

A taste of sedition



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By Nate Smelle

Sedition, insurrection, insurgency, siege, coup ... are all words not to be used lightly. Yet, in the last week they have been put to work repeatedly and accurately by journalists covering the deadly terrorist attack by President Donald Trump's supporters on the United States Capitol.

Surprisingly, despite the fact the terrorists responsible for this putsch planned their fatal assault on democracy in plain sight - using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Parler, Instagram, etc. - somehow law enforcement was grossly outnumbered, and in turn overwhelmed by the crowd of 8,000+.

When for several weeks leading up to the riot the president of the United States was directing his vacuous followers to participate in the rally - even Tweeting on one occasion ?Big protest in DC on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!? - how is it possible that law enforcement could still be caught off-guard? It is not as if the plot for this Trump-led act of domestic terrorism was developed in secret. Anyone who had spent more than 10 minutes on social media in the past couple months has heard the calls for a violent overthrowing of the U.S. government spewing from the accounts of Trumpists.

Following his resignation last week, outgoing Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund told The Washington Post that two days prior to the riot on Jan. 6 his requests to bring in the National Guard to protect the Capitol were denied six times by House Sergeant-at-Arms Paul Irving. Why is it that this summer more than 4,000 National Guard members were deployed to protect the Capitol when Black Lives Matter activists gathered on Capitol Hill to take a stand against police brutality and systemic racism?

The blood of the five people who died as a result of this criminal insurrection - including the blood of 42-year-old Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick who died after being struck in the head with a fire extinguisher by one of Trump's goons - is on the outgoing president's puny hands. The lack of preparedness by law enforcement and the coordination of this terrorist attack happened on Trump's watch, and is ultimately his fault. But, it is of vital importance that history does not overlook the fact that America's worst president did not act alone. Trump's attempted coup would not have been possible without the assistance of his fellow Republican lawmakers, MAGA hat-wearing members of the Capitol Police and military, white supremacists, neo-nazis, QAnon cultists, evangelical Christians, card-carrying conservatives, and the other confederate flag-waving self-proclaimed "patriots" who made up this seditious mob of cop killers.

No matter the height of their office or the depth of their character, everyone of these domestic terrorists must be held responsible for their actions.

So, as Canadians, why does what happened in Washington, D.C. Jan. 6 matter to us?

Well, like the United States of America, Canada is also a democracy. In possessing a system of government in which the citizens have the power to elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, we the people must remain aware of forces that threaten our freedom and protect our right to live peacefully. Racism, greed, hatred and ignorance, every ounce of fuel giving rise to Trump's fire are not restricted by the border dividing us from our neighbours to the south. These dysfunctional and vile elements of our society exist here in Canada, and like the COVID-19 pandemic they are spreading fast.

As Trump and his supporters continue their assault on American democracy in the coming weeks, we will see several of our elected officials on the right aligning themselves with, and cashing in on this hateful political movement. Recognizing that we will likely be going to the polls ourselves in Canada in the near future, we must not forget these telling alignments, and for what these individuals truly stand.