

Senate report confirms support for Trump's coup at FBI and Department of Homeland Security

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New details revealed in a report authored by the Democratic majority on the Senate Committee on Homeland Security confirm that Donald Trump's January 6 coup nearly succeeded thanks to substantial support within the federal intelligence agencies in the lead-up to the attack.

The new 105-page report, titled "Planned in Plain Sight," refutes the "one-man coup" narrative proffered by the now-dissolved January 6 House Select Committee. Michigan Senator Gary Peters, the chairman of the committee, and the committee's majority staff report that despite receiving "many credible tips of violence" between November 2020 and January 6, 2021, neither the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) nor the Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) issued a threat assessment or a joint intelligence bulletin warning of potential violence at the Capitol.

This is despite the fact that both agencies had independently received tips that violent right-wing fascists summoned by Trump, such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, were traveling to Washington D.C. in the run-up to January 6 to storm the Capitol. Both agencies tracked multiple warnings that members of the militia groups were coming to Washington to "literally kill people," but they did not issue warnings to law enforcement bodies, claiming the threats were "not credible."

They deemed "not credible" warnings that Trump supporters planned to use makeshift weapons such as flagpoles, that they intended to use their numbers to overwhelm the police and that their goal was to storm the Capitol.

The report reveals that the FBI failed to catalog all the tips it received. In violation of its policy "requiring every tip to be logged, regardless of credibility," the agency failed to retain an untold number of tips in its "Guardian" system.

The Senate report states that "the system did not contain all of the January 6th-related tips that it should have."

The FBI may well have received many "credible tips" that have

since been erased by the agency to cover up its complicity in the attack. In a timid protest against what was in all likelihood systematic non-compliance, the report notes, "The Committee also faced challenges in obtaining full compliance with its request, an increasingly regular occurrence across administrations."

In interviews with the committee staff, the FBI claimed that it communicated threats "informally" and "verbally." One of the threats the FBI chose to keep to itself was Trump's plan to march on the Capitol.

In an internal January 5 FBI email to Counterterrorism Division staff, an FBI official wrote that a "notable event tomorrow that could trigger a flashpoint is a planned POTUS rally/speech on the ellipse at 1100 EST." The email continued: "It's estimated that 30,000 participants will then march toward the Capital [sic] which will coincide with the 1300 EST scheduled Congressional meetings to certify the electoral college vote."

Emphasizing the supposed "threat" from anti-Trump counterprotesters, the email concluded, "Obvious concerns remain if counter-protests ensue and opposing ideologies clash."

While the *World Socialist Web Site* warned repeatedly as early as October 1, 2020 that Trump was preparing to attempt a coup, the FBI issued only two "intelligence products" related to a potential attack on January 6. Both reports were issued on January 5 by field offices, one in Norfolk, Virginia, and the other in New Orleans. Neither was disseminated widely. The New Orleans report warned that elements associated with "Stop the Steal" had established heavily armed "Quick Reaction Forces" in northern Virginia.

The Senate report notes that besides refusing to categorize any of the dozens of threats the agency received in relation to January 6 as "credible," the FBI did not consider the threats in their totality.

The agency weakened its ability to track the threats by switching to a different third-party contractor to monitor social media just days before January 6. While the FBI previously used Dataminr to spy on the population, something agency officials had claimed they did not do, the Senate report reveals that on January 1, 2021 the FBI switched to a new company, ZeroFox. This transition came as a surprise to many in the agency and forced FBI officials to track online threats manually for several days.

The report documents a series of extraordinary messages disseminated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on January 6 aimed at downplaying the peril.

At 6:46 a.m. on the morning of the coup, the DHS distributed a “National Civil Unrest Summary” to law enforcement agencies. The summary reported that as many as 30,000 people would be in Washington D.C. on January 6, participating in 55 “different demonstrations.” The summary gave no indication of possible violence, even though many of those coming to Washington were members of violent militia groups.

Just over two hours later, at 8:57 a.m., the senior watch officer at the DHS National Operations Center sent an email to federal agencies, including the FBI, noting that “members of the crowd are wearing ballistic helmets, body armor and carrying radio equipment and military grade backpacks.”

The email confirmed that there were 85 different protests, with participants including the Proud Boys, Stop the Steal and a group called “Operation Occupy the Capitol.” Yet, the email concluded, “there is no indication of civil disobedience.”

At 2:12 p.m., well after Proud Boys and other Trump fascists had begun their attack on the Capitol and the Washington Metropolitan Police had declared a riot, the US Capitol Police forwarded a request to the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) asking for any information about groups “talking about taking over the Capital [sic] on social media” or discussing tactics such as using specific radio frequencies or weapons.

Over half an hour later, at 2:48 p.m., I&A staff emailed each other—not the police—to confirm that while there was “significant chatter” online, “no credible information to pass on has been established.” Five minutes later, the director of the Current & Emerging Threats Center within I&A reminded staff to keep emails “internal” until they met the “reporting thresholds.” Over an hour later, at 4:27 p.m., an internal I&A staff email reported that the agency had not yet found “anything that has met our threshold for reporting...”

By this time, QAnon fascist Ashli Babbitt had been shot and killed by the police, Vice President Mike Pence had been evacuated and D.C. National Guard Commander William

Walker was seeking to get permission from Trump loyalists in the Pentagon to deploy his soldiers. Yet I&A intelligence analysts were unable to report any “credible threats” against the Capitol.

What Senator Peters downplays as a failure of the DHS to “connect the dots” prior to and on January 6 can only be understood as a deliberate policy. The rationale given by capitalist politicians for creating the DHS, and the I&A specifically, in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, was the need to improve intelligence sharing between federal and local police agencies and eliminate so-called “intelligence failures.” That the agency specifically created to coordinate and disseminate intelligence reports refused to do so prior to the January 6 coup can only mean there was broad support for Trump’s plot within the agency.

While the Democrats’ Senate report includes some damning revelations, it remains an effort at cover-up and damage control, chiefly for the benefit of the Republican Party and the police-intelligence apparatus. The word “coup” appears only once, in a footnote, and the wider role of the Republican Party in backing the coup, from foot soldiers to pro-coup members of Congress and conspirators among the military brass and within the intelligence agencies, is completely left out.

The report goes so far as to attribute the failure of the FBI and DHS to warn of violent attacks to an over-correction in response to criticisms of their gestapo tactics against protesters and journalists during the 2020 summer protests against police violence.

In contrast to the “hands off” approach of DHS to Trump’s thugs prior to and on January 6, against the summer protests the DHS deployed helicopters, airplanes and drones in over 14 cities where demonstrators gathered peacefully to demand an end to police murders. The Senate report notes that over that period the DHS collected more than 270 hours worth of surveillance and created at least 34 Operational Background Reports, or OBRs. Three of these OBRs targeted journalists.



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