

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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Opening Statement Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney House Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing “The Capitol Insurrection: Unexplained Delays and Unanswered Questions (Part II)” June 15, 2021

Today, the Committee on Oversight and Reform is holding its second [hearing](#) on the January 6th insurrection.

As we examine the events of that day, we must keep at the forefront that January 6th was the deadly culmination of weeks of increasingly desperate efforts by former President Trump to prevent the peaceful transfer of power and overturn the lawful results of the 2020 presidential election.

Just this morning, the Committee released [documents](#) we obtained showing that in the weeks leading up to the January 6th attack, President Trump repeatedly pressured the Department of Justice to overturn the election that he had lost. President Trump sent bogus election fraud claims to Jeffrey Rosen just minutes before he announced on Twitter that he was appointing Mr. Rosen as Acting Attorney General.

When that didn't work, President Trump used official White House channels and a private attorney to pressure DOJ to file a lawsuit in the Supreme Court to nullify the election—but only in states he lost. When the Department refused, President Trump attempted to replace Mr. Rosen with another DOJ official who appeared willing to embrace these conspiracy theories and further the President's corrupt ends. In an email released by the Committee, one DOJ official called the conspiracy theories pushed by the White House, quote, “pure insanity.”

After his efforts to pressure the Department of Justice failed, President Trump grew even more desperate. And so, on the morning of January 6th, he sent an angry, violent mob to the Capitol. The goal was to use violence to stop Congress from certifying that Joe Biden won the election. In other words, Donald Trump was attempting to instigate a coup. Or to use his own words as he gave literal marching orders that morning, President Trump wanted the rioters to, quote, “walk down to the Capitol,” to quote, “fight like hell,” and to, quote, “stop the steal.”

And the rioters responded. They marched to the Capitol, forced their way inside, violently attacked the police, and put the lives of the Vice President, Members of Congress, and our staff, in grave danger.

Thanks to the bravery of our law enforcement, including the U.S. Capitol Police and D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department, the mob was defeated, and Congress certified the results of a free and fair election.

But make no mistake, the men and women on the frontlines of that battle faced terrible odds on January 6th. They were beaten, bludgeoned, and pepper-sprayed. Many officers from the Capitol Police lacked the equipment and proper training to confront such a violent mob, and others felt they did not receive the instructions and support from superiors that they needed as conditions deteriorated.

Last week, in consultation with Ranking Member Comer, the Committee invited the Acting Chief of the Capitol Police, Yogananda Pittman, to testify today about these challenges. I am very disappointed that Chief Pittman has declined to appear today. However, she has committed to testify, and I can announce today that she will appear before this Committee on July 21.

The Capitol Police was gravely unprepared on January 6th, but they could not be expected to repel the worst attack on the Capitol in 200 years on their own.

Unfortunately, our Committee's investigation has revealed that the federal government failed to sound the alarm before

January 6th and was slow to respond once the attack occurred. Today, we are joined by three witnesses who can shed light on those failures.

First, we are joined by FBI Director Christopher Wray. The FBI is our nation's leading law enforcement agency, and is tasked with preventing domestic terrorism. In the weeks before January 6th, online forums erupted with threats of violence against lawmakers and the Capitol. One FBI field office warned that violent extremists were preparing for, quote, "war."

Yet the FBI failed to use all of its tools to warn of the looming assault.

It did not issue a formal intelligence bulletin about the threat, and it did not pass on key intelligence to the leaders of the Capitol Police.

Five months after the attack, we still do not have the full story of these failures, because the FBI and the Department of Justice have not fully cooperated with this Committee's investigation. This delay is unacceptable, and it makes us more vulnerable to another attack.

Today we also welcome General Charles Flynn and Lieutenant General Walter Piatt, who worked on the Army staff on January 6th. Neither of these career military officers was in the direct chain of command on January 6th, but they participated in key discussions about how the National Guard should respond.

That response took far too long. [Documents](#) obtained by the Committee show that beginning at 1:30 p.m., top officials at the Defense Department received at least 12 urgent requests for help from the Capitol Police Chief, the Mayor, and other officials. But after a series of delays, the National Guard did not arrive until 5:20 p.m., more than 4 hours after the Capitol perimeter was breached. This is a shocking failure, and today we intend to get to the bottom of why it happened.

At our [last hearing](#), I was deeply dismayed that some of my Republican colleagues denied basic truths about that day. So let's be clear. The attack was an insurrection. It wasn't a peaceful protest or a normal tourist visit. It was an insurrection. You don't have to take my word for it. The top Republicans in Congress, Senate Minority Leader McConnell and Republican Leader McCarthy, have both acknowledged that the events of January 6th were, quote, an "insurrection."

As the next step in our investigation, the Committee has requested transcribed interviews with former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, who directly pressured DOJ officials at least five times to investigate fake claims of election fraud. We also plan to interview former Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen and other senior officials with first-hand knowledge of President Trump's campaign to overturn the 2020 election.

We must never forget the horrific events we witnessed in January, or dishonor those who risked their lives to protect ours. This Committee will continue to fulfill its duty and investigate the attack on January 6th with every means at its disposal.

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