

**Statement of Amy Klobuchar, Chairwoman Committee on Rules and
Administration**

JOINT FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

EXAMINING THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL, PART II

March 3, 2021

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by thanking you, and Ranking Member Blunt and Ranking Member Portman for the bipartisan and constructive hearing that we had last week.

I also want to thank the many members of both committees that patiently participated, during votes and all, last week and asked thoughtful questions that will help us move forward.

Importantly, there were a number of areas of agreement. We heard all of our witnesses last week make clear that there is now evidence that the insurrection was deliberate and coordinated, that it involved white supremacists and extremist groups, and it was highly dangerous but could have been so much worse if it was not for the actions of brave law enforcement on the front line.

We also heard consensus – from witnesses who held key leadership positions in charge of the Capitol security on January 6 – how they didn't agree on everything but there was consensus that there were breakdowns in intelligence sharing, delays in bringing in the National Guard, and issues concerning the structure of the Capitol Police Board and the decision making process that is in our unique responsibility to change.

I hope that this spirit of bipartisanship and cooperation will continue today, as we hear testimony from federal agencies on their roles with respect to intelligence gathering and timely sharing of intelligence security preparations, the response, and the request for help from the Defense Department, as well as their perspectives on how the Capitol Police decision making process could be so much better going forward. We know that there were errors made by those in charge of security in the Capitol and it is always easy, of course, to realize that later than when we were in the moment. But that fact alone, to me, isn't enough to not look back. We must look back because we must do better going forward.

We heard last week that the Capitol Police is a “consumer,” that was the word of the former Chief of intelligence. It relies on its federal partners, including the FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), who have witnesses here today.

While we are aware of the FBI raw intelligence report that came out the day before out of the Norfolk office, public reporting has indicated that neither agency, DHS or FBI, produced a threat report—that the FBI did not produce a joint intelligence bulletin, and that DHS did not produce a threat assessment—ahead of January 6. And the former police chief has said that representatives from these agencies indicated that they didn't have any new intelligence to share at a meeting the day of the attack.

But the insurrectionists who attacked the Capitol, as we know, “came prepared for war,” as we heard last week. They brought radios, they brought climbing gear, to surmount the Capitol's security features, and they brought weapons.

So we need to hear from the federal agencies about what was known and when, what was done in response to these foreboding online threats, and how information was shared with the law enforcement partners who depend on them.

We also need to understand why, with all the information that was available, the decision to reinforce local police with the National Guard was not made ahead of time. Now, that decision was made – or maybe I should say rather not made – by the former House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, who in fact have resigned.

And nevertheless, despite the clear breakdowns at the Capitol, we must get to the bottom of why that very day it took the Defense Department so long to deploy the National Guard once the need for reinforcements became patently clear on every TV screen in America.

At our hearing last week Acting Chief Contee provided a disturbing account of how, at 2:22 p.m., as the rioters already had broken through police lines, smashed windows at the Capitol, and were breaching the building, all on live television, the initial response from the Defense Department to a request of National Guard support was not to immediately activate the Guard.

As the Acting Chief said to us last week he was “simply just stunned that there was not a more immediate response.”

Last, an issue of critical importance in today's hearing is the threat posed by domestic terrorism and hate groups, and their role in the attack on January 6.

We will never forget the story of the Capitol Police officer who fought against the violent mob for hours, and after it was all over, broke down in tears telling fellow officers how he'd been called the N-Word repeatedly that day and then said: “Is this America?”

We also won't forget the picture of the insurrectionist proudly waving a confederate flag in the Capitol Rotunda, or the images of a rioter in a “Camp Auschwitz” hoodie.

But this rising problem is not just limited to the events of January 6. According to an FBI report, hate crimes in the U.S. rose to the highest level in more than a decade in 2019.

Putting all the dates and the memos aside, there was widespread knowledge of the importance of the date, of the rise of violent extremism, and that the President of the United States had called out his followers to go to the Capitol that day. The warnings were dismissed despite the fact that the Vice President, the future Vice President, and the entire Congress was gathered in one place.

In the end, it was left to front line officers who were severely outnumbered to protect not only those of us in the Capitol, but our democracy itself. They performed heroically under unimaginable circumstances, tragically suffering many injuries and loss of life. That's why we need answers. Thank you.