

January 6 Committee covers up role of Republican Party, national security officials in Trump coup

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The 1974 book *All the President's Men* by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein detailed the role of dozens of Nixon aides and state officials in orchestrating and covering up the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate complex.

Twenty-two Nixon aides and government officials were indicted, convicted and jailed for their roles in the Watergate conspiracy.

That “dirty tricks” operation, for all its criminal and anti-democratic implications, was nowhere near the magnitude of the full-scale, violent and nearly successful coup led by Donald Trump on January 6, 2021.

Yet despite an ever expanding mountain of evidence incriminating Trump, the Republican Party and substantial sections of the military, the police and the intelligence agencies in the bid to overturn the 2020 election and install Trump as dictator-president, neither Trump nor any of his major co-conspirators, with the exception of Steve Bannon, has been indicted, let alone imprisoned, and Bannon faces a mere misdemeanor charge.

Based on Thursday night's prime time nationally televised hearing of the House Select January 6 Committee, the Democratic Party's book on Trump's insurrection would be titled *A One-Man Coup: How the Evil President Defied His Good Advisers*.

The Democrats' management of the hearings is based on a massive contradiction. The hearings have revealed damning evidence that a powerful network within all branches of government almost abolished the Constitution and established a dictatorship, and figures have testified that Trump and his allies are actively engaged in planning their next attempt. But at the same time, the Democrats use the hearings to promote the Republican Party, including figures like Liz Cheney, and to insulate Trump's conspirators from criminal prosecution. Their aim is to save the political institution of the two-party system, upon which the stability of capitalist rule depends.

This is what played out on Thursday. Over the course of nearly three hours, the Democratic-controlled committee presented a narrative of Trump's actions on January 6 that argued, absurdly, that the fascist siege of the Capitol was allowed to drag on because Trump rejected multiple pleas to call it off from White House staffers, family members, congressional leaders and other loyalists who had supported Trump's baseless claims of a “stolen election,” but heroically came to the defense of the Constitution.

One chilling clip showed then-Vice President Mike Pence and his staff and Secret Service detail fleeing for their lives from the mob, which had come within a few feet of where Pence was hiding in the Capitol. There was audio describing Secret Service agents making what they feared were their final calls to wives and family members.

That the coup eventually fizzled out was not due to anything Biden or the Democrats did. The president-elect stood by silently for hours and only emerged to plead with Trump to go on television and call off his own coup. Democratic lawmakers cowered under their desks in the Capitol. They made no call for the population to rise up and stop the coup.

The hearing, the last in the current series of eight televised hearings, marked a further step in the attempt to focus all attention on Trump and a handful of cronies—Bannon, Rudy Giuliani, John Eastman—and insulate the far broader sections of the ruling class and the state apparatus that were involved in the coup.

What Trump did and did not do during the 187 minutes between the time he ended his speech at the Ellipse by calling on his supporters to march on the Capitol and his 4:17 p.m. statement telling his “special people” and “patriots” to leave the Capitol and go home could not have come as a surprise to anyone seriously following the political crisis surrounding the election. In his debate with Joe Biden at the end of September, Trump had refused to guarantee a peaceful transfer of power and ordered the Proud

Boys to “stand back and stand by” in the event he was declared the loser.

The *World Socialist Web Site* had outlined with remarkable prescience how Trump would proceed in the run-up to the election and its aftermath, warning the working class of the danger of a coup.

The Democrats have sought to politically frame the opposition to Trump’s coup in the most conservative and patriotic manner. They have allowed war-hawk Liz Cheney, one of two Republicans on the panel, to dominate the proceedings. In her concluding remarks she praised Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and said the insurrectionists on January 6 had acted out of misplaced “love for country.”

The Committee chose two military veterans, Elaine Luria of Virginia, a long-time Navy commander, and Republican Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, an Air Force pilot in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, to lead the questioning. Luria’s closing remarks epitomized the political line of the hearing. She said: “President Trump sat in his dining room and watched the attack on television, while his senior-most staff, closest advisers and family members begged him to do what was expected of any American president.”

As in the previous hearings, the in-person witnesses were former Trump aides: Matthew Pottinger, a Marine veteran who fought in the Middle East wars and became deputy national security adviser, where he helped formulate Trump’s bellicose policy against China, and Sarah Matthews, deputy White House press secretary under Trump.

In support of the principle of the “peaceful transfer of power,” Pottinger praised Al Gore’s capitulation to the theft of the 2000 election by the Supreme Court.

There was no mention of the scandal engulfing the Secret Service, which earlier on Thursday was informed by the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security that his office had launched a criminal probe of the agency’s mass deletion of text messages sent and received by agents around the time of the January 6 coup. The Secret Service deleted the messages after being instructed by Congress to preserve all records from January 6, and the January 6 Committee had subpoenaed the agency to turn over the texts.

On January 6 itself, Pence’s Secret Service detail had attempted to remove him from the Capitol, which would have made impossible the official counting of Electoral votes and opened the way for Trump to declare an emergency and hijack the election.

There has been no attempt in any of the hearings to explain why the Capitol was left so poorly protected on January 6. Or why the FBI failed to issue a threat assessment in advance of the official certification of Biden’s victory. Or why the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) failed to

declare the January 6 joint session of Congress a National Special Security Event (NSSE), despite the magnitude of threats tracked by the FBI, DHS and other state agencies against Pence and the lawmakers.

The committee focused on the 187 minutes between Trump’s speech at the Ellipse and his 4:17 p.m. call for his mob to vacate the Capitol. It has, however, said nothing about the 199 minutes between the request by then-D.C. National Guard commander William Walker for authorization to deploy his troops to secure the Capitol, made at 1:49 p.m., and Trump’s acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller’s approval at 5:08 p.m. During that period, Trump’s hand-picked leadership of the Pentagon, along with the uniformed brass, including Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley, were watching the bloody assault on Congress while doing nothing to stop it.

This massive cover-up, led by the Democratic Party and the Biden administration, who continue to appeal for “unity” with their Republican “colleagues,” is aimed at politically disarming the working class. Meanwhile, Trump, the Republican Party and their allies in the state apparatus and financial oligarchy are emboldened and given a free hand to intensify their plans to overturn the next election and impose a dictatorship.

It is critical that the working class intervene into the terminal crisis of American democracy on the basis of its own independent, socialist program. Democracy cannot exist within the capitalist system, which breeds staggering levels of social inequality and war. The development of the class struggle must be accompanied by a break with the Democrats and the entire capitalist two-party system, and the fight for workers’ power.



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