

Press reports claim Liz Cheney blocks probe of FBI, Pentagon in January 6 attack

Patrick Martin
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Staff members of the House Select Committee investigating the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol have told the media that the committee's vice-chair, Republican Liz Cheney, has blocked examination of the role of the national-security agencies in Trump's attempt to overthrow the government and remain in power, despite losing the 2020 election.

Two media reports, from NBC News and the *Washington Post*, cite unnamed staffers irate over Cheney's efforts to focus the investigation and the committee's final report, now in the concluding stages, exclusively on the role of Trump. The effect would be to downplay the actions of the intelligence agencies and high-level Republicans, as well as their connections to fascist groups like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers.

Even these two press accounts may amount to a further cover-up, as neither mentions the role of the Pentagon in the events of January 6. Top civilian and military figures in the US high command blocked the dispatch of National Guard troops to assist police who were battling the attackers inside and outside the Capitol. These troops were held back for more than three hours, and the Capitol was actually cleared with the assistance of Virginia and Maryland local and state police, not the soldiers.

What the two press accounts do reveal is that Cheney's role on the committee, where she has been the most intransigent in prosecuting a case against Trump, has been in the service of a definite political agenda: she is seeking to exonerate the Republican Party as a whole, and protect key institutions of the state, particularly the FBI.

This is hardly surprising, given that she is the daughter of former vice president and former secretary of defense Richard Cheney, and herself held high-level positions in the State Department. Liz Cheney is a full-

throated defender of American imperialism and of the institutions on which it relies, both for war abroad and for suppressing political opposition at home.

The NBC report, first aired on November 11 with little notice in the corporate media, was the first significant account of the internal workings of the House committee based on leaks from staff members. They were said to be up in arms over a decision, pushed by Cheney, to focus the committee's final report on the work of the "gold team" of investigators, who had concentrated on the personal role of Trump in the events leading up to and during January 6.

There were three other investigative teams, each labeled with a different color: blue, for the response of law enforcement and intelligence agencies; green, for the fundraising to support the January 6 rally at the White House; and purple, for the role of groups like the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and other fascist or militia-type organizations.

Critically, there was no group dedicated to examining the role of Congressional Republicans in preparing the attack, although as many as a dozen were directly involved in building the rally that became the launching pad for the violent assault. Nor was the role of the Pentagon singled out, although the "blue team" reportedly interviewed some former and current Pentagon officials. Their findings will be largely excluded from the final report.

The blue team did not focus on the role of the military, but rather on why the FBI "failed to act on a torrent of information on social media threatening violence in the weeks leading up to the Capitol riot," according to the NBC report.

The NBC report added, citing an email to the current number two official in the FBI, that the FBI leadership had been warned that a "sizable percentage" of agents

were “sympathetic” to those attacking the Capitol.

The *Washington Post* report, published November 23, confirmed the NBC News report and explored Cheney’s political motivation for focusing the investigation entirely on Trump. It claimed as its sources “15 former and current staffers” who “expressed concern that important findings unrelated to Trump will not become available to the American public.”

The leaks to the *Post* appear to be part of an ongoing conflict within the committee staff and likely among the committee members themselves—seven Democrats and two Republicans—over how much emphasis to place on Trump’s personal role and how best to whitewash the role of the national-security apparatus, which both parties defend.

Cheney exercises a de facto veto power over the final report, both because of her prominence in the public hearings and her role as the leading Republican on a committee which professes to be bipartisan.

According to the *Post*, “People familiar with the committee’s work said Cheney has taken a far more hands-on role than Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-Miss.), who is chairing the committee. She is said by multiple staffers to want the report to focus on Trump, and has pushed for the hearings to focus extensively on his conduct—and not what she views as other sideshows.”

As part of its report, the *Post* quoted from a response by a Cheney spokesman, who denounced the staff criticism and said, “Some staff have submitted subpar material for the report that reflects long-held liberal biases about federal law enforcement, Republicans, and sociological issues outside the scope of the Select Committee’s work.

“She won’t sign onto any ‘narrative’ that suggests Republicans are inherently racist or smears men and women in law enforcement, or suggests every American who believes God has blessed America is a white supremacist.”

These comments suggest that Cheney is operating on the committee to offload all blame for the January 6 attack solely onto Trump in order to exonerate institutions that are of paramount importance to the American ruling class: the Republican Party, the FBI, and above all the Department of Defense.

Democratic members of the committee share this

agenda, as does President Joe Biden, who from the beginning of his presidency has declared his support for preserving a “strong” Republican Party.

A leading Democrat on the committee, House Intelligence Committee chair Adam Schiff, interviewed on the CNN program “State of the Union” Sunday, said, in response to a question about whether the *Post* report was true, “No. I mean, at least I certainly hope not.”

He added, referring to the report of dissension among the staff, “I don’t think the back-and-forth is particularly helpful to the committee, and I don’t want to engage in it.”



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