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Trump aides, House members helped plan January 6 attack on Congress

Two right-wing activists who participated in planning and organizing the January 6 rally at the White House that preceded the attack on Congress have told a House Select Committee and *Rolling Stone* magazine that at least a dozen members of Congress, their staff, and several top White House aides were involved in the preparations.

The “stunning series of allegations,” as *Rolling Stone* described it, has been met by a wall of silence in the corporate media, and a similar blackout from leading Democrats, including President Biden—whose election victory was the target of the January 6 attack—as well as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose offices were ransacked and staff terrorized by the fascist attackers.



With the White House in the background, President Donald Trump speaks at a rally in Washington, Jan. 6, 2021 [Credit: AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File]

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Rolling Stone said that the two insiders “detailed explosive allegations that multiple members of Congress were intimately involved in planning both Trump’s efforts to overturn his election loss and the Jan. 6 events that turned violent.”

The magazine’s report would, if proven true, serve as the basis for expulsion from Congress and trial on serious felony charges of such Republican representatives as Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, Andy Biggs and Paul Gosar of Arizona, Lauren Boebert of Colorado, Mo Brooks of Alabama, Madison Cawthorn of North Carolina, and Louie Gohmert of Texas.

Gosar in particular allegedly promised planners of the attack on Congress that Trump would issue a full pardon for anyone charged with a crime as a result of the events of January 6, a clear indication that both he and those he was speaking to were aware that what was coming was not a peaceful protest, but some form of criminal assault on the US Capitol.

The two sources named Thomas Van Flein, Gosar’s chief of staff, as a participant in conversations about a “blanket pardon” for those involved in the upcoming events. Van Flein is one of those named in the House Select Committee’s request for documents and communications from within the Trump administration about the events of January 6.

In addition to the two participants in the preparation of the January 6 attack who spoke to the committee and to *Rolling Stone*, a third participant spoke only to the magazine, and reportedly confirmed the account of the other two.

Rolling Stone reported: “While there have been prior indications that members of Congress were involved, this is also the first account detailing their purported role and its scope. The two sources also claim they interacted with members of Trump’s team, including former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, who they describe as having had an opportunity to prevent the violence.”

The two organizers identified long-time Trump aide Katrina Pierson, a participant in both the 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns, as the main go-between between the president’s inner circle and the groups preparing action in the streets. “Katrina was like

our go-to girl,” one told *Rolling Stone*. “She was like our primary advocate.” Pierson was a speaker at the January 6 rally outside the White House.

According to the report, “Both sources also describe Trump’s White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows, as someone who played a major role in the conversations surrounding the protests on Jan. 6.” Meadows was subpoenaed by the House Select Committee along with top Trump counselor Stephen Bannon

“Meadows was 100 percent made aware of what was going on,” one activist told *Rolling Stone*. “He’s also like a regular figure in these really tiny groups of national organizers.”

The two activists who spoke to both the committee and to *Rolling Stone* claimed to have intended only to build a rally in front of the White House, which would be confined to the Ellipse, a park-like area behind the building. They said they were surprised when Trump concluded his speech to the crowd, which numbered about 10,000 people, with an appeal to march down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, where Congress was just beginning a joint session to formally receive and tabulate the Electoral College votes recording Biden’s victory.

At the rally, Congressman Brooks was wearing body armor while he gave his speech, in which he declared, “Today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking ass.”

Brooks, Gosar and Biggs were all involved in the previous “Stop the Steal” rallies held in November and December, which were effectively dress rehearsals for the main event on January 6 and involved the mobilization of paramilitaries from groups like the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys along with ordinary Trump supporters deluded by his claims that the presidential election had been stolen.

According to *Rolling Stone*, “While it was already clear members of Congress played some role in the Jan. 6 events and similar rallies that occurred in the lead-up to that day, the two sources say they can provide new details about the members’ specific roles in these efforts. The sources plan to share that information with congressional investigators right away. While both sources say their communications with the House’s Jan. 6 committee thus far have been informal, they are expecting to testify publicly.”

The House Select Committee declined to comment for the report. This is in keeping with the extremely low-key approach that has been taken by the committee chair, Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, and other leading Democrats on the panel, including Adam Schiff of California, the lead impeachment manager in 2020, and Jamie Raskin of Maryland, who was the lead impeachment manager earlier this year, on charges stemming from the January 6 attack.

The committee has issued a vast number of subpoenas, but there is no indication that the House Democratic leadership has the slightest interest in actually exposing the true dimensions of the coup plot which unfolded on January 6 and came very close to significantly disrupting the congressional certification of Biden's victory and Trump's defeat.

It is clear from numerous book-length exposés of the final days of the Trump administration, most recently *Peril* by Bob Woodward and Robert Costa, that Trump was counting on Vice President Mike Pence to block the certification of electoral votes from a half dozen contested states—Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin—and either declare Trump the victor in the remaining 44 states, or throw the election into the House of Representatives, where the Republicans would have a narrow majority of state delegations. Either procedure would have produced a Trump victory.

Pence's last-minute refusal to carry out this completely unconstitutional and illegal intervention in what is a purely ceremonial role left only violence as a means of shutting down the count of electoral votes. If the attackers had succeeded in capturing Pence, House Speaker Pelosi, or a number of representatives or senators, they could have bargained their lives in exchange for concessions from the Democrats on the extension of Trump's presidency, or even a full-scale overturning of Biden's election victory.

Like the proverbial iceberg, there is far more to the January 6 coup plot below the surface than has already been revealed. The exposure of the threats to democracy cannot be left to the capitalist media or the capitalist politicians of the Democratic Party because they have a vested interest in covering up the precarious state of bourgeois democracy. This task requires the independent political intervention of the working class.

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