Biden.

Neither Piatt nor Flynn could explain why official Department of Defense timelines did not match those provided by the D.C. National Guard or the Capitol Police.

General Piatt admitted during the hearing that despite knowing the Capitol had been breached by fascist militias, he pushed back on requests by Walker and Sund to deploy the National Guard. Piatt told the committee that federal troops should not be used as a “clearing force at the Capitol.” Apparently, the US military is to be deployed domestically only against peaceful anti-police violence protesters or striking workers.

On the morning of the hearing, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform released damning emails dating back to December 2020 that detail Trump’s unconstitutional efforts to pressure Jeffrey Rosen, the acting attorney general following the resignation of William Barr, to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Before announcing his decision to leave office, Barr announced that the Justice Department had found no evidence of election fraud sufficient to change the outcome of the presidential vote.

In her opening statement, the chairwoman of the committee, Carolyn Maloney (Democrat from New York) stated that “beginning at 1:30 p.m.” on January 6, the Department of Defense received “12 urgent requests for

help,” yet National Guard troops did not arrive for hours, which she characterized as a “shocking failure.”

Maloney also revealed that the social media company Parler, which became the preferred platform of fascists and racists leading up to the attempted coup, had informed the FBI prior to January 6 of 50 separate instances of users planning violence at the Capitol aimed at preventing Congress from officially counting the Electoral College vote.

Under questioning, FBI Director Wray claimed to have had no knowledge of these emails.

One of the emails forwarded to the FBI from a Parler employee included a quote from a Trump supporter that read: “This is not a rally and it’s no longer a protest. This is a final stand where we are drawing the red line at the Capitol Hill!” It continued, “Trump needs us to cause chaos to enact the Insurrection Act.”

Maloney revealed that that FBI has failed to respond to document requests made by the committee more than three months ago. She stated that the Department of Justice under Biden has similarly failed to turn over documents requested by the committee.

Republican members of the committee denounced the hearing as a partisan political exercise and diversion from what they called “serious” issues, such as Biden’s alleged failure to halt the flow of immigrants across the southwestern border and his reluctance to prosecute anti-police violence “rioters.” They reiterated the position of virtually the entire Republican Party that nothing of any great consequence occurred on January 6, and that Trump’s claims of a “stolen election” were and remain entirely legitimate.

Maloney’s opening statement referred to the emails that had been acquired and released by the committee prior to the hearing. They show that from day one of acting Attorney General Rosen’s brief stint as head of the Justice Department under Trump, the White House bombarded him with demands that he resurrect the lawsuits filed by Trump lawyers and loyalists claiming massive election fraud, all of which had been thrown out by state and federal courts, including the US Supreme Court. Trump and his accomplices, including his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, his chief of staff Mark Meadows, and mid-level Justice Department flunkies such as Jeffrey Clark, demanded that Rosen adopt the cases and seek to bring them before the US Supreme Court.

The demands became increasingly desperate and outlandish. Meadows peppered Rosen with demands that he investigate baseless conspiracy theories, including an

alleged plot involving an Italian defense contractor who worked “in coordination with senior US intelligence officials (CIA)” to change the electoral results via “military satellites.”

Meadows also demanded that Rosen investigate alleged irregularities involving Dominion voting machines in New Mexico, and “signature match anomalies in Georgia.”

Finally, Trump demanded that Rosen take up a Texas lawsuit that had been rejected by the Supreme Court earlier in December. The suit called for the nullification of the popular vote in six states due to alleged fraud, so that the Republican-dominated state legislatures could submit their own slate of pro-Trump electors.

When Rosen refused to go along, Trump moved to have him replaced by Jeffrey Clark, who headed the civil division of the Justice Department. When top Justice officials threatened to resign if Trump fired Rosen, Trump pulled back.

In her statement, Maloney said Trump’s response to his failure to get the Justice Department to overthrow the election results came on the morning of January 6, when he “sent an angry, violent mob to the Capitol. The goal was to use violence to stop Congress from certifying that Joe Biden had won the election.”

“In other words,” continued Maloney, “Donald Trump was attempting to instigate a coup.”

But in her closing statement at the end of the hearing, Maloney described the actions of the FBI as merely an “intelligence failure,” and the stand down of security forces by the Defense Department and the military as merely a “mistake.”

The reality is that in the more than five months since the attempted coup, no one who actually planned and facilitated the coup at the highest levels of the Trump administration and the state has been held to account or charged. This demonstrates that the fight against the fascist threat cannot be left to the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street and the intelligence agencies, beholden to the same class interests as its fascistic “colleagues.”



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