

In third day of January 6 hearings

Retired federal judge warns Trump will attempt another electoral coup

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More than 17 months after ex-President Donald Trump and his fascist supporters in the Republican Party attempted to overturn the election of Biden, a retired federal judge warned during Thursday's January 6 hearing that Trump and his allies "would attempt to overturn that 2024 election in the same way that they attempted to overturn the 2020 election."

This stark message was delivered by John Michael Luttig, who along with Greg Jacob, the White House lawyer to former Vice President Mike Pence, were the two in-person witnesses featured during the third day of hearings held by the January 6 Select Committee charged with investigating the attack on the Capitol.

Luttig, a lifelong Republican who was on former President George W. Bush's short list to be nominated to the Supreme Court, warned that Trump, "his allies and supporters are a clear and present danger to American democracy."

He added, "To this very day, the former president, his allies and supporters pledge that in the presidential election of 2024—if the former president or his anointed successor as the Republican Party presidential candidate were to lose that election—that they would attempt to overturn that 2024 election in the same way that they attempted to overturn the 2020 election, but succeed in 2024 where they failed in 2020."

Luttig, a former clerk for then-Judge Antonin Scalia, ended his statement and the hearing by stating: "The former president and his allies are executing that blueprint for 2024 in open and plain view of the American public."

Prior to the hearing, the January 6 committee revealed further details of Trump's plot. As part of Trump's efforts to stay in power, top Trump coup lawyer John Eastman corresponded with Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. This follows revelations that Virginia Thomas texted with White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, urging Meadows to bring in far-right lawyer Sidney Powell and send Trump's political enemies to Guantanamo Bay.

While the content of the emails has not been revealed, there is no question that they concerned Trump's efforts to remain in power. In previous text messages with Meadows, Virginia Thomas expressed her "disgust" at Pence's unwillingness to overturn the Constitution.

For the first time on Thursday, Thomas agreed to provide testimony to the January 6 committee, saying she hoped to clear up any "misconceptions" about her role in Trump's coup.

Underscoring the danger of the attack on the Capitol, and at the same time, refuting claims that the attack was a "spontaneous riot" that just "got out of hand," the committee cited a witness's statement from a confidential informant as part of the seditious conspiracy case against five members of the Proud Boys militia group.

The informant, known as "Witness-1" in the documents, said that the Proud Boys were targeting Pence and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi during the

attack on the Capitol, and that had they captured either of the politicians, it is likely they would have been killed.

The committee revealed that when Trump's mob broke into the Capitol, they were at one point approximately 40 feet (~12 meters) away from Pence and his entourage who were fleeing the Senate chamber.

Thursday's hearing, like the two that preceded it, was dominated by witnesses and testimony from Republicans. This is part of the Democratic Party's deliberate strategy to use the hearings to present the narrative of a "sane" Republican Party, in opposition to Trump and the "crazies" that include life-long Republican lawyers John Eastman and Rudolph Giuliani.

Like Trump's second impeachment trial, Democrats and Republicans on the committee used their time to commend Pence for not doing something that was blatantly illegal and unconstitutional. Bennie Thompson (Mississippi-Democrat) began the hearing by reciting a quote from Pence. Ranking member of the committee Liz Cheney (Wyoming-Republican) in her opening comments played a video of Pence saying the exact same quote, portraying Pence as a valiant defender of democracy in contrast to his boss Trump.

This false presentation ignores the fact that for over four years and up until January 6, 2021, as Trump's vice president, Pence dutifully followed Trump's lead. Following Biden's victory, Pence continued to back Trump's claims that the election was illegitimate, saying in a November 2020 speech to the Council for National Policy that he and Trump were "going to keep fighting until every legal vote is counted and until every illegal vote is thrown out."

During that speech before the powerful Republican think tank, which includes Virginia Thomas among its nine-member CNP Action board, Pence told members that "we await the results of our election," even though the election had already been declared for Biden.

Pence has refused to testify before the committee and has not spoken publicly on many aspects of Trump's

coup, further protecting Trump and his co-conspirators. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the committee from anointing the former governor of Indiana as a paragon of democracy.

The Democrats secured the presidency and control of both houses of Congress in the 2020 election. But they immediately proclaimed their desire for "unity" with the very Republican Party that had sought to carry out a coup. Biden declared, "We need a strong Republican Party."

Over the ensuing year and a half, the Democrats have systematically covered up the scale and significance of the January 6 coup attempt, seeking the support of the Republicans to carry out policies of mass infection and military aggression. This, in turn, has only emboldened the fascists that dominate the Republican Party.

The ongoing revelations about the massive scale of the January 6 conspiracy and the warnings of yet another coup attempt by Trump make clear that working people cannot defend democratic rights through the mechanism of the Democratic Party. The struggle against dictatorship requires the independent mobilization of the working class on the basis of a socialist perspective.



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