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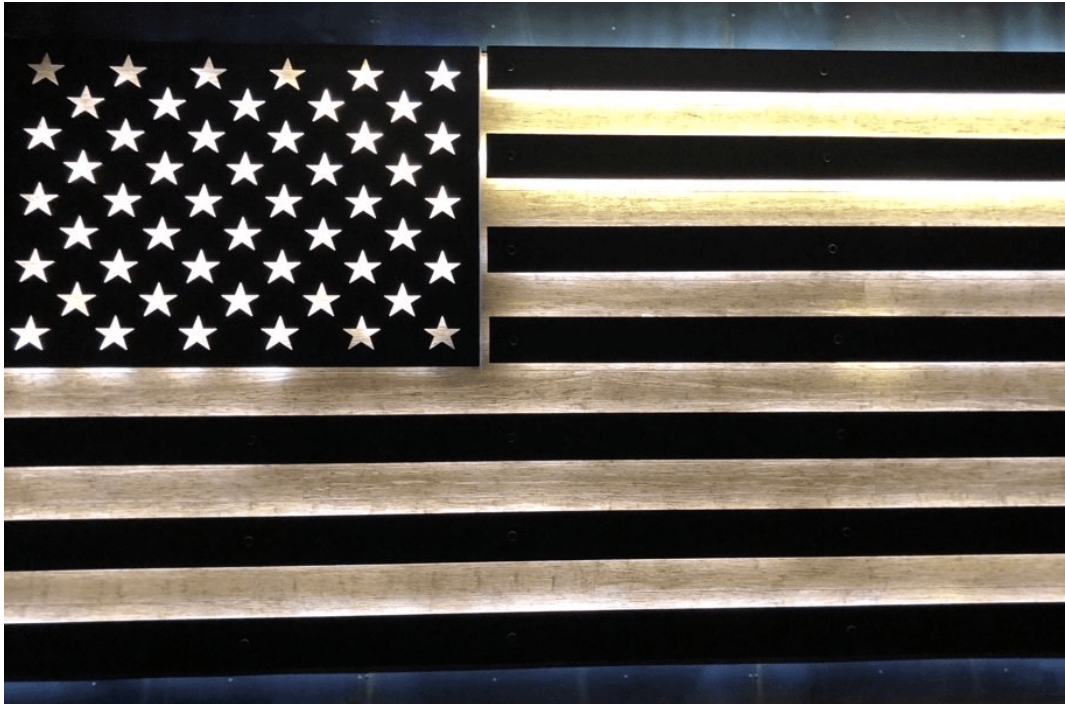
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BY ROBERT WEISSMAN

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A Dark, Dark Day for America



Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

This is a dark, dark day for America.

Today, I went to the White House to see the rally that Trump had instigated with his false claims about the election.

“Soon enough, this distressing episode in American history will be behind us. But its corrosive impact will remain.” I saw thousands and thousands of people who have been fooled by Trump’s lies. They truly believe the election was stolen from Trump.

I also saw a crowd primed for violence.

I left before Trump spoke and incited the crowd to march to the Capitol and, according to *The New York Times*, “demand” that Congress “confront this egregious assault on our democracy” (that is, his loss to Biden), and exhorting them that “you have to show strength and you have to be strong” and “you will never take back our country with weakness.”

Now, there is rioting at—and inside of—the U.S. Capitol building.

And—unless Trump tweets “stand down” to his supporters—things may continue to spiral further out of control in the next few hours.

We have to assume that many of the rioters are armed and that danger will grow worse at night.

Responsibility for all of this rests, first and most fundamentally, with Donald Trump, of course.

“We need to be very clear that responsibility is shared by Trump’s enablers.” But we need to be very clear that responsibility is shared by Trump’s enablers.

A dozen or more U.S. senators and more than 100 members of Congress are today aiding and abetting an effort to undertake a coup — a coup effort that is preordained to fail, but a coup attempt nonetheless.

Unlike the pro-Trump mob that I saw, none of those senators and virtually none of those House members actually believe that Trump won the election or has any valid claim of widespread election improprieties.

Soon enough, this distressing episode in American history will be behind us. But its corrosive impact will remain.

Tens of millions of Americans have been fooled into believing the election was stolen, undermining not just their belief in our flawed democracy, but their commitment to democracy itself.

This is a frighteningly dangerous state for the nation.

Trump and his enablers have generated a quasi-fascist movement that is poised to perpetuate racist street violence, conspiratorial thinking, and serious perils for a functioning democracy.

“This is a frighteningly dangerous state for the nation.” Here’s what should happen now:

- + Trump should tell the protesters to stop.

- + The Secretary of the Army should immediately agree to the Washington, D.C., mayor’s request for more National Guard troops.

- + The senators and members of Congress objecting to certifying the election should withdraw their objections and permit an immediate certification of the election.

Please stay calm and stay safe. This immediate problem will be resolved. Then we’ll get to work on the longer-term issues.

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ROBERT WEISSMAN is president of [Public Citizen](#).