

Oct 13, 2022

- As Delivered –

Chairman Thompson: “Good afternoon. And may God Bless the United States of America.

“Four months ago, this committee started to present our findings to you, the American people.

“From the beginning we understood that some people watching those proceedings would wrongly assume that the committee’s investigation was a partisan exercise.

“That’s why I asked those who were skeptical of our work to simply to listen to the evidence, to hear the testimony, with an open mind and to let the facts speak for themselves before reaching any judgment.

“Over the course of these hearings the evidence has proven that were a multi-part plan led by former President Donald Trump to overturn the 2020 election.

“Donald Trump lost his bid for reelection as shown from the testimony of some of the President’s closest allies and advisors. Donald Trump knew he lost.

“Despite this knowledge Donald Trump went to court to contest the 2020 election, and he lost in court.

“The Electoral College met and declared Joe Biden the winner, yet Donald Trump continued to pull out all the stops in his attempt to stay in power.

“What Donald Trump proceeded to do after the 2020 election is something no president has done before in our country.

“In a staggering betrayal of his oath, Donald Trump attempted a plan that led to an attack on a pillar of our democracy. It’s still hard to believe.

“But the facts and testimony are clear, consistent, and undisputed.

“How do we know this? How have we been able to present such a clear picture of what took place?

“Because of the testimony we’ve heard and that we have presented to you through proceedings. Because of the documentary evidence we’ve gathered, and also made available directly to you the American people.

“When you look back at what has come out through this committee’s work.

“The most striking fact is that all this evidence comes almost entirely from Republicans.

“The evidence that has emerged did not come from Democrats or opponents of Donald Trump.

“Instead, look at who has written and testified and produced evidence. Who has that been?

“Aides who worked loyally for Donald Trump for years.

“Republican state officials and legislators.

“Republican electors.

“The Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee.

“Political professionals who worked at the highest levels of the Trump Campaign.

“Trump appointees who served in the most senior positions in the Justice Department.

“President Trump’s staff and closest advisors in the White House.

“Members of President Trump’s family.

“His own White House counsel.

“I’ve served in Congress a long time. I can tell you, it’s tough for any congressional investigation to obtain evidence like what we’ve received, least of all such a detailed view into a President’s inner circle.

“And I want to be clear: not all these witnesses were thrilled to talk to us.

“Some put up quite a fight. But ultimately, the vast majority cooperated with our investigation.

“And what we’ve shown you over the last four months has been centered on the evidence—evidence that has come overwhelmingly from Republican witnesses.

“So, I’ll say to you again as I did in June: this investigation is not about politics.

“It’s not about party. It’s about the facts, plain and simple.

“And it’s about making sure our government functions under the rule of law as our Constitution demands.

“Today, as in previous proceedings, my colleagues and I will present new evidence that includes new testimony from additional Republicans who served in the Trump administration.

“Never-before-seen footage of Congressional leaders on January 6th working to coordinate a response to the violence and ensure the people’s business went forward.

“New materials produced to the Committee by the Secret Service, details about the ongoing threat to American democracy.

“Today’s proceedings will also be grounded in the facts.

“But it won’t look exactly like all our other hearings.

“We will also take a step back and look at that evidence in a broader context providing a summary of key facts we have uncovered. Facts relevant to President Trump’s state of mind. About his motivations and about his intent.

“What did President Trump know? What was he told? What was his personal and substantial role in the multi-part plan to overturn the election?

“For those of you who watched our prior hearings, some of this evidence will look familiar.

“For those of you tuning in for the first time, we will summarize some of the most important facts and we urge you to go online and watch our hearings in full.

“As one more difference about today.

“Pursuant to the notice circulated prior to today’s proceedings, we are convened today not as a hearing but as a formal committee business meeting, so that in addition to presenting evidence we can potentially hold a committee vote on further investigative action based upon that evidence.

“Before we get to that evidence, I recognize our distinguished Vice Chair, Ms. Cheney of Wyoming, for any opening statement she’d care to offer.

Vice Chair Cheney: “Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

“Much has happened since our last public hearing on July 21st.

“As the Chairman mentioned, we have received new and voluminous documentation from the Secret Service, which we continue to analyze.

“We have received new witness testimony, including about efforts to obstruct our investigation and conceal key facts. And according to public reporting, the Department of Justice has been very active in pursuing many of the issues identified in our prior hearings.

“Our committee may ultimately decide to make a series of criminal referrals to the Department of Justice, but we recognize that our role is not to make decisions regarding prosecution.

“The Preamble to our Constitution recites among its purposes to “establish Justice,” and our nation’s Judiciary, and our U.S. Department of Justice, have that responsibility.

“A key element of this Committee’s responsibility is to propose reforms, to prevent January 6th from ever happening again.

“We have already proposed, and the House has now passed, a bill to amend the Electoral Count Act, to help ensure that no other future plots to overturn an election can succeed.

“And we will make further specific recommendations in our final report, based in part on the evidence you will hear today.

“Our hearings last summer began with an outline of President Trump’s multi-part plan to overturn the 2020 Presidential election, and then proceeded to demonstrate each of these elements in detail, with more than 20 hours of evidence.

“Today, we will see new evidence, but as the Chairman said, we will also synthesize evidence you have seen before. The vast weight of evidence presented so far has shown us that the central cause of January 6th was one man, Donald Trump, who many others followed.

“None of this would have happened without him. He was personally and substantially involved in all of it.

“Exactly how did one man cause all of this?

“Today, we will focus on President Trump’s state of mind, his intent, his motivations, and how he spurred others to do his bidding.

“And how another January 6th could happen again if we do not take necessary action to prevent it.

“As you view our evidence shown today, I would suggest a focus on the following points.

“First, as you will see, President Trump had a premeditated plan to declare that the election was fraudulent and stolen before election day, before he knew the election results.

“He made his stolen election claims on election night, against the advice of his campaign, without any evidence in hand.

“Then, over the next two months, he sought to find those who would help him invent and spread lies about the widespread fraud.

“Many of those who stepped forward to help, including Rudy Giuliani, knew they never had real evidence sufficient to change the election results – and on the evening of January 5th, they admitted they were still trying to find that phantom evidence.

“Of course, as a result of making intentionally false claims of election fraud, Mr. Giuliani’s license to practice law has now been suspended.

“Second, please recognize that President Donald Trump was in a unique position, better informed about the absence of widespread election fraud than almost any other American.

“President Trump’s own campaign experts told him that there was no evidence to support his claims. His own Justice Department appointees investigated the election fraud claims and told him, point blank, that they were false.

“In mid-December 2020, President Trump’s senior advisors told him the time had come to concede the election. Donald Trump knew the courts had ruled against him.

“He had all of this information, but still made the conscious choice to preach, fraudulently, that the election was stolen, to pressure state officials to change election results, to manufacture fake electoral slates, to attempt to corrupt our Department of Justice, to summon tens of thousands of supporters to Washington, knowing they were angry and knowing some were armed, to send them to the Capitol.

“Then, as a riot was underway, he incited his supporters to further violence by publicly condemning his Vice President.

“And he then refused for hours to disband his rioting supporters and instruct them to leave the Capitol, even when begged repeatedly to do so.

“None of this is normal, or acceptable, or lawful, in our Republic.

“Third, please consider today who had a hand in defeating President Trump’s efforts to overturn the election. Vice President Pence.

“Bill Barr, Jeff Rosen and others at the Department of Justice.

“State Republican officials.

“White House staff, who blocked proposals to mobilize the military to seize voting machines and run new elections.

“Our Capitol Police, aided by the Metropolitan police.

“Other federal law enforcement and our National Guard, who arrived later in the afternoon.

“All of these people had a hand in stopping Donald Trump.

“This leads us to a key question.

“Why would Americans assume that our Constitution, and our institutions of our Republic, are invulnerable to another attack?

“Why would we assume that those institutions will not falter next time?

“A key lesson of our investigation is this: our institutions only hold when men and women of good faith make them hold, regardless of the political cost.

“We have no guarantee that these men and women will be in place next time.

“Any future President inclined to attempt what President Trump did in 2020 has now learned not to install people who could stand in the way.

“And also, please consider this: The rulings of our courts are respected and obeyed because we as citizens pledge to accept and honor them.

“Most importantly, our President, who has a Constitutional obligation to faithfully execute the laws, swears to accept them.

“What happens when the President disregards the courts’ rulings as illegitimate? When he disregards the rule of law?

“That, my fellow citizens, breaks our republic.

“Finally, as you view the evidence today, also consider this. President Trump knew from unassailable sources that his election fraud claims were false.

“He admitted he had lost the election. He took actions consistent to that belief.

“Claims that President Trump actually believed the election was stolen are not supported by fact and lack evidence.

“There is no defense that Donald Trump was duped, or irrational. No President can defy the rule of law, and act this way in a Constitutional Republic. Period.

“Mr. Chairman, our nation’s federal judges are sworn to do impartial justice, to preserve our Constitution and preserve our union.

“Dozens of these judges have been addressing January 6th cases, and many have given us plain, unmistakable warnings about the direction of our Republic.

“Let me read from one judge’s statement, given at a recent sentencing hearing:

“High ranking members of Congress and state officials who know perfectly well the claim of fraud was and is untrue and that the election was legitimate are so afraid of losing their own power, they won’t say so.

“It has to be crystal clear it is not patriotism, it is not standing up for America to stand up for one man who knows full well that he lost instead of the Constitution he was trying to subvert.

“Mr. Chairman the violence and lawlessness of January 6th was unjustifiable, but our nation cannot only punish the foot soldiers who stormed our Capitol.

“Those who planned to overturn our election, and brought us to the point of violence, must also be accountable.

“With every effort to excuse or justify the conduct of the former President, we chip away at the foundation of our Republic.

“Indefensible conduct is defended. Inexcusable conduct is excused. Without accountability, it all becomes normal, and it will recur.

“So, as we watch the evidence today, please consider where our nation is in its history.

“Consider whether we can survive for another 246 years. Most people in most places on Earth have not been free.

“America is an exception. And America continues only because we bind ourselves to our founders’ principles, to our Constitution.

“We recognize that some principles must be beyond politics, inviolate, and more important than any single American who ever lived.

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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