

House Select Committee on January 6 attack holds final hearing, votes to subpoena Trump

Patrick Martin
13 October 2022

The House Select Committee investigating the January 6, 2021 fascist attack on the Capitol held its final hearing Thursday, or at least its last before the midterm election, whose results could rapidly put an end to any congressional effort to gather evidence on the attempted coup by then-President Donald Trump.

The hearing ended with a unanimous vote by the nine members of the committee, seven Democrats and two Republicans, to subpoena Trump to testify under oath about his actions leading up to and during the attack on Congress. Trump will certainly defy the subpoena, and litigation could delay any enforcement action until after the subpoena expires at the end of the current congressional term, January 2, 2023.

If the Republicans win control of the House on November 8, they will certainly abolish the select committee and rescind any subpoenas and other investigative actions which are still outstanding at that time.

The hearing, which lasted slightly more than two hours, presented considerable new evidence detailing the circumstances of the attack, particularly on the role of the Secret Service and other federal agencies in allowing violence to explode after a rally of Trump supporters outside the White House.

Whipped into a frenzy by Trump and encouraged by him to go to the Capitol and “fight” against the certification of Democrat Joe Biden’s victory in the 2020 election, the mob marched down Pennsylvania Avenue, broke through barriers and police lines and then stormed into the Capitol itself.

Congressmen and senators fled, hiding in underground shelters until police and National Guard troops were mobilized to retake control of the building. Many hours later, they reconvened and certified Biden’s victory in the Electoral College, which followed his victory in the popular vote by a massive margin of nearly 8 million votes.

The new evidence presented during the Thursday hearing fell into two main categories: an account of what the Secret Service and other government agencies knew about the impending attack on the Capitol, based on more than 1.5

million messages, including texts, chats and emails, turned over to the committee by these agencies; and a video showing the congressional leaders, both Democrat and Republican, huddling in their shelters under police protection and pleading with the White House, other federal agencies and the military to mobilize police and troops to clear the building of the attackers.

As in previous public hearings of the committee, the evidence presented was compelling and narrated in a coherent fashion by the nine representatives, who divided up the two hours into roughly equal blocks. No live witnesses testified, but there were numerous excerpts played of recorded testimony of such witnesses as White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson and White House Counsel Pat Cipollone, among others.

The combined effect of the testimony was to give a picture of the sweep of events from Trump’s initial threats to ignore the election results if he lost—delivered with increasing bluntness from the summer of 2020 through the final days of the election campaign—to January 6 itself, when Trump clashed with his own Secret Service detail because he wanted to march with his supporters to the Capitol and lead the attack, but the agents charged with protecting him objected that it was too dangerous.

And as at previous hearings, the nine congressmen and congresswomen refused to draw any conclusions about the scale of the conspiracy to overthrow the US government and install Trump as a president-dictator. It was all put down to Trump’s personal determination to remain in office, and his role in directing the various elements in the coup attempt, from legal challenges to the vote, to efforts to induce state legislators or the Department of Justice to back his bogus claims of election fraud, to the ultimate violent attack on the Capitol.

Among the most striking evidence was the text of various communications between Secret Service agents or between the Secret Service and other federal agencies. These established that the federal security forces were carefully monitoring the social media postings of fascist groups and

other Trump supporters. These forces planned the attack on the Capitol and issued directives to bring weapons to the January 6 rally at the White House and then go to the Capitol and use them to kill members of Congress and Vice President Mike Pence if they did not agree to overturn Trump's election defeat.

Despite this clear understanding, the security agencies did nothing to protect the Capitol from an attack involving thousands of attackers, many of them armed. Only a thin line of Capitol Police were in place, quickly overrun by the mob. Units of the Metropolitan Washington Police joined the melee, along with scattered units from various federal departments, but only the arrival of substantial forces from Virginia and Maryland, followed hours later by the National Guard, made it possible for Congress to reconvene and finish the certification.

This demonstrates that there was wide support for the coup inside these federal agencies. Trump was not a lone wolf but the leader of an effort to overturn the election that involved mobilizing substantial forces to attack the Capitol and at the same time engineering a "stand-down" of the forces that would, in other circumstances, have been expected to defend it.

The committee also continued its practice of whitewashing the role of the Republican Party in the coup attempt. Chairman Bennie Thompson and senior Democrat Zoe Lofgren emphasized that the evidence that had been presented to the committee had come largely from Republican witnesses, and that many Republican government officials had "done their duty" on January 6.

These statements covered up the role of leading Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who remained silent during the months before the election while Trump made repeated statements that he would not accept the result of the vote unless he won. McConnell publicly defended Trump's post-election efforts to dispute the outcome, claiming the president was doing nothing more than asserting his legal right to recounts and challenges, even as the campaign to mobilize fascists against the election escalated.

Nor was there any mention of the 139 Republican members of the House of Representatives and eight senators who voted against certifying Biden's election victory only hours after the mob had been cleared from the House chamber.

No one at the hearing discussed the role of Virginia (Ginni) Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, a longtime Republican activist who was interviewed by the committee only days before the hearing.

Thomas was at the center of the White House campaign to persuade state legislators in "battleground" states won by

Biden to overturn the decision of voters and award their state's electoral votes to Trump. She sent dozens of emails to legislators in Arizona and Wisconsin and visited or contacted the White House several times during the weeks leading up to January 6.

What came across in testimony and documents presented Thursday is the intensity of the conflict within the capitalist state and within the ruling class as a whole, driven largely by differences between Trump and the Democrats—and sections of the Republicans—over foreign policy.

Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger, an Afghanistan war veteran, touched on this issue directly in his section of committee presentation. He cited Trump's orders for a complete withdrawal of all US military forces from Afghanistan and Somalia by January 20, 2021, in order to end these operations before the "next guy" could countermand the order.

The ostensible purpose was to demonstrate that Trump was well aware that he had lost the election and would be replaced as commander-in-chief on Inauguration Day. But Kinzinger also gave voice to the outrage in the military brass, which resisted implementation of the order and succeeded in keeping US forces in both countries well after Trump left the White House.

Another significant detail, not cited at the hearing but noted in media coverage afterwards, testifies to the sharpness of the conflict within the security agencies themselves. Biden apparently insisted on a complete changeover of the Secret Service detail assigned to protect the White House. He would not allow anyone assigned to protecting Trump to play any role in insuring his own security, viewing them as potentially disloyal.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact