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Federal officials deliberately ignored January 6 coup plotting, Washington Post reveals

A lengthy three-part series on the January 6 attack on the US Capitol, published Sunday on the website of the *Washington Post*, provides new evidence that federal agencies were well aware of the advance preparations for fascist violence and turned a blind eye, permitting the coup plot to go ahead.

According to the *Post*, the reports of imminent violence flooding in to federal agencies were so numerous that one official at the Department of the Homeland Security in Washington alerted local hospitals to prepare for a “mass casualty event” on January 6. The official urged hospitals to lay in additional blood supplies to treat the wounded.

The concerns of this official and many others, however, were overridden by the decision of the FBI, issued on December 23, to shut down any systematic threat assessment related to January 6, with the declaration that it “does not warrant further investigation at this time.”



Trump supporters at the US Capital Building on January 6, 2021. (Image Credit: Flickr?blinkofanaye)

Two weeks later, several thousand fascist rioters stormed the US Capitol, shutting down congressional certification of Trump's election defeat and seeking to capture Vice President Mike Pence, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other top officials. If they had been able to take hostages, there is little doubt that the Democratic Party would have capitulated to demands to overturn the election and allow Trump to extend his presidency.

The new account of the January 6 attack, based on material collected by nearly two dozen reporters, is divided into three parts, headlined "Red Flags," "Bloodshed," and "Contagion." The first segment, also labeled "Before," contains much valuable, even remarkable material. The second and third sections, labeled "During" and "After," are far less significant, and in the case of the latter, even misleading.

"Red Flags" begins by noting the efforts of a local homeland security official in Washington D.C., Donell Harvin, whose office "had spotted increasing signs that supporters of President Donald Trump were planning violence when Congress met to formalize the electoral college vote, but federal law enforcement agencies did not seem to share his sense of urgency."

On January 2, Harvin and another local security official, Mike Sena in San Francisco, organized a conference call of "fusion centers"—inter-agency security offices spread across 80 regions of the United States—which unexpectedly drew the attendance of

hundreds of officials, all reporting a similar upsurge in internet threats of violence. The *Post* account continues, “For the first time, from coast to coast, the centers were blinking red. The hour, date and location of concern was the same: 1 p.m., the U.S. Capitol, Jan. 6.”

Harvin made further attempts to sound the alarm: “He invited the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, military intelligence services and other agencies to see the information in real time as his team collected it. He took another extreme step: He asked the city’s health department to convene a call of D.C.-area hospitals and urged them to prepare for a mass casualty event. Empty your emergency rooms, he said, and stock up your blood banks.”

According to the *Post*, additional alerts “were raised by local officials, FBI informants, social media companies, former national security officials, researchers, lawmakers and tipsters, new documents and firsthand accounts show.”

None of these efforts, however, could sway top decision makers in the national security apparatus, and particularly at the FBI and the Pentagon, who were either intimidated by Trump or were part of his fascistic cabal.

According to the *Post*, “There was so much material now bubbling up about Jan. 6 that bureau analysts running the FBI’s online portal where social media companies were reporting suspected criminal behavior had begun using a hashtag to track and organize incoming threats: #CERTUNREST2021.” One pro-Trump web site, TheDonald.win, appeared more than 300 times in FBI investigative reports leading up to January 6, without the agency taking any action.

The FBI dismissed the open planning for violence, including threats to kill congressmen, senators and anyone else who stood in Trump’s way, as “vague and primarily First Amendment-protected speech.”

Given that the FBI is one of the leading enemies of free speech rights, particularly when asserted by opponents of American imperialism and representatives of workers, minorities and victims of police brutality, its solicitude for the First Amendment is not credible. The FBI didn’t crack down on the fascist filth plotting violence on January 6 because FBI

officials and agents were largely in agreement with these plans, or at least their political aims.

At the Department of Homeland Security, the massive super-agency created after the 9/11 attacks, supposedly to centralize the defense of targets within the United States against terrorist threats, top officials, most of them “acting” officials kept on a short leash by the White House, did not take any special measures except to fly in several hundred Border Patrol agents to protect their own offices in the District of Columbia.

The *Post* writes, “But it did not issue a security bulletin—the department’s most readily recognized warning to law enforcement agencies, as well as to the public, regarding possible violence. Agency leaders also never moved to put the Secret Service in charge of security planning for an event that would bring together all members of Congress, the vice president and the vice president-elect, a move that could have elevated intelligence sharing and security coordination.”

Similarly, the Pentagon stayed on the sidelines, with top civilian and military leaders evading requests for the deployment of the National Guard, both ahead of and during the attack on the Capitol. Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reviewed a request from Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser to deploy several hundred National Guard troops for traffic control on January 6, which would free the Washington Metropolitan Police for duty at the Capitol.

The *Post* writes, “The main concern of both Bowser and the Pentagon officials was that Trump might direct National Guard troops to interfere with the vote count, or otherwise engage in action that could be perceived as intimidating Congress.”

In other words, both the Pentagon officials and the Democratic mayor viewed mobilization of the National Guard as something of a double-edged sword, since Trump, still the “commander-in-chief” for two weeks until the January 20 inauguration, might order the troops to halt the certification of the Electoral College vote by Congress.

Bowser, with her close connections to congressional Democrats, would undoubtedly have informed House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of her concerns, but neither the congressional

leadership nor President-elect Biden sought to alert the American people to the danger that the outgoing president, just rejected by the voters, might seek to stay in power by force.

The *Post* report is completely silent on this crucial political aspect of the January 6 crisis. It indicts Trump—for good reason—but gives the Democratic Party a pass.

The account underscores the reality that the events of January 6 were not a spontaneous riot by disappointed Trump supporters, whipped into a frenzy at a rally outside the White House, but rather the outcome of several months of incitement, organization and preparation. It retraces the statements issued by Trump in the two months following the election, and the response at each point of the various fascist groups, particularly the Proud Boys, and the more informal networks of ultra-right activists, with an increasing focus on the congressional ceremony to certify the results of the Electoral College vote.

The newspaper's account continues: "Trump was the driving force at every turn as he orchestrated what would become an attempted political coup in the months leading up to Jan. 6, calling his supporters to Washington, encouraging the mob to march on the Capitol and freezing in place key federal agencies whose job it was to investigate and stop threats to national security." It then cites Trump's notorious tweet calling on supporters to come to Washington for January 6: "Be there, will be wild!"

However, the refusal of federal security agencies to take action is dismissed with the same whitewash theory first developed in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks to explain away the close connections between the hijackers and American intelligence agencies: failure to "connect the dots." The *Post* writes, "The paralysis that led to one of the biggest security failures in the nation's history was driven by unique breakdowns inside each law enforcement agency and was exacerbated by the patchwork nature of security across a city where responsibilities are split between local and federal authorities."

The political purpose of this theory is demonstrated particularly in the final part of the series (the second part is largely a blow-by-blow account of the events of January 6 itself, containing little new information). Part three, headlined "Contagion," follows the impact of the January 6 attack on individual policemen, participants in the attack, and election officials responsible for vote-counting in the election.

It avoids, however, any assessment of the response of the US political establishment to the attack. There is no discussion of the failed impeachment, the failed effort to establish a bipartisan commission to investigate January 6, or the establishment of the House Select Committee, which has become the chosen vehicle of the Democratic Party leadership to strictly limit the release of information to that permitted by the Biden administration.

The overriding concern of the Democrats is to conceal the deep involvement of wide layers of the Republican Party, including virtually the entire Republican membership of the House of Representatives and many Republican senators, in Trump's illegal and unconstitutional effort to overturn the election and stay in office.

A report last week from *Rolling Stone*, citing two organizers of the January 6 rally at which Trump urged his supporters to "walk to the Capitol" and "fight like hell," said that a dozen Republican congressmen and several top Trump aides, including White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, participated in meetings to plan the events of January 6. The corporate media has largely ignored what the magazine described as "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 scale of this collaboration is further indicated by a lawsuit filed over the weekend by Trump's attorneys seeking to block release by the National Archives of Trump's White House communications in the final days of his presidency. More than 750 pages of emails, text messages, phone logs and notes involving as many as 1,600 officials are listed in the suit, which seeks to withhold this evidence from the House Select Committee investigating the January 6 attack.

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