

STATEMENT OF ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE YOGANANDA D. PITTMAN UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

On behalf of the women and men of the U.S. Capitol Police, I want to thank the Committee, the Congress, and the American people for their support following the attack of January 6, 2021.

As you know, the U.S. Capitol Police's sole mission is to protect Congress to ensure that Congress may fulfill its legislative obligations under the Constitution of the United States. The Department understands the gravity of this important objective and holds itself to the highest of standards in ensuring mission fulfillment. The Department also knows that you – the Congressional community – expect excellence from the Capitol Police and depend on us for your safety, but, most importantly, the protection of the democratic process.

On January 6th, in the face of a terrorist attack by tens of thousands of insurrectionists determined to stop the certification of Electoral College votes, the Department failed to meet its own high standards as well as yours. Although the Department fulfilled its mission of protecting Members and democracy ultimately prevailed, the insurrectionists' actions and the Department's inability to immediately secure the U.S. Capitol emboldened the insurrectionists and horrified millions of American. We fully expect to answer to you and the American people for our failings on January 6th.

I am here to offer my sincerest apologies on behalf of the Department.

But I am also here to tell you what we are doing to secure the U.S. Capitol from future threats – whether domestic or foreign.

Let me be clear: the Department should have been more prepared for this attack. By January 4th, the Department knew that the January 6th event would not be like any of the previous protests held in 2020. We knew that militia groups and white supremacists organizations would be attending. We also knew that some of these participants were intending to bring firearms and other weapons to the event. We knew that there was a strong potential for violence and that Congress was the target.

The Department prepared in order to meet these challenges, but we did not do enough. Based on the information we had about the event, the Department changed its existing operational plan for January 6th. It required all available officers to be working that day. It increased the number of Civil Disturbance Units scheduled to work the event from four to seven, including four hard platoons equipped with less lethal munitions. It activated its SWAT team to extract violent demonstrators or those with weapons from the rally and to engage in counter sniper activity. It also adapted a new security perimeter based on instructions it received from the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms.

Additionally, on January 4th, former USCP Chief of Police Steven Sund requested that the Capitol Police Board declare a state of emergency and authorize a request to secure National Guard support.

The Board denied the request, but encouraged Chief Sund to contact the DC National Guard to determine how many Guardsman could be sent to the Capitol on short notice, which he did. Chief Sund also coordinated with Acting Chief of Police Robert Contee of the Metropolitan Police Department to guarantee additional support on January 6th.

The Department had over 1200 sworn personnel working on site when the attack occurred, which was no match for the tens of thousands of insurrectionists (many armed) attacking the Capitol and refusing to comply with lawful orders.

In my experience, I do not believe there was any preparations that would have allowed for an open campus in which lawful protestors could exercise their first amendment right to free speech and at the same time prevented the attack on Capital grounds that day.

However, I do believe certain challenges the Department faced the day of the attack could have been overcome with additional preparation.

First, it became clear early on that the Department needed much more manpower than what was available. We received immediate assistance from the MPD who sent a hundred officers within minutes of the initial breach of the outer security perimeter.

Chief Sund immediately coordinated with federal agencies and law enforcement partners across the area to gain additional boots on the ground. He also lobbied the Board for authorization to bring in the National Guard, but he was not granted authorization for over an hour.

In addition, the Department's resources were diverted to other major concerns. At nearly the exact time the mob arrived on the Capitol, a pipe bomb was discovered at the RNC headquarters at First and C Street, SE. The Department sent USCP personnel to investigate and secure the location, which included evacuating the Madison and Cannon House office buildings as well as residents and local businesses. Shortly after the initial pipe bomb was discovered, USCP discovered a vehicle with explosive chemicals and a firearm in plain view parked on that same block. An identical pipe bomb was also discovered at the DNC headquarters several minutes later.

Second, our officers were equipped with less lethal options such as OC spray and batons. They were also backed up by CDU platoons deploying pepper balls and other chemical munitions. They did not have other less lethal options, such as impact weapons, at their disposal.

Moreover, due to the amount of less lethal chemicals being used to disperse the crowd, additional supplies should have been staged for easy access. Instead, the Department had to send in personnel to reload our officers.

Third, once it became clear that the mob was getting too close to the Capitol building, I ordered a lockdown of the Capitol, which means that every entrance should have been closed and sealed to prevent entry from the outside. The Department has very specific lockdown procedures that require the lockdown to take effect even when officers remain outside of the building. The policy may not have been consistently followed.

Fourth, we have been told by the Union and other employees that our communications were difficult to hear on their radios over the ruckus of the attack. Without a clear line of communication, officers were operating with limited information about what was occurring and with little instruction from leadership.

Similarly, Members and staff have told us that our communications over the PA system were not clear enough.

This is not an exhaustive list, but a general overview of some of the things that the Department could have done better than and that we are working to improve now.

Once the Capitol building itself was breached, the Department's priority was evacuating Members. Our Dignitary Protection Division agents immediately evacuated congressional leadership and took them to a secure location to ensure the continuity of government.

Almost simultaneously I connected with both the House and Senate Sergeant at Arms to arrange the evacuation of Members from the House and Senate Chambers, as well as the extraction of Members from their offices by USCP personnel.

It was while Members were being evacuated that an invader was shot by a USCP official outside of the House Floor. This matter is still undergoing investigation by outside law enforcement.

Once Members were safe, the Department began aiding staff barricaded in offices in the Capitol.

It was not until Members and staff were safely evacuated that the Department began clearing the Capitol of invaders floor by floor with the assistance of its law enforcement partners.

Immediately following January 6th, the Department's priority has been to secure the campus now and into the future.

We have acquired the assistance of the National Guard who have provided thousands of armed personnel to assist us in securing the campus. Access to the campus has been restricted. And the inner and outer perimeters are protected by an eight foot non-scalable global fencing.

Additionally, the Department has taken steps to ensure that it shares and receives critical intelligence information from its law enforcement partners and that such information is disseminated to its workforce. The Department's Intelligence Director holds daily internal intelligence briefings with USCP officials. The Department has also arranged to deliver intelligence briefings to the Union on a routine basis.

The Department is also leaning forward with briefings for the Congressional Community, including for core leadership, oversight committees, and congressional caucuses.

The Department is also providing additional training to personnel on civil disturbance policies and practices.

These are only some of the steps taken by the Department in the immediate wake of the January 6th insurrection.

In addition to proactive measures intended to shore up the Capitol's security, the Department has taken numerous steps to aid our officers.

I want to stress that the vast majority of Capitol Police officers who were on the front lines on January 6th performed valiantly in the face of extraordinary violence. They held off the attackers long enough for us to evacuate the House and Senate Chambers and lead the Members and staff to safety. These officers are heroes.

I visited every roll call to meet with officers in the days following my being sworn in as Acting Chief of Police. Many are suffering from PTSD, particularly after the loss of two of our officers directly and indirectly as a result of the events of January 6th. And since January 6th, they've been working around the clock to prepare for future events, including the inauguration.

The Department has EAP on site to offer counseling services to officers and their families. The Department also has trauma counselors specialized in dealing with military and law enforcement PTSD. Finally, due to the uptick in COVID-19 infections following the January 6th event, the Department has provided onsite testing for USCP personnel and is seeking additional sources for COVID-19 vaccinations.

The attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6 also forever changed how we look at the "People's House." By design, the Capitol campus is open and welcoming to visitors. The Capitol Building, until recently, had not been surrounded eight foot global fencing.

And, because it is an open campus, it is very difficult to fortify. Even before September 11, 2001, security experts, including former USCP chiefs of police, argued that more needed to be done to

protect the Capitol campus – although I doubt many would have thought it would be necessary to protect it against our own citizens.

As the Acting Chief, I take responsibility for the mistakes that were made by the Department, and I pledge to this Committee, the Congress, the American people, and my USCP colleagues, that we will do better going forward, but we need to make changes.

The Department is working with the various offices and agencies tasked with documenting the events as they unfolded that day, as well as conducting our own in depth review of the incident, to ensure that accurate, factual and detailed information is provided.

I believe the multiple reviews, after actions, and investigations currently underway will conclude that the Capitol's security infrastructure must change and that the Department needs access to additional resources – both manpower and physical assets.

We know the eyes of the country and the world are upon us. The U.S. Capitol Police remain steadfast in addressing the new challenges that we face head on. We are committed to protecting and defending this institution that is responsible for safeguarding the freedoms we all hold dear – including the public's right to exercise their First Amendment rights at the U.S. Capitol.

Once again, I'd like to thank this Committee and the entire Congress for their support of our law enforcement officers. I am prepared to address any questions you may have.

Thank you.