

January 6 hearing details Trump's call for fascist violence to overturn election, conceals role of military and police in coup plot

Barry Grey
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The seventh in the current series of televised hearings by the House Select Committee on the January 6 coup focused on former president Donald Trump's mobilization of violent, far-right terrorists in his attempt to overturn the 2020 election and seize dictatorial power.

The hearing, held on Tuesday, largely reiterated previously reported aspects of the plot to reverse Trump's defeat by a wide margin at the polls, emphasizing that his own White House lawyers and Justice Department officials repeatedly told him there was no basis for his claims of a stolen election.

However, it brought forth chilling examples of videos and tweets posted by his far-right allies, showing that Trump's call on December 19 for a mass rally on January 6 ("Be there, will be wild!") was, as one committee member said, "A call to arms."

The committee used clips from the eight-hour deposition given last Friday by Trump's White House Counsel Pat Cipollone to corroborate testimony provided last month by former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson on Trump's summoning of armed supporters to overrun the US Capitol and halt the certification of the Electoral College vote.

Cipollone described the raucous meeting held in the White House late into the evening of December 18, four days after the electors chosen by the popular vote in each state had met and certified Joe Biden's victory by a margin of 306 to 232 electoral votes.

At the White House meeting, Trump's sacked former national security adviser Lt. General Michael Flynn (retired), conspiracy lawyer Sidney Powell and then-CEO of Overstock.com Patrick Byrne proposed that Trump order the military to seize voting machines and appoint Powell as independent counsel to investigate vote fraud.

Cipollone and another White House lawyer barged into the secret meeting and denounced the scheme, forcing Trump to back away from issuing the necessary orders.

Just a few hours later, in the early morning hours of December 19, Trump posted his tweet calling for his supporters to flood into Washington DC and "Stop the Steal" on January 6. He promised that the day "will be wild."

That this was a call for far-right violence, including murder, directed against elected officials and others opposed to Trump, both on January 6 and thereafter, was documented by the

statements and exhortations of leaders of the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers and other fascist paramilitary groups, as well as far-right bloggers such as Alex Jones.

Tweets shown by the committee included: "We need volunteers for the firing squads." "Why don't we just kill all Democrats?" "Bring handcuffs and wait near the tunnels." "I'm locked and loaded and ready for Civil War part two." "Is this D-Day... We will need volunteers for the firing squad."

Speakers at a Washington D.C. rally of Trump supporters on January 5 included "Stop the Steal" founder Ali Alexander and Alex Jones, both of whom called for a new "1776."

The second part of the hearing featured an in-person panel of two witnesses. Stephen Ayres, who recently pleaded guilty of disorderly conduct for invading the Capitol as part of Trump's mob, said he was convinced that the election had been stolen on the basis of social media posts by Trump and his allies, but had since changed his mind.

Jason Van Tatenhove, who joined the Oath Keepers in 2014 and handled the group's media operations until he left several years ago, called the organization "dangerous, racist and white supremacist." He said he resigned after a discussion in which members were insisting that the Holocaust was "not real."

Asked about Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes' call for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act on January 6, Tatenhove said, "It would have been an armed insurrection... They see in Trump an opportunity to become a paramilitary force."

Asked if he had ever heard Rhodes speak of committing violence against elected leaders, Tatenhove said, "Yes. He wanted me to create a deck of cards of people to take out, different politicians, judges, including Hillary Clinton as the queen of hearts."

He said the American people were "exceedingly lucky" that more bloodshed did not occur on January 6, and said he feared what the next election would bring.

The committee outlined the links between Trump's inner circle, including Flynn and Roger Stone, and far-right groups such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers. It noted that Trump pardoned both Flynn and Stone, who were facing charges in connection with the Mueller investigation, between the November 3, 2020 election and January 6, 2021.

It showed a photo of Flynn and Patrick Byrne being guarded by a Proud Boy. Stone was shown in a video clip about his "Friends of

Stone network,” which includes the Proud Boys, calling himself a “Western chauvinist.”

Flynn has known ties to the 1st Amendment Praetorian paramilitary group, which provided security for him when he spoke at a pro-Trump march in Washington in December 2020. Joining that group in providing security for the event were the Oath Keepers, including Rhodes.

The committee also cited a chat group called “The Ministry of Defense” in which Proud Boys and Oath Keepers discussed tactical plans for January 6, including pinpointing police locations.

Panel member Jamie Raskin said that Kelly Meggs, a leader of the Florida Oath Keepers, held direct discussions with Stone on January 5 and January 6.

Trump spoke twice to Stephen Bannon on January 5, according to White House logs examined by the committee. That day, on his podcast, Bannon told his audience that “all hell is going to break loose tomorrow.”

As for claims that Trump decided at the last minute to call for the crowd gathered at the Ellipse on the morning of January 6 to march to the Capitol and force Congress to halt the certification, the hearing presented proof that the attack on Congress had been decided on well before then.

The panel noted that after a January 2 phone call with White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, Katrina Pierson, a former Trump aide who was involved in organizing the January 6 rally at the Ellipse, sent an email to other organizers saying that the president planned to “call on everyone to march to the Capitol.”

And in a January 4 text message, Kylie Jane Kremer, another rally organizer, stressed the need to keep secret the plan to march on the Capitol.

Totally evaded in the hearing, as in all of the prior ones, were a number of obvious questions: Why was nothing done to stop the coup conspiracy, which was being carried out in the full light of day? Why were the plotters, beginning with Trump, not arrested and put in jail? Why was the public not alerted to the danger of mass murder at the hands of fascist paramilitary killers? Why were no measures taken to secure the Capitol? And why are the plotters—Trump, Flynn, Giuliani, Powell, Bannon, Eastman, Stone, etc.—still at large and free to prepare for the next coup?

That there was massive intelligence in advance of the coup in the possession of the FBI, CIA, the military and the Democratic Party is beyond dispute. The internet was teeming with plans to keep Trump in power by violent and illegal means, including by the means employed on January 6. Last year, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified to Congress that there was not sufficient intelligence to warrant any special preparations for the joint session of Congress. That was an obvious lie and act of perjury.

Indeed, Enrique Tarrio, the former leader of the Proud Boys, has been publicly identified as a “prolific” FBI informant. So too has Joseph Biggs, another Proud Boy leader who is facing seditious conspiracy charges. The fascist right is deeply penetrated by the intelligence agencies, which value them as potential weapons to be thrown against the working class.

In fact, neither Biden, nor the Democratic Party did anything to stop the coup. They either cowered in silence or bided their time, waiting to see the outcome. They made no appeal for an outraged

public to mobilize and smash the coup. This proves that had the mob succeeded in capturing one or more officials, the Democrats would have capitulated and allowed Trump to remain in powers as dictator-president.

In this hearing, as in all those that have preceded it, the Democrats and their Republican allies such as the neo-con war hawk Liz Cheney have attempted to present the attempted overthrow of the Constitution as the work of one evil individual, Donald Trump. They have sought to cover up the role of the military, the police and the intelligence agencies, within which there was substantial support for the coup.

The Pentagon, headed by hand-picked Trump loyalists, waited for 199 minutes to approve the deployment of D.C National Guard troops to clear the mob from the Capitol. The Capitol police were virtually stood down in advance of the attack and given no reinforcements after it was launched.

Likewise, the Democrats have attempted to cover up the critical role played by the entire leadership of the Republican Party and the bulk of its members of Congress. The Democrats continue to call for “unity” and “bipartisanship” with their Republican “friends” and “colleagues.”

In her concluding statement, Committee Vice-Chair Cheney reviewed the different tentacles of the plot to overturn the election, and declared, “They all have one thing in common—Trump.”

Both she and the Democrats on the committee have sought to boost Republican officials who, after promoting the stolen election lie and the accompanying conspiracy, balked at the outright coup of January 6, such as Pence (who has since the Supreme Court’s overthrow of *Roe v. Wade* announced his support for a nationwide ban on abortions). Cipollone was shown in a video clip calling for Pence to be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Jamie Raskin, the Democrat from Maryland who oversaw the abortive shutdown of the second impeachment trial of Trump following the coup, used his concluding statement to hail the Capitol police and warn that Trump “threatens to take one of our two parties down the road of authoritarianism.” This is said about a party that has already officially declared the January 6 coup a “legitimate form of political discourse.”

Stephanie Murphy, a right-wing Democrat from Florida whose family fled Vietnam after the defeat of US imperialism and its puppet regime, invoked anticommunism and patriotism in her closing remarks, declaring, “My family fled a communist dictatorship. I love this country.”

That Trump and his allies continue to plot the destruction of democratic rights was made clear at the end of the hearing, when Cheney announced that Trump had attempted to phone one of the committee’s witnesses following the previous hearing. She said the committee had referred this act of witness tampering to the Justice Department.



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