

Release of redacted affidavit heightens political crisis after FBI raid on Trump compound

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On Friday, US Judge E. Bruce Reinhart released a heavily redacted version of the Justice Department affidavit used to secure the warrant for the August 8 FBI raid on Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago compound in Palm Beach, Florida.

Of the document's 38 pages, 17 were totally redacted, three were partially redacted, four consisted of boilerplate on the search procedure, and six were appendages, including a three-page letter from Trump's lawyer from last May arguing that Trump had absolute authority to declassify documents and that the government's demand for the return of documents he removed from the White House was politically motivated.

While not entirely new, information provided in point 47 underscored the highly sensitive character, from the standpoint of the capitalist state, of material found in the first batch of 15 boxes returned by Trump to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) last January, after months of prodding by the federal agency. After reviewing the documents, NARA sent a criminal referral to the Justice Department, urging it to investigate violations of laws covering the handling of classified and other national security material.

Paragraph 47 stated that in a "preliminary review," FBI agents identified documents with classification markings in 14 of the 15 boxes. It listed as "approximate numbers" 184 unique documents bearing classification markings, including:

- 67 documents marked as confidential
- 92 documents marked as secret
- 25 documents marked as top secret

It noted that these documents included some of the most sensitive types of records related to national security and defense, including human sources, military-related material falling under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), and signals intelligence, i.e., communications intercepts from foreign sources.

The affidavit did not refer to a subsequent batch of

documents recovered from Mar-a-Lago by Justice Department officials in June, or the 26 boxes removed on August 8 following the execution of the search warrant.

The warrant, which was unsealed on August 12, justified the unprecedented search of a former president's residence on the grounds of probable cause to investigate criminal violations of the Espionage Act and laws banning tampering with official government records and obstructing a criminal investigation.

Other official documents released since the August 8 raid cite documents with secrecy classifications above "top secret," including "top secret/secret compartmented information" and material on "special access programs," often concerning covert operations.

Point 53 of the affidavit cited an article published last May in *Breitbart* by Kash Patel in which the Trump aide called reports that NARA had found classified materials among the documents turned over by Trump in January "misleading" because Trump had declassified the documents. There is no record of the supposed declassifications, but Trump lawyers have since asserted that Trump had a standing order to declassify any and all documents that he removed from the White House when he left office.

Cable and broadcast networks generally aligned with the Democratic Party such as CNN and MSNBC reported the release of the redacted affidavit as further proof of dangerous violations of US national security by Trump.

For his part, Trump used his Truth Social outlet to once again rail against the Justice Department and the FBI, calling them "political Hacks and Thugs" and asserting they "had no right under the Presidential Records Act to storm Mar-a-Lago and steal everything in sight, including Passports and privileged documents."

He later posted the words "WITCH HUNT." Significantly, he singled out for attack Judge Reinhart, who has received multiple threats, many of them anti-Semitic, from Trump fascists. Trump said Reinhart was motivated by "his

animosity and hatred of your favorite president, me.”

The furor over the affidavit occurs within the context of a broader ratcheting up of the crisis within the US political system. On Friday morning, the *New York Times* published a lengthy editorial comparing the current crisis in the run-up to the November midterm elections to the Civil War, and arguing that the Justice Department should prosecute Trump for his attempt to violently overthrow the 2020 presidential election, his violations of national security laws in the handling of sensitive documents, or both.

Significantly, the focus of the editorial was on Trump’s attempted coup of January 6, 2021 and the ongoing conspiracy, backed by the bulk of the Republican Party, to establish a dictatorship with Trump as its head. The *Times* warned that indicting and prosecuting Trump would likely “inflame the bitter partisan divide, even to the point of civil unrest.” It referred to the violent response to the FBI search of Mar-a-Lago, which included an armed attack on an FBI office in Cincinnati by a veteran of the January 6 assault on the US Capitol.

It cited the victories in Republican primary elections of Trump-backed election denialists and suggested that the post-Civil War 14th Amendment provision permanently barring from holding office any official who “engaged in insurrection or rebellion” or gave “aid or comfort” to those who did be invoked against Trump and his main Republican supporters.

On Thursday evening, in his first campaign speech for Democrats in the upcoming midterm elections, Biden once again took up the theme of a “democracy” imperiled by Trump, which he had largely dropped for months. Speaking first at a private \$1 million fundraiser in a wealthy Maryland suburb of Washington D.C., Biden said of the “MAGA Republicans,” “It’s not just Trump... It’s almost semi-fascism.”

At a public event later that evening sponsored by the Democratic National Committee, Biden made no mention of “fascism,” but he did cast pushing back the Trump Republicans in November as a “vote literally to save democracy.”

In doing so, Biden sought to conjure up a sharp demarcation between the “mainstream” Republican Party and the Trump “MAGA Republicans.” This was part of an appeal for unity with a Republican Party that, in fact, no longer exists.

“The MAGA Republicans don’t just threaten our personal rights and economic security,” he said. “They’re a threat to our very democracy. They refused to accept the will of the people, they embrace political violence.” He followed with an appeal for the votes of “Democrats, independents, mainstream Republicans” who “love this country.”

It is noteworthy in that his speech extolling the supposed progressive reforms of his administration, including the pro-corporate “Inflation Reduction Act” and the totally inadequate student loan debt measure, Biden made no mention of the escalating proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, for which there is no significant popular support.

The cynicism and hypocrisy of his supposed defense of democracy were highlighted by his favorable reference to outgoing Maryland Republican Governor Larry Hogan, a critic of Trump.

Saying Hogan was “within the mainstream” of the Republican Party, Biden declared, “I respect conservative Republicans. I don’t respect these MAGA Republican folks.”

In fact, the Democratic Governors Association (DGA) saw to it that Hogan’s choice to succeed him, longtime aide and former State Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz, was defeated by rabid Trump supporter and election denialist Dan Cox. The DGA did so by running a multi-million-dollar ad in the Republican primary election last month attacking Cox as too loyal to Trump, knowing that it would boost turnout among right-wing Trump voters.

This was but one of multiple cases where the Democratic Party intervened with expensive ad campaigns in Republican primaries to secure the victory of fascistic Trump acolytes, calculating that such GOP candidates would be easier to defeat in the November general election.

At the same time, the field of Democratic candidates is more than ever packed with what the *World Socialist Web Site* has called “CIA Democrats,” i.e., candidates recruited from the ranks of military officers who served tours in Washington’s neo-colonial wars in the Middle East and North Africa, CIA operatives and State Department functionaries.



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