

# New book details Trump's efforts to instigate war with China as part of January 6 coup attempt

Barry Grey  
14 September 2021

New revelations emerged Tuesday of the extraordinary steps taken by Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to counter efforts by then-President Donald Trump to instigate a war with China—and possibly launch a nuclear strike—as part of his efforts to overturn his election defeat and remain in power.

The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN and other news sources published accounts of the conflict within the state apparatus based on a new book by *Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Robert Costa, *Peril*, which is slated to be released to the public next Tuesday.

According to the accounts, US intelligence concluded in the final months of Trump's term that the Chinese military considered an American military strike to be likely under conditions where Trump was refusing to commit to a peaceful transfer of power. Milley, the authors of *Peril* write, “felt no absolute certainty that the military could control or trust Trump and believed it was his job as the senior military officer to think the unthinkable and take any and all necessary precautions.”

On October 30, just days before Election Day, Milley told his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Li Zuocheng, commander of the People's Liberation Army, that the US would not carry out a military strike against China. “General Li, I want to assure you that the American government is stable and everything is going to be okay,” Milley told him. “We are not going to attack or conduct any kinetic operations against you.”

But Trump's refusal to concede defeat after the election intensified both fears in China and the internal crisis and conflict within the American state. CIA Director Gina Haspel warned Milley, according to the new book, “We are on our way to a right-wing coup.”

On January 8, two days after the fascist storming of the US Capitol aimed at blocking congressional certification

of the electoral vote, Milley spoke again in secret with his Chinese counterpart to reassure him that the United States was stable and would not attack China. He even told Gen. Li Zuocheng that should he prove unable to prevent Trump from launching a military strike, he would give the PLA commander advance notice of the impending attack.

That same day, Milley, who, as the president's chief military adviser, is not formally in the military chain of command, called an extraordinary and secret meeting in his Pentagon office of the senior officials in charge of the National Military Command Center and instructed them to take no orders from anyone—including the president—unless he was involved. The meeting, according to the *Times*, was intended to “remind” the commanders “that the procedures for launching a nuclear weapon called for his involvement in such a decision.”

CNN cites the following account of the meeting:

“No matter what you are told, you do the procedure. You do the process. And I'm part of that procedure,” Milley told the officers, according to the book. He then went around the room, looked each officer in the eye, and asked them to verbally confirm they understood.

“Got it?” Milley asked, according to the book. “Yes, sir.”

“Milley considered it an oath,” the authors write.

Books released earlier this year have documented Milley's references to the run-up to the January 6 coup as Trump's “Reichstag moment.” The new book provides further information, including on the central role of

Trump's former adviser, Steve Bannon.

According to Woodward and Costa, it was Bannon who urged Trump to return to the White House to prepare for the events of January 6. "You've got to return to Washington and make a dramatic return today," Bannon argued in a quote cited by CNN, calling January 6 "the moment of reckoning." He added, "We're going to bury Biden on January 6th, fucking bury him."

These new revelations shatter all attempts to downplay the significance of the events of January 6. That Trump and his fellow coup plotters inside and outside the Republican Party have never been charged with a crime, let alone arrested, is a testament to the cowardice and duplicity of the Democratic Party. Virtually none of the revelations in the new book had been revealed in the nine months since January 6 and the numerous hearings held by Democratic-controlled committees.

The House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the US Capitol, whose members were chosen by Pelosi, has held only one public hearing, at which no government officials were called to testify. Its lethargy is palpable. If one goes onto its website and clicks on "committee activity," one sees "There are no upcoming hearings."

Rather than alert the public as the coup was unfolding, the Democrats did everything they could to keep the crisis contained to the state and military apparatus. That opposition to Trump's coup plotting was to be left entirely in the hands of the military, "the guys with the guns," as Milley put it, testifies to the extreme crisis of American democracy.

Since Biden's inauguration, the theme of the Democratic Party has been "unity" and "bipartisanship." This has created the conditions for Trump to strengthen his position as the de facto head of the Republican Party as he prepares to run for president again in 2024.

Over the weekend, Trump used the 9/11 anniversary to deliver fascist rants to police and firefighters in Manhattan. Trump copied Hitler's "stab-in-the-back" narrative and applied it to the Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan. He combined it with the lie of the "stolen election," which has been embraced by virtually the entire Republican Party, and called for the removal of all restraints on police violence and for stepped-up attacks on opposition to austerity, war, inequality and the homicidal back-to-school and back-to-work policies of the entire ruling class.

Railing about "Antifa running down the streets and burning down your buildings," Trump in effect called for

a police state.

Trump supporters, militia groups and former Trump aides have called a rally in Washington D.C. for September 18 titled "Justice for J6," calling for the release of the "political prisoners" imprisoned for their roles in the storming of the Capitol. The US Capitol Police announced Monday it is planning for possible armed violence and will re-erect a seven-foot security fence around the Capitol grounds.

Meanwhile, the Democrats continue to plead for "unity" with Trump's Republican co-conspirators. This was on full display at the official ceremonies to mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11 held on Saturday.

George W. Bush, who presided over the launching of the "war on terror" and the complete break with both US and international law it entailed, was given pride of place to deliver the main address at the commemoration in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. He was flanked by his vice president, Dick Cheney, and the current vice president, Kamala Harris, who hailed the response to 9/11 as proof "that unity is possible in America." The same theme was invoked by Biden, who declared in a taped video statement, "Unity is our greatest strength."

By "unity," the Democrats and sections of the Republican Party mean the unity of the ruling class as it confronts the massive growth of social opposition produced by the pandemic, which has claimed the lives of more than 670,000 people in the US alone. It means the perpetuation and acceleration of the underlying tendencies that produced Trump and raise before workers in the US and internationally the threat of fascism and dictatorship.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**