

Pentagon recommends promoting general involved in delay of National Guard to US Capitol on January 6

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Over the weekend, the *Washington Post* reported that the top two civilian leaders in the Army chain of command after President Joe Biden, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin and Acting Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth, recommended that Lt. General Walter Piatt be promoted to four-star general. Piatt is one of two high-ranking US Army generals implicated in delaying the deployment of National Guard troops to the US Capitol as it was under siege on January 6, 2021.

Piatt's promotion to head the Army Futures Command was also recommended by General James McConville, the Army's top officer and fourth in the Army chain of command. The *Post* noted that the recommendations by Austin, Wormuth and McConville, previously unreported, were confirmed by "two defense officials" who spoke to the newspaper "on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue."

According to the *Post* account, Biden rejected the recommendations of Austin and Wormuth, both of whom he had appointed, as well as McConville's, and let Piatt's promotion languish in the Senate for months, likely sending the general to an early retirement within the next year.

This *Post* article, the result of a leak from within the military, is an indication of bitter internal conflicts that continue to roil the civilian and uniformed military, as well as ongoing tensions between the military and the civilian authorities more than 21 months after the attempted coup.

The *Washington Post*, closely connected to the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Central Intelligence Agency, wrote that the rejection by the

White House "marks a rare instance." It pointed out that such a nomination requires a lengthy review process up the chain of command.

There is no question that Biden's decision to prevent Piatt from ascending further is rooted in Piatt's actions during and after the January 6 coup.

Earlier this summer, it was revealed that top officials in the DoD, including Piatt, former Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller, Miller's former Chief of Staff Kash Patel, former Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, General McConville and General Counsel James E. McPherson had all deleted their text messages despite requests from Congressional committees to preserve their records following the attack on the Capitol.

Former D.C. National Guard Commander William Walker, who has since been promoted to House sergeant at arms by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, has testified before Congress, and reiterated in multiple interviews, that his requests to deploy soldiers to the Capitol during the attack on Congress were delayed by his superior officers, including Piatt and Gen. Charles Flynn, brother of Trump's former national security adviser, retired general and coup plotter Michael Flynn.

In explosive Senate testimony delivered in March 2021, which has been ignored throughout the January 6 House Select Committee hearings, Walker said that he requested permission to deploy roughly 155 soldiers under his command at 1:49 p.m., nearly 30 minutes before the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers broke into the Capitol.

Walker made his recommendation to then-Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. He did so after having received frantic reports and appeals for help from then-

US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund and D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Robert Contee. The police chiefs told Walker that their forces would not be able to defend the Capitol from thousands of rampaging and violent Trump supporters.

At the Senate hearing, Walker testified that despite his urgent requests for permission to deploy his soldiers, authorization from his superiors was delayed for hours. Walker said that during a 2:30 p.m. conference call with senior Army leadership, Piatt and Flynn argued against sending soldiers to the Capitol.

Walker testified that as the Capitol was being overrun by right-wing elements seeking to capture or kill lawmakers in order to stop the certification of the Electoral College vote, the generals on the line said they did not like the “optics” of having uniformed soldiers deployed to the Capitol. Piatt and Flynn argued, according to Walker, that the presence of troops at the Capitol could “incite” the crowd, which at the time was chanting “hang Mike Pence!” and demanding to know where Speaker Pelosi was hiding.

Walker further testified that he was not given permission to deploy his soldiers by Acting Secretary of Defense Miller until 5:08 p.m., 199 minutes after his initial request.

Donald Trump had fired his defense secretary, Mark Esper, several days after Biden was declared the winner of the presidential election on November 7, 2020, and replaced him with Miller, a 30-year Special Forces operative and retired colonel with no experience in the upper echelons of the military command. Miller’s only qualification to head the DoD appeared to be his unreserved loyalty to Trump.

In Congressional testimony in June 2021, Piatt tried to argue that he never rejected requests to deploy the soldiers, merely requiring Walker to “prepare a plan” before the request could be approved. Army officials speaking on behalf of Charles Flynn after the attack initially claimed that Flynn was not present during the conference call with Walker. However, at the same June 2021 hearing, Flynn acknowledged that he was, in fact, present.

In a blistering response to Piatt and Flynn’s testimony, and a November 2021 DoD inspector general’s report that claimed Walker had rejected commands from senior Army leadership to deploy troops sooner, Army Reserve Colonel Earl Matthews,

Walker’s subordinate, wrote a 36-page memorandum accusing Piatt and Flynn of being “absolute and unmitigated liars.”

Matthews accused Piatt and other senior Army leaders of changing facts to suit their narrative in order to create “a revisionist tract worthy of the best Stalinist of North Korea propagandist.” Walker himself requested that the inspector general retract his report, saying it was inaccurate.

Speaking to the *Post* via email over the weekend, Walker said he stood by his previous testimony, which he called “accurate and unambiguous.” He also confirmed he stood by Matthew’s memorandum, which he said “speaks for itself.”



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