

US political warfare escalates: House committees launch probes of Biden's mishandling of classified documents

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On Friday, one day after Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the appointment of a special counsel to investigate President Joe Biden's mishandling of classified documents, Republican-led House committees launched their own investigations.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, one of the leading supporters of Donald Trump's attempt to overthrow the 2020 election, sent a letter to Garland announcing that his committee was initiating a probe not only into Biden's actions, but also the role of Garland and the Justice Department. The Republicans have accused the Biden Justice Department of "weaponizing" the federal government in order to persecute Trump, his allies in Congress and the fascist insurrectionists who attacked the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Alluding to the fact that days before the 2022 midterm elections, the Justice Department was informed by the National Archives that Biden aides had discovered highly classified documents at a private Washington D.C. office Biden used between 2017 and 2021, Jordan wrote: "It is unclear when the Department first came to learn about the existence of these documents, and whether it actively concealed this information from the public on the eve of the 2022 elections."

Implying a deliberate cover-up coordinated with the White House, Jordan continued: "It is also unclear what interactions, if any, the Department had with President Biden or his representatives about his mishandling of classified material."

He then proceeded to denounce Garland for authorizing the August 8 raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence to enforce a grand jury search warrant after

Trump defied a subpoena ordering him to release hundreds of pages of classified documents he continued hold at his Florida compound.

"In fact, on August 8, 2022, despite the publicly available evidence of President Trump's voluntary cooperation, you personally approved the decision to seek a warrant for excessive and unprecedented access to his private residence," Jordan wrote.

The letter demanded that Garland turn over to the committee all documents relating to his appointment of former Trump Justice Department official Robert Hur as special counsel in the Biden documents case and all other documents relating to the investigation of the matter. It gave the Justice Department a deadline of 5 p.m. on January 27 to comply with the request.

Also on Friday, James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, sent a letter to the Biden White House counsel's office reiterating the initiation of his committee's own, separate investigation and demanding that the White House turn over all classified documents found in the Penn Biden office in Washington D.C. as well as other classified documents that were subsequently found at the president's private residence in Wilmington, Delaware. The letter further demanded a list of all Biden aides tasked to search through the president's documents, a complete list of locations searched, and all communications "between or among the White House and the Department of Justice or NARA (National Archives) regarding classified documents retrieved..."

Tying the documents scandal together with Republican plans to investigate alleged shady business dealings of Biden's son, Hunter Biden, with Chinese companies, the letter noted that Hunter Biden resided at

the Wilmington address “while engaging in international business deals with adversaries of the United States.” It too set a deadline of January 27 for compliance.

At a White House press briefing on Friday, Biden’s press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, continued to stonewall on the scandal surrounding the documents. As on Thursday, she deflected multiple questions about both the documents themselves and the failure of the White House to inform the public about the discovery of document batches both prior to the midterm elections and on December 20. CBS News first reported the discovery of the classified documents in Biden’s former private D.C. office on Monday, after which Biden acknowledged their existence and insisted the mishandling was inadvertent, and that his lawyers had immediately informed the National Archives and were collaborating fully with the Justice Department.

At the same time, Jean-Pierre stressed the “bipartisan achievements” of the administration, pointing to the trillion-dollar infrastructure bill passed last year and the January 4 photo-op in Covington, Kentucky at which Biden posed with Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, also a Republican, to tout a new bridge linking the two states being built with the help of a federal subsidy.

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That demonstration of bipartisan unity coincided with last week’s holdout by 20 of the most fascistic House Republicans, delaying the election of Kevin McCarthy as House Speaker for 15 ballots and five days and establishing these elements, two years after the attempted coup, as the dominant force in the Republican Party. The eruption of the Biden documents scandal has only accelerated the political warfare between rival factions of the corporate-financial elite, demonstrating the uncontrollable and irreversible collapse of the traditional forms of capitalist rule in America, and the inexorable trajectory toward dictatorship and fascism on the part of the ruling class.

As sharp as they are, the differences concern tactics and means, not basic class policy. In the face of a deepening economic and geo-political crisis, and, above all, a growing movement of the working class against intolerable exploitation and social inequality, all

factions are united behind a policy of war against Russia and ultimately China, risking nuclear annihilation, and a war against the wages, jobs and living standards of the working class.

Under these conditions, the most right-wing sections of the Republican Party set the tone and dictate the basic direction of policy, and the Democrats, as always, lurch further to the right in search of unity, above all in the prosecution of the war against Russia and preparations for war against China.

In this connection, it is significant that on Friday, one day after the announcement of a special counsel to investigate Biden, the *New York Times* handed over the bulk of its op-ed page to a “guest column” by Trump acolyte and accomplice Kellyanne Conway.

Having served as Trump’s campaign manager in 2016 and senior counselor from 2017 to 2020, Conway is now given a platform by the unofficial organ of the Democratic Party to tout the “accomplishments” of Trump and provide advice on how he might mount a winning reelection campaign in 2024. In the course of the article, Conway makes only a passing reference to the violent coup launched by Trump in 2021, taking care not to criticize it. Instead, she taunts the Democrats for their cowardly refusal to jail or even prosecute any of the ringleaders of the attempted overthrow, beginning with Trump himself, who, she writes, “eludes prosecution like no other public figure.”



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