

Select Committee issues first round of subpoenas targeting high-level Trump conspirators in January 6 coup attempt

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24 September 2021

On September 23, Chairman of the House Select Committee investigating January 6 and Mississippi Democrat Bennie G. Thompson released a statement announcing the first round of subpoenas against high-level Republican officials and Trump advisers who were intimately involved in Donald Trump's attempted coup on January 6. In a press release announcing the subpoenas, Thompson said the committee would be seeking "documents and testimony to four individuals with close ties to the former President who were working in or had communications with the White House on or in the days leading up to the January 6th insurrection."

Subpoenas are to be issued to two top officials within the Trump White House, former chief of staff Mark Meadows and former deputy chief of staff Dan Scavino. The committee also subpoenaed Kashyap "Kash" Patel, chief of staff of former acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller and former White House Special Adviser and host of the fascist "War Room" podcast Stephen Bannon. The four are expected to provide documentation to the committee by October 7 and appear for testimony on October 14 (Patel and Bannon) and October 15 (Meadows and Scavino).

In response to the subpoenas, Trump vowed to "fight the Subpoenas on Executive Privilege and other grounds..."

The same day the statement was released, the committee published the letters sent to each individual subpoenaed briefly outlining the reasons the committee is compelling their testimony. In the letter to Meadows, Thompson notes that he was "in the vicinity of President Trump on January 6, had communications with the President and others on January 6 regarding events at the Capitol, and are a witness regarding activities of that day. Moreover, it has been reported that you were engaged in multiple elements of the planning and preparation of efforts to contest the presidential election and delay the counting of electoral votes."

Thompson noted Meadows' leading role in attempting to coerce election officials into requesting "investigations into

election fraud matters in several states" and Meadows' communications with Amy Kremer of Women for America First, the Trump-aligned political committee which organized the Save America Rally outside the White House on January 6.

Writing to Patel, Thompson stated: "At the time of the attack, you served as chief of staff to Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller...there is substantial reason to believe that you have additional documents and information relevant to understanding the role played by the Department of Defense and the White House in preparing for and responding to the attack on the US Capitol, as well as documents and information related to your personal involvement in planning for events on January 6 and the peaceful transfer of power."

Thompson citing a *Vanity Fair* report noted that Patel claimed to be in contact with Meadows "nonstop that day" (January 6.) The *World Socialist Web Site* wrote last November that the appointment of Patel, along with Christopher Miller and Ezra Cohen-Watnick at the Pentagon following Trump's firing of Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, were "Among the most ominous actions taken by the Trump White House as it seeks to nullify the results of the 2020 presidential election..."

In his letter to Bannon, Thompson cited Bannon's presence at the Willard Hotel on January 5, during which Bannon, Trump family members, Republican Senators, and Eduardo Bolsonaro, son of the fascist president of Brazil, attempted "to persuade Members of Congress to block the certification of the election the next day." Thompson noted that Bannon was communicating with Trump in December and early January urging Trump to "plan for and focus his efforts on January 6."

Thompson also referenced reporting in the new book *Peril*, from Robert Costa and Bob Woodward. Costa and Woodward wrote that Bannon spoke to Trump prior to the 6th, telling him "People are going to go, 'What the fuck is

going on here? We're going to bury Biden on January 6th, fucking bury him." Bannon also told Trump, "We're going to kill it in the crib, kill the Biden presidency in the crib."

Seemingly confirming the reporting by Woodward and Costa, Bannon told his podcast listeners this past Wednesday, "Yeah, because his legitimacy. Forty-two percent of the American people—4-2—think that Biden did not win the presidency legitimately. It killed itself. ... Just let this go with what this illegitimate regime is doing. It killed itself. We told you from the very beginning. Just expose it. Just expose it. Never back down. Never give up. This thing will implode."

In his letter to Scavino, Thompson wrote that the committee believes Trump's White House communications director had "knowledge regarding the communications strategy of the former President and his supporters leading up to the events of January 6," and cited Scavino's tweets prior to January 6 in which he "encouraged people to 'be part of history.'"

The subpoenas come nearly a month after the committee announced it was seeking White House electronic records and telephone communications from the National Archives and Records Administration, along with communications from seven different federal agencies. The *New York Times* reported that the committee has also sent demands to 35 technology companies to preserve electronic records.

In addition to social media companies such as Twitter, Facebook and Parler, one of the companies likely asked to preserve their records is the far-right web-hosting company Epik. On September 13, journalist Steven Monacelli revealed that the hacker group Anonymous had gained access to more than 180 gigabytes of the company's data. A preliminary analysis of the data by *Daily Dot* has revealed that Republican operative and lead Stop the Steal organizer, Ali Alexander, used the company's services to propagate Trump's election lies by registering 122 separate domains with Epik. *Daily Dot* reported that 57 domains, or nearly half of the domains registered by Alexander, were related to Stop the Steal.

These included stopthestealmovement.com, stopthestealnews.com, stopthestealactiong.org, stopthestealfilm.com and stopthestealupdates.com. The date leak also showed that in days following Trump's attempted coup, Alexander sought to "anonymize" his data and hide his central role in inciting the attack on the Capitol online through the Stop the Steal movement.

The issuing of the subpoenas represents the first real attempt by the Democrats, nearly 10 months after the Capitol was overrun by Trump supporters and fascist militia members, to bring to light the role of high-level Republican officials in facilitating Trump's attempt to overturn the

election of President Joe Biden and install himself as president-dictator. The fact that none of these people have been charged yet speaks to the ongoing cover-up within the state, that is being overseen by the Democrats and Republicans alike.

In the months following Trump's coup, the Democrats have bent over backwards to cover up the integral role that Republican officials and Trump loyalists within the White House, legislature and Pentagon had played in the lead-up to and day of the coup. This includes issuing a joint bipartisan Senate report this past June which, per Republican demands, completely omitted the word "insurrection," Trump's leading role in planning the coup, along with his and the Republican Party's promotion of the "stolen election" conspiracy theory, which continues to this day.

However, fierce divisions within the ruling class, sections of which are not prepared to discard all forms of democratic rule, and fearful of provoking massive social opposition from below, are seeking to provide the veneer of "accountability." During a press conference this Friday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that the Biden administration will not invoke executive privilege on Trump's behalf in order to shield any White House communications from the Select Committee.

"I would say that we take this matter incredibly seriously. The president already concluded that it would not be appropriate to assert executive privilege," Psaki said. "And so, we will respond promptly to these questions as they arise. And certainly, as they come up from Congress, and certainly we have been working closely with congressional committees and others as they work to get to the bottom of what happened on Jan. 6."



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