

Former US Capitol Police chief claims

Pentagon deployed security forces to protect itself while ignoring besieged Congress on January 6

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A new book written by former US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, and obtained in advance by the *Washington Post*, claims that while high-level generals and civilian officials at the Pentagon were denying his urgent requests to deploy National Guard soldiers to the Capitol as it was under siege by Trump's right-wing mob on January 6, 2021, the Department of Defense ordered that security forces be sent to protect the homes and offices of high-level department officials.

In the book, *Courage Under Fire*, according to the *Post* account, Sund wrote that during the attack on Congress, "the Pentagon fully understands the urgency and danger of the situation even as it does nothing to support us on the Hill."

Sund resigned from his post at the urging of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi one day after the attack on Congress.

In the book, the former top cop of the US Capitol Police confirmed that his requests for National Guard support to the Capitol were denied by Lt. General Walter Piatt during a 2:35 p.m. conference call on January 6.

Sund wrote that Piatt told him and others on the mid-afternoon call, including Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Robert Contee, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, and then-D.C. National Guard commander Major General William Walker, that he did not like the "optics" of sending soldiers to help Congress. He said this as Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and other fascists were storming the building, seeking to capture and/or kill politicians who refused to unconstitutionally declare Donald Trump the winner of the 2020 election.

In his closed-door testimony to the House Select Committee investigating the January 6 coup attempt, the transcript of which was only released last week, Sund recalled thinking at the time, "You know, here I am getting—my officers are getting beaten, and they're worried about the optics of the National

Guard."

In his interview with the committee, Sund recalled hearing Contee reply to Piatt's statement that he was not going to approve his request by saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Let me get this right. You're denying the chief of police requests for the National Guard?"

Sund recalled Contee turning to him and asking, "Steve, are you requesting the National Guard?" And I said, 'Yes. This is an urgent, urgent request.' Second time I said it, 'I need the National Guard to help reestablish our perimeter.' And Lieutenant General Piatt came back and he said, 'It's not that I'm just denying it; I just don't like the optics of the National Guard standing a line with the Capitol in the background.'"

"It's a response I will never forget the rest of my life," Sund wrote in the book, according to the *Post*.

Sund is not the only high-level security official to accuse the Pentagon of slow-rolling the deployment of soldiers prior to and on January 6, so that Trump's fascists would have ample opportunity to seek out their targets.

Speaking to the Select Committee, D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Contee said that restraints put on the National Guard prior to January 6 by Trump appointees Ryan McCarthy, secretary of the Army, and Christopher Miller, acting secretary of defense, were "odd." These included forbidding soldiers from advancing past 9th street towards the Capitol without explicit permission from either McCarthy or Miller.

Even getting the request through in the first place was difficult. Confirming former D.C. National Guard commander Walker's testimony that he received "tremendous resistance" from McCarthy ahead of January 6, Contee said that pushback he

and the mayor received from McCarthy to a request to deploy D.C. Guard troops to assist police at traffic control points on January 5 and 6 was “unusual.”

In his interview with the committee’s investigators, Contee said that during the attack on the Capitol, once Sund requested additional support from him, it took the Metropolitan Police only 20 minutes to redeploy from traffic control points around the city to the besieged building. National Guard soldiers, many of whom were at the same traffic control points with Metropolitan police, were not allowed to reach the Capitol for another three hours.

Contee confirmed that the military’s response to Sund’s urgent request was “sluggish” and peppered with “talk about optics.”

“There was talk about boots on the ground again,” Contee recalled. “You know, that’s not good optics, having boots on the ground. You know, the optics of—all that was talked about on this call. I don’t know who from the military side was saying those things, but those things did come up as we had this conversation.”

This is not the first time it has been reported that the Pentagon refused to send security elements to the Capitol while ensuring the safety of its own officials during the attempted coup. In April 2021, the *Associated Press* reported that an internal timeline of calls maintained by the Department of Defense showed that at 3:37 p.m. “the Pentagon sent its own security forces to guard the homes of defense leaders. No troops had yet reached the Capitol.”

In fact, no Washington D.C. National Guard soldiers, or any other military support, would reach the Capitol for another two hours.

Reflecting on the purposeful delay by the Pentagon, which underscores that Trump’s coup was not a “one-man” operation, as the “Final Report” from the Select Committee claims, but the culmination of a concerted plan carried out by Trump’s co-conspirators across the US government, Sund wrote that for “several hours” the police had been “battling a mob at the Capitol and the fight has been televised around the world.”

“We have multiple fatalities including a shooting inside the Capitol. We have had to secure members of Congress, the vice president and his family and the next three levels of succession to the president of the United States. And the military has made no effort whatsoever to help end this.” he wrote.

Confirming the deliberate stand-down, Sund wrote in his book that he talked to Walker later on January 6, who told him, “Steve, I felt so bad. I wanted to help you immediately... but

they wouldn’t let me come.”

Commenting on the fact that New Jersey State Police beat the D.C. National Guard, whose armory is two miles away from the Capitol, to the scene, Walker added, “Imagine how I felt. *New Jersey got here before we did?*”

The *Post* reported that a Pentagon spokesman “did not answer a question about [Sund’s] assertions that the military had buffed up security for top military officials’ homes on Jan. 6.”

The confirmation that the Pentagon delayed sending troops to the Capitol, while protecting their own, explodes the false claim made in the Select Committee’s final report that there was “no evidence” of an “intentional delay.”

The only reason Trump’s coup nearly succeeded was the intentional stand-down of security elements, not only by the Pentagon but throughout the entire federal security apparatus in the lead-up to January 6.

These delays were not the “byproduct of military processes, institutional caution, and a revised deployment approval process,” as the Select Committee claims on page 749 of its report, but evidence of Trump’s co-conspirators in the Pentagon, including Miller, McCarthy, Kash Patel, Anthony Tata and Ezra Cohen-Watnick, carrying out a definite, pre-determined plan that contributed to the deaths of at least five people and hundreds of injuries.

That these damning revelations are only coming to light nearly two years after the attack on the Capitol, while the Select Committee disbands, underscores the concerted effort by members of both big business parties to conceal from the American people the extent of the support Trump’s coup had throughout all major institutions of the capitalist state, including the police, the military, the intelligence agencies, the Republican Party and the US Supreme Court.



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