

US House of Representatives votes to hold Trump co-conspirator Stephen Bannon in contempt

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On Thursday, the House of Representatives voted to approve a referral presented by the House Select Committee charged with investigating the January 6 attack on the US Capitol. The referral recommended that former White House special advisor and co-conspirator in Donald Trump's attempted coup, Stephen Bannon, be held in criminal contempt after defying the Select Committee's subpoena earlier this month.

As the Select Committee's report made clear and was previously reported by the *World Socialist Web Site*, Bannon played an integral role in Trump's coup plot. In the months leading up to the coup, he incited fascistic violence on his "War Room" podcasts, warning on the January 5 broadcast that "All hell is going to break loose," and "It's all converging, and now we're on the point of attack tomorrow."

As confirmed in the book *Peril* by Bob Woodward and Robert Costa, Bannon joined Trump allies—including the former president's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, One America News Network's Christina Bobb and lawyer John Eastman—at the Willard Hotel in Washington D.C. on January 5 in a "war room" to discuss their plan and lobby Republican lawmakers to join them. Previously confirmed Trump-aligned figures who participated in the "war room" include retired Army General Michael Flynn and Roger Stone.

Bannon also spoke at several "Stop the Steal" rallies propagating Trump's lies that the election was stolen. Two of these fascist rallies were held in Washington D.C. and were heavily attended by far-right militia groups, such as the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys.

Bannon has a close relationship with the former,

while Trump infamously directed the Proud Boys to "Stand back and stand by" in his September 2020 debate with Joe Biden. Both groups, along with other neo-Nazis, retired and current police officers, ex-military and small business owners, spearheaded the attack on the Capitol.

Bannon acted as an intermediary between the Trump White House, fascist lawmakers such as Marjorie Taylor Greene and right-wing paramilitaries helping to organize and plan Trump's attempted putsch.

The close relationship between the Oath Keepers and Bannon was further documented in a recent report by the *Herald-Tribune*, which uncovered through the Epik leak of Oath Keeper email and communications data the fact that a longtime associate of Bannon, Andrew Badolato, was a member of the Oath Keepers. Badolato and Bannon were both indicted last year in fraud scheme that revolved around raising money for a southern border wall.

In furtherance of the scheme, Oath Keeper founder Stewart Rhodes spoke at a proposed construction site for the privately financed border wall. In this 2019 video, Rhodes praises the construction work for Bannon's border wall and advocates for the US military to be deployed to the US-Mexico border.

Rhodes was on the Capitol grounds communicating with subsequently indicted Oath Keepers during the attempted coup. Yet Rhodes has not been arrested.

Despite the prodigious evidence linking Bannon to Trump's coup plot, Bannon has refused to cooperate with the Select Committee, citing Trump's claims of "executive privilege." Trump's rejection of the committee, and with it the US constitutional framework, was made clear in a statement he released

before the House vote was held.

“The insurrection took place on November 3, Election Day. January 6 was the Protest!” declared Trump.

He added, “The Unselect committee of partisan Democrats and two very weak and pathetic RINOs [Republicans In Name Only] should come to the conclusion after spending many millions of dollars that the real insurrection happened on November 3, the Presidential Election, not on January 6, which was a day of protesting the Fake Election results.”

Reflecting deep divisions within the ruling class and the embrace of Trump by virtually the entire Republican Party, all but nine House Republicans voted against the measure, producing a near party-line final vote of 229-202.

The Select Committee passed the referral by a unanimous 9-0 vote on Tuesday. Now that it has been passed by the full House, it will be delivered to the Department of Justice (DOJ). Attorney General Merrick Garland will decide whether federal prosecutors in Washington D.C. will indict Bannon and present the case to a grand jury for prosecution. This is by no means a foregone conclusion.

During a town hall event Thursday evening on CNN, President Biden, the immediate target of Trump’s coup, apologized for publicly saying Bannon should be prosecuted last week.

“I should have chosen my words more wisely,” Biden demurred. “I did not, have not and will not pick up the phone and call the attorney general and tell him what he should or should not do.”

While the Democrats, who control the House, the Senate and the executive branch, refuse to prosecute Trump and his accomplices, the Republicans, seizing the initiative, continue to unite around Trump and his fascistic “America First” program.

After the House vote, fascist Georgia lawmaker Marjorie Taylor Greene confronted Democratic Representative Jamie Raskin and Republican Liz Cheney, two members of the Select Committee. “This is a joke,” Greene yelled at the pair. Greene told Cheney, “You’re done. You’re a joke, Liz. Your party rejected you.”

Taylor Greene later appeared on Bannon’s “War Room” podcast to defend her fellow fascist. Taylor Greene said she was “sick” of listening to the “lies...

accusing you of organizing the January 6 riot. You had nothing to do with it. You weren’t even there, you did not cause it, you did not plan it and everyone knows the truth about that.”

These developments are a serious warning to the working class as to the advanced decay of democratic rights in the United States.

The nine Republicans who voted to hold Bannon in contempt included Select Committee members Liz Cheney (Wyoming) and Adam Kinzinger (Illinois), along with Representatives Peter Meijer and Fred Upton (Michigan), Brian Fitzpatrick (Pennsylvania), Anthony Gonzalez (Ohio), John Katko (New York), Nancy Mace (South Carolina) and Jaime Herrera Beutler (Washington.)

Of the nine who voted in favor of the contempt charges, Trump is supporting primary challenges against four, including Cheney (Harriet Hageman), Gonzalez (Max Miller), Upton (Steve Carra) and Herrera Beutler (Joe Kent). As of this writing, according to Ballotpedia.org, Trump has endorsed 42 Republican candidates for office. Of the 183 endorsements Trump gave in 2020, 77 percent, or 141 Trump-endorsed candidates, won election.

Gonzalez, one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump in January, has already decided to bow out and not seek re-election, to which the would-be Führer responded, “1 Down, 9 To Go!”



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