

US Capitol Police hired fascistic military contractor to train emergency response unit

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On Tuesday, Capitol Police Inspector Michael Bolton presented the contents of his fourth “flash report” on the January 6 attack on the US Capitol to the House Administration Committee. The report noted the Capitol Police department’s use of a far-right private contractor to train the Capitol Police’s emergency response unit in the techniques used by US Special Operations death squads in Iraq, Afghanistan and other war zones.

Bolton revealed that the Capitol Police department spent \$90,075 in government funds in 2018 and 2019 to hire Northern Red Inc. to train its Containment Emergency Response Team, or CERT. He revealed that Northern Red features neo-Nazi iconography on the homepage of its website, in the company’s logo, and in patches prominently worn and displayed by the company’s founder and CEO, John-David Potynsky.

Potynsky is a highly trained former US Army Special Forces soldier with multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The logo of Northern Red Inc. features an Othala Rune with feet, a symbol that was used by two SS divisions during World War II. It appeared on the flag of the Volksdeutsche 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division.

The same rune design was displayed at this year’s Conservative Political Action Conference, during which former President Donald Trump gave a fascistic diatribe, railing against socialism and communism while demanding that the Republican Party be purged of his critics.

At Tuesday’s hearing, Bolton explained that an unnamed former lieutenant of the CERT team, against government policy, sought outside training for CERT from Northern Red. Despite the fact that the D.C. metroplex hosts several nearby government police and military facilities offering cheaper and more extensive mission-centric training, the Capitol Police sought training hours away at Northern Red’s rural Virginia compound on six separate occasions, costing on average \$15,000 each time.

According to an article published by *Congressional Quarterly Roll Call*, Congress was notified last week that Chad Thomas, an assistant chief for uniformed operators who oversaw the Capitol Police’s CERT and Civil Disturbance units, was resigning. Sources told *Roll Call* that Thomas’ departure was not optional.

Bolton stated that the use of Northern Red by the Capitol Police was sanctioned “all the way up the chain.” He testified that former Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, as well as his predecessor, Matthew Verderosa, signed off on the lieutenant’s request to spend thousands of dollars to have CERT trained by the private contractor.

Northern Red was founded by former US Army Special Forces “Green Beret” soldier Potynsky in 2011. On the company’s website there are several videos featuring the trainers and instructors at Northern Red, all of whom are former US Special Forces soldiers, such as former Delta Force sniper Tom Spooner. On his LinkedIn profile, Spooner notes he was a “managing partner” at Northern Red from 2014 to 2017.

The soldiers-turned-mercenaries have years of experience deploying to

Iraq, Afghanistan and South America in US neo-colonial wars where they conducted hundreds, if not thousands, of assassination and kill/capture missions. In a chilling video, Potynsky explains that he joined the military following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks “to be part of the reckoning.”

Northern Red’s “take no prisoners” ethos

On its website, Northern Red boasts of its training options, which include Carbine, Pistol, Scoped Rifle, Combatives and NVG CQB [Night Vision Goggles Close Quarters Battle] plus Urban Movement. There is no training offered for skills such as first aid, deescalation or “less-lethal,” courses typically offered to police charged with protection as opposed to eliminating enemies.

In addition to the neo-Nazi logo, the homepage of the contractor features a heavily-armed soldier with the statement: “For those who have hunted armed men training is never the same.”

On the company’s website and social media accounts, including Instagram and Facebook, Potynsky and other Northern Red trainers, all former soldiers, are shown wearing a “Devil’s Guard” black and red patch.

During Tuesday’s hearing, California Democrat Pete Aguilar noted that Bolton, in an unusual move, released an “advisory report” to the Capitol Police Department on May 26, prior to the release of his fourth “flash report.” The “advisory report” recommended that the department stop contracting with Northern Red “immediately.” Aguilar questioned Bolton as to why he felt compelled to issue the advisory report given the fact that he mentioned the use of Northern Red by the Capitol Police CERT team in his flash report.

Bolton responded that he felt it was necessary to “alert the [Capitol Police] department as quickly as possible,” so “that if they had plans to continue to use this company that we could put a stop to that immediately.”

“What concerned us,” Bolton continued, was “the patches worn” by Northern Red employees, which Bolton revealed were from a 1971 novel titled *Devil’s Guard*.

The book is part of three-part series that sympathetically tells the story of a Nazi SS soldier who escaped from Czechoslovakia following World War II, joined the French Foreign Legion and committed atrocities in Vietnam. The main character in the book, in the words of Bolton, “believed in asymmetrical warfare, utilization of hostages, civilians and/or other tactics.”

Bolton did not elucidate further on the tactics espoused by the protagonist of *Devil’s Guard*, SS soldier Hans Josef Wagemueller. In an early chapter of the book, Wagemueller explains his unit’s decision to

round up family members of supposed Viet-Minh guerrillas to use as human shields.

"I was resolved to show the enemy that terror, brutality, and cold-blooded murder were not their monopoly, a Communist privilege, and that at least my battalion was ready to pay them tit for tat. They understood no other language," Wagemueller says.

The fascist drive cites the near-genocide of the Native peoples in America as a model for the extermination of socialists. One passage reads: "I have read somewhere what the American settlers used to say about the Indians, Hans. The only good Indian is a dead Indian. I think that is also true of the Bolsheviks."

A 2017 investigation by the Intercept revealed the book's popularity among members of the notorious US assassination squad Seal Team 6. The article said that members of the squad "read the book... and believed it."

Capitol Police CERT unit refused to defend the Capitol on January 6

In the course of Tuesday's hearing, Pennsylvania Representative Mary Gay Scanlon, reading from Bolton's flash report, revealed that the CERT team trained by Northern Red refused to deploy as the Capitol was under siege by Trump's mob. Scanlon noted that "a Special-Ops division official" requested CERT support "several times" for officers who were trapped inside the Rotunda of the Capitol on January 6, but never received any.

Instead, a single CERT official responded in person at the Capitol, without the rest of his team. The official told the special-ops division official that CERT did not want to deploy less-lethal ammunition against the pro-Trump forces storming the Capitol and attempting to capture lawmakers because "they did not want people falling down the steps."

Asked why the CERT team did not deploy or use less-lethal methods, Bolton said that CERT "was left on its own to make decisions as they were." He added that radio traffic reviewed by his office found one CERT official saying: "If they are not going to give us an order to utilize these munitions then what's the point of us being here anyways?"

Bolton concluded: "None of the elements within the Capitol Police knew what the other elements were going to be doing."

In a stunning revelation, the Democratic chairwoman of the committee, Zoe Lofgren of California, reading from Bolton's report, stated, "CERT did not participate in the leadership evacuations." Lofgren asked Bolton if CERT not being deployed put "congressional leadership or even the Vice President in danger?"

Bolton replied that his answer would be "law-enforcement sensitive," but added, with emphasis, "it is a *concern* that they were not there."

In addition to the Capitol Police paying nearly \$100,000 to the fascist paramilitary outfit for four training sessions in 2019 and two in 2018, for a total of six separate courses, *CQ Roll Call* reported that "the FBI awarded several contracts to Northern Red from 2015 to 2018, according to a review of government contract records. The Army and the Air Force also awarded contracts to the firm in 2016."

The *World Socialist Web Site* has found evidence that local police departments have also been paying for "training" from Northern Red Inc. for years.

A conspiracy of silence by the Democratic Party and the media

The fact that US Capitol Police, many of whom were observed on January 6 welcoming Trump's far-right insurrectionists into the Capitol, were trained by fascistic paramilitary death squads has been completely blacked out by the corporate media. As of this writing, no articles on the topic have been posted by the *Washington Post*, *USA Today* or the *New York Times*. The television broadcast and cable networks are similarly maintaining a stony silence, with no segments devoted to the subject on ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, CNN or MSNBC.

The same conspiracy of silence is being maintained by the Democratic Party.

On Wednesday, Bolton appeared before the Senate Rules and Administration Committee to testify on his latest flash report. In contrast to the previous day's House hearing, the Capitol Police's use of Northern Red was barely mentioned.

The Democratic chair of the committee, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, and Democratic Senator Alex Padilla referred briefly to the Capitol Police's contracting with a company displaying "white supremacist imagery." No one at the hearing, including Bolton, uttered the name of the company, and Bolton made no mention of it in his prepared remarks.

Klobuchar used her time to solicit praise from Bolton for her committee's whitewash report on the January 6 attack issued on June 8. She hailed the bipartisan character of the report, which was endorsed by the ranking Republican on the committee, Senator Roy Blunt of Missouri, because Klobuchar agreed to exclude any mention of Trump's role in the coup attempt and refrain from characterizing the mob that attacked Congress as "insurrectionists."

In her weekly press conference on Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made no mention of Bolton's revelations concerning Northern Red, nor has Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer raised the issue.

All six members of the "Squad," House members who present themselves as the "progressive" and even "socialist" wing of the Democratic Party, have remained silent on the Capitol Police's use of neo-Nazi former Special Operations killers to train police tasked with protecting Congress.

The *World Socialist Web Site* plans to publish further articles detailing the integration of far-right private military contractors with the Republican Party and the US military, intelligence and police agencies.



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