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5 SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
6 JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL,
7 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
8 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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12 INTERVIEW OF: MURIEL BOWSER

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16 Wednesday, January 12, 2022

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18 Washington, D.C.

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21 The interview in the above matter was held via Webex, commencing at 12:50 p.m.

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2 Appearances:

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5 For the SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE

6 THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL:

7

8 [REDACTED] SENIOR INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

9 [REDACTED] INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

10 [REDACTED] INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

11 [REDACTED] INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

12 [REDACTED] PROFESSIONAL STAFF

13 [REDACTED] RESEARCHER

14 [REDACTED] CHIEF CLERK

15

16 For MURIEL BOWSER:

17

18 EUGENE ADAMS, DIRECTOR, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

19 DOROTHY BROWN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

20 BETSY CAVENDISH, GENERAL COUNSEL

1
2 [REDACTED] This is a transcribed interview of Muriel Bowser, Mayor of the
3 District of Columbia, conducted by the House Select Committee to Investigate the January
4 6th Attack on the United States Capitol, pursuant to House Resolution 503?

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY [REDACTED]

7 Q Mayor Bowser, could you please state your full name and spell your last
8 name for the record, ma'am?

9 A My name is Muriel Elizabeth Bowser, B like boy, o-w-s-e-r.

10 Q Thank you, ma'am.

11 In the room today and conducting the questioning will be myself, [REDACTED]
12 and colleagues of mine, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Also, we may be joined
13 by members of the select committee as well, and I'll announce them when they come
14 into the room.

15 This will be a staff-led interview. And members, of course, may also choose to
16 ask questions.

17 Before we begin, I'd like to describe a few ground rules. You are permitted to
18 have an attorney present at the time of this questioning. And we will make -- excuse
19 me -- a copy of the official transcript available to you through your attorney.

20 There's an official reporter transcribing the record of this deposition. Please wait
21 until each question is completed before you begin your response, and we will try and wait
22 until your response is complete before we ask our next question.

23 The stenographer cannot record nonverbal responses such as shaking your head,
24 so it is important that you answer each question with an audible, verbal response.

25 We ask that you provide complete answers based on your best recollection. If a

1 question is not clear, please ask for clarification. If you do not know the answer to a
2 question, please simply say so.

3 I would also remind you that it's unlawful to deliberately provide false information
4 to Congress. And, again, you and your attorney will have an opportunity to review the
5 transcript.

6 Before we begin in earnest, ma'am, any questions about anything that I've
7 covered before we get started?

8 A No questions.

9 Q Thank you, ma'am.

10 So what I'd like to do is sort of lay out the roadmap of the questioning. And what
11 I'd like to do is begin with some background about you, ma'am, your professional
12 background up to your current position as the Mayor of D.C., then move on to just a
13 discussion of what your day was like on January 6th. How did the day unfold for you?
14 What were you involved in? And then sort of shift to some more specific subcategories,
15 specifically, what was the threat landscape like from your perspective? How did that
16 inform, if it did, your request for assistance for the National Guard? What was your
17 interaction like with other Federal partners in terms of the response to support D.C.?

18 And then, finally, I'd like to compare and contrast the summer of 2020 and sort of
19 how that played out with January 6th and see how, if at all, the summer of 2020 informed
20 your response or your approach to January 6th.

21 That make sense?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Thank you, ma'am.

24 [REDACTED], sorry. Before we get started, I just wanted to make
25 sure there was no one else on the mayor's side joining.

1 Mayor Bowser. Oh, yes, my lawyer is here.

2 Mr. Adams. And [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] my name is Eugene Adams.

3 I'm the mayor's attorney. And my colleague, Ms. Dorothy Brown, is with me also.

4 We're the only three people in the room, in her office.

5 [REDACTED] Okay, great. If the court reporter's able to pick that up.

6 [Reporter responds.]

7 [REDACTED] Thank you.

8 Mr. Adams. Will do.

9 [REDACTED] Great. Thanks. Thanks.

10 Sorry, [REDACTED] Go ahead.

11 [REDACTED] No worries. Thank you, ma'am.

12

BY [REDACTED]

13 Q All right. Madam Mayor, let's start with your background. Why don't we
14 just sort of start with where you went to school and sort of a synopsis of how you made
15 your way to the Mayor of D.C.?

16 A I'm a two-term D.C. Mayor, and I was elected in 2015. I was elected to the
17 Council of the District of Columbia in 2007, where I served 2.5 terms. Before that, I was
18 a government official, a local government official. I worked for Montgomery County. I
19 have a master's degree from the American University and a bachelor's degree from
20 Chatham College.

21 Q Thank you very much, ma'am.

22 Let's start with what your day was like on January 6th. Sort of just walk us
23 through what your day was like beginning when you woke up in the morning and sort
24 of -- we'll sort of go through the story, and I may sort of ask you questions along the way.

25 A The day of, I was working. I think I had a staff meeting of one of my

1 agencies. And I held that meeting at one of the District's buildings, not City Hall, but 441
2 4th Street, which is now called the Marion Barry Building. That's important because it's
3 across the street from police headquarters where my JOC had -- would be convening to
4 address the events of the day. That would be our headquarters basically. So I had my
5 meeting, a staff meeting there.

6 I was called out of the meeting by a call from the police chief. And the chief, I
7 think in the first call I had with him, had indicated that -- the first call, I believe, was about
8 the bomb threats that he was responding to and that there were two. And he alerted
9 me to that.

10 Sometime later, there was another call that I had with him about, I believe at that
11 time, he was concerned about the Capitol's barrier being breached. It may have already
12 happened or they were concerned about it happening. And we discussed the need to
13 implement a curfew in the District.

14 Q And, ma'am, you mentioned that you -- I'm sorry. Go ahead. I didn't
15 mean to cut you off.

16 A I mean, it was a long day. So I could talk for a long time. I don't know
17 how --

18 Q Yes, ma'am. No, I understand.

19 I wanted to back up a little bit and ask you: The initial phone call that you got
20 regarding the bomb threats, do you recall around what time of day that was? Was that
21 in the morning? Was that in the afternoon?

22 A Oh, no, it definitely was in the morning. And it was -- let me see if I can get
23 a better sense of the time exactly. Or maybe it wasn't. Maybe I have -- I don't know
24 exactly what time it was. The first note of a call I have is a little after 1 p.m.

25 Q Okay. And with respect to the call regarding the bomb threats, that was

1 just sort of a notification from -- was that from Chief Contee or from someone else in the
2 police department?

3 A It was from Chief Contee.

4 Q Okay. And what, if anything, did you do about that? Did you -- did he just
5 sort of -- was he just briefing about what he was going to do or was there some specific
6 direction that you all discussed about how you wanted to handle the bomb threats?

7 A He was just briefing me about -- about it and anything else at the Capitol.
8 And I recall having two calls with him before I went over to headquarters, and so I don't
9 want to confuse the topics. But I believe the first one was about the bomb threats, and I
10 think the later one was about a breach of the perimeter.

11 Q Okay. And with respect to the second call, I know it was sometime after
12 the first. Was that -- do you recall if that was in the afternoon as well or --

13 A No. It -- they were only separated by a few minutes, maybe 15 minutes.

14 Q Okay. And what did Chief Contee report to you, if you recall, about the
15 breach at the Capitol perimeter?

16 A I think just that -- I don't remember exactly, other than they had gotten
17 beyond the Capitol Police. And in that conversation, we talked about the need for us to
18 send support and to declare a curfew for the District.

19 Q Okay. And sometime after that call, it sounds like you left where you were
20 and you went over to headquarters?

21 A Yeah, that's correct.

22 Q And do you recall around what time of day that was? Was that in the
23 afternoon?

24 A Oh, no, that was within minutes. Keep in mind that I could walk there. I
25 mean, it's literally catty-corner to 44 -- to the conference room that I was in. And we -- I

1 walked over there at that time.

2 Q Okay. And once you got to headquarters, ma'am, what did you do when
3 you got there?

4 A I was briefed by the chief. I also went into a room there that is -- has a
5 bank of cameras on it. And all of the emergency team was there in the JOC.

6 Q And do you recall what you were being, like, specifically what you were
7 being briefed about or who was doing the briefing? Was it your own folks? Was it
8 interagency folks? I'm just trying to get a sense of --

9 A No. I would have gotten it more than likely directly from the chief and the
10 deputy mayor, who I think was -- no, he was -- he may not have been there yet. So it's
11 probably directly from the chief.

12 Q Okay. And at any point during the day, did you have any calls, interagency
13 calls, with other government partners, like Capitol Police, FBI, National Guard,
14 Department of Defense, anything like that?

15 A I had calls all of that day. When I first arrived -- and I'm looking at a note
16 because I use this kind of as a vantage point for, you know, the time that I got there.
17 And shortly after that, we could see, I could see on the screens kind of the situation.

18 And we're looking at, keep in mind, we're looking at CNN. We're looking at news
19 broadcasts onto what's happening at the Capitol, and we could see people getting
20 beyond the police. And more than that, we could see the police, the Capitol Police
21 retreat to the building.

22 And that was the point where the chief declared a riot. And that happened -- by
23 then, I had probably been there a few minutes when the chief declared a riot.

24 Q And what's the consequence of the chief declaring a riot? What does that
25 mean practically?

1 A Practically, it means that the kind of the tactics that they deploy take on, you
2 know, the status of dealing with a riot and not a peaceful protest. And that's specifically
3 the -- our local law had changed recently and that had a special consideration for the type
4 of equipment that they could use or bring to bear in the situation.

5 Q Thank you, ma'am.

6 Do you recall if you had any discussions that day either with your own team or
7 with partners about assistance from other partners like the National Guard or the FBI or
8 Secret Service or anyone?

9 A Throughout that time and around the time that I arrived, the chief was trying
10 to make contact with Chief Sund, the U.S. Capitol Police Chief. And we couldn't make
11 contact with them.

12 Keep in mind also that we couldn't see in the building. We have no situational
13 awareness of what was happening in the building. And, obviously, that's a very scary
14 notion because, at this point now, our officers are there. And we -- you know, the chief
15 needs to be able to deploy them in the most effective ways and, of course, keep them
16 safe. And so we had no situational awareness of what's going on in the building.

17 So at some point -- during that time too, the chief, because we really couldn't get
18 Sund, we didn't know what was happening, we sent our command officials over to U.S.
19 Capitol Police headquarters to -- and we sent one of our inspectors up to the building to
20 make sure that our people were being deployed strategically.

21 Q Thank you, ma'am.

22 Do you recall if at all during that day you met personally with anyone else from
23 the interagency partner realm, like with the National Guard, General Walker, anyone
24 else?

25 A I would say my next phone call was with the Secretary of the Army, and my

1 recollection is that he called Chief Contee. And I was, like, in the vicinity, so I took the
2 phone. And I had a conversation with him about making sure that he was giving the
3 Capitol all of the assistance that it needed.

4 Q And based on that phone call, did you feel like that assistance was being
5 provided?

6 A I felt like that -- no, I knew it wasn't being provided, because the D.C.
7 National Guard had not been redeployed.

8 Keep in mind that I think we had about 500 guardsmen that were deployed to the
9 District based on my request but not on the -- on the Capitol Grounds. Specifically, their
10 mission would not allow them to extend east beyond a certain street. I can't remember
11 what it was. I think 9th Street or --

12 Q I think it might have been 9th Street.

13 A 9th Street. And so they could not respond. And as mayor, I could not
14 redirect their mission. In fact, they had specifically in their deployment instructions said
15 that they could only go to the street and they could not deploy beyond that without the
16 express consent of the Secretary of Defense.

17 So the conversation I had with McCarthy, who we had had many conversations
18 and gotten to know each other over the events in the summer and who was pretty
19 hands-on, in my experience, as a Secretary of Defense, his concern, I think, was that they
20 had not gotten the request from the Capitol and that how could they go to the Capitol
21 during an election proceeding with the United States Army showing up on the Capitol
22 steps.

23 And my discussion with him was pretty much like, you're seeing what I'm seeing.
24 Your Capitol is being overrun. I don't have the permission to be up there either, but
25 MPD is there.

1 Q Uh-huh.

2 A FEMS is there.

3 Q And what -- so it sounds like he was saying he needed to get permission in
4 order to perform the request. Is that -- did that strike you as unusual or is that
5 consistent with how you dealt with him in the past juxtapose summer 2020?

6 A It wouldn't strike me as unusual in a less urgent situation.

7 Q Right.

8 A I mean, you know, they're requests. They're protocols. They are two
9 separate branches of government. All of that is true, but your Capitol is being overrun.
10 This is what I could see. And so the bottom line was they had to send -- and if I needed
11 to make the request, like, I -- like formalitywise with my authority, I don't really
12 technically have it, but I'm telling you they need help.

13 Q And at the conclusion of that phone call, did you -- did you get the sense that
14 that help was forthcoming or you were still waiting to figure -- they were still --

15 A I had the sense that he was running it up his chain -- that he was running it
16 up his chain of command.

17 Q Okay.

18 A But I also knew clearly then that they needed to hear it directly from the
19 Capitol.

20 Now, keep in mind that my sense, at this point, I hadn't talked to Sund or even
21 heard his voice during this period of time that I was there. And it became very clear to
22 me at one point that he was with the Members. Like, we couldn't get him because he
23 was trying to get the Members in a safe place.

24 Q Uh-huh.

25 A And it became clear to me that it was now our -- the building was now our

1 responsibility.

2 Q We had the opportunity to speak with Chief Contee yesterday, as well as a
3 couple of weeks ago. One of the things he told us was that he was on a phone call with
4 Chief Sund and representatives of the Department of Defense on this issue of support to
5 the Capitol.

6 I guess, were you a part of that conversation at all, that phone call? I think it was
7 either a phone call or a video conference. I'm not sure which.

8 A No, there were no video conferences that I'm aware of. It was a phone call.
9 It was a phone call initiated, as I recall, by Homeland Security Director Rodriguez. As is
10 their process in kind of dealing with these emergencies, they call -- I think they call it a
11 bridge call or something where they get everybody on and get the, you know, the request
12 better defined.

13 And so he initiated that call with Walker at D.C. National Guard. And I think
14 Walker moved in some DOD officials who we are not exactly sure who was on that. I'm
15 not exactly sure who was on the other end. General Walker may have a clearer
16 understanding of who he looped in.

17 Q Thank you, ma'am.

18 And before we talk about that second conference call or bridge call, the call that
19 you described earlier, was that before or after the conference call, the bridge call?

20 A That was before.

21 Q Okay.

22 A Before. I'm pretty certain that was before.

23 Q Okay. And if you can, ma'am, sort of walk us through what the conference
24 bridge call was about and sort of what the resolution of that call was, if any.

25 A The purpose of the call was to have the Capitol Police define what they

1 needed from DOD, and that was kind of the back and forth about what do you want.
2 You know, what's the mission? How can we help, blah, blah -- you know, blah, blah,
3 blah.

4 Q And did you get the sense that the bridge call was similar to the call you had
5 before in terms of they were trying to run it up the flagpole, they were trying to get
6 permission up the chain of command? Was it the -- was that the same general sense in
7 this bridge call environment?

8 A It wasn't the sense that I got, frankly, because the -- because Sund, who had
9 the authority to request the D.C. National Guard, was making a request. And in my
10 view, that warranted a direct response. It's no longer -- the previous call or the
11 conversation that I had with McCarthy was not the entity under attack asking for help.

12 Q Understood. And do you recall how long that bridge call lasted and what
13 the ultimate resolution of the call was?

14 A I guess that it lasted maybe 10 minutes. Maybe it could have been longer,
15 but this is -- was a heated moment.

16 Q Sure.

17 A It could have been 2 minutes. I'm not sure.

18 Q And at the end of the call, did you get the sense that the help that the
19 Capitol Police requested was forthcoming or that they were still seeking permission?

20 A Oh, they were definitely seeking permission. And I think what was
21 important about this call was that Chief Sund made a direct request to General Walker, to
22 DO -- the DOD officials who were on the line.

23 Q Okay. And so after this bridge call, walk me through sort of what your next
24 steps were in terms of what you -- what you did on behalf of the District of Columbia.

25 A I think at that moment, we were also ensuring at the same time, because

1 there are other people working obviously while this call was happening, we were ensuring
2 that our mutual assistance had been activated.

3 We had, prior to the 6th, I don't know, one of the days leading up to it, activated
4 our mutual assistance compact. And you are familiar that that just says that the District,
5 we'll go and assist Arlington County. Likewise, they would assist us. So we put them
6 on notice. I think that allowed at least three local jurisdictions to be close by, and they
7 responded pretty quickly to the Capitol. So we did that.

8 We also tried to get more National Guard support from Maryland. So we called
9 our counterparts in Maryland and Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware to get the support of
10 the Governors as well.

11 And what else is happening? I'm also making calls to my counsel. We set up a
12 call to give them a briefing. I made calls to congressional leadership. Tried to track
13 them down, and had that -- a few of those conversations.

14 Q And I just want to go back to the mutual aid for a moment. So when you
15 reached out to Maryland and Virginia, was that for law enforcement assistance and
16 National Guard assistance, one or the other? Both?

17 A It was for National Guard. The law enforcement assistance pretty much
18 came through our mutual assistance compact.

19 Q Okay.

20 A So we had already tapped that, and I think HSEMA would have been our
21 agency making sure that those resources were forthcoming and also that they had a rally
22 point. At that point, we needed to tell people where to go and what to do.

23 Q Understood, ma'am.

24 And you mentioned that you, as part of the many phone calls you were making,
25 you were trying to get ahold of congressional leadership. Were you successful at all?

1 And if so, do you recall who you spoke to, if anyone?

2 A Yes. I spoke to the Speaker. Who else did I talk to? I feel I spoke to
3 maybe Steny. I think I spoke to Leader Hoyer. Those are who I can recall right now,
4 but they were together. I reached out to the Speaker, and I think I talked to Steny. I'm
5 pretty sure I spoke with Steny because he was close to her. There may have been
6 others that I can't remember.

7 Q Yes, ma'am. I appreciate that.

8 Do you recall generally what you and the Speaker and Leader Hoyer discussed?
9 Was it sort of a just checking in to make sure okay status update?

10 A It was to make sure that they were safe. And I also had zero intelligence
11 from the inside. So anything else we needed to know from the inside. And she, as I
12 recall, wanted to know what the holdup was with the Guard, because they had been told
13 a couple of things. I'm pretty sure I talked to Steny, because I remember him saying that
14 he was also reaching out to figure out what was up with the Maryland Guard.

15 Q Understood. So by this point of the day, is it early afternoon, early evening,
16 late evening? I'm just trying to get a sense of timing.

17 A I feel like I probably talked to her earlier, but I don't remember.

18 Q Okay.

19 A Oh, I have a note that says I spoke to her about 3:30.

20 Q Okay. And going back again for a moment to the Governors and your
21 request for their assistance with their National Guard, what was their response, from
22 Virginia and Maryland, to that request?

23 A I think that they were going through their process. I don't think I spoke to
24 the Governor directly in either case, but we -- they were staff-level conversations.

25 Q Okay. So they were -- so they were basically being worked up their chain of

1 command?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Understood. So after these series of phone calls, sort of what else do you
4 recall sort of next in terms of significant activity that you engaged in, in terms of the
5 District of Columbia?

6 A We -- we -- at one point, the -- we also had -- I didn't mention. We reached
7 out on the executive side as well to the White House and our contacts in the White
8 House. At one point, the chief of staff called me back to say that the President had
9 approved the request. Don't ask me what time that was or -- it was -- but it was
10 sometime after, long after those requests.

11 Q Okay. And you mentioned that you reached out to the White House and
12 Chief of Staff Meadows called you.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Did that happen around the same time? Or when you called, did you speak
15 to someone and then Meadows called you back? I'm just trying to get a sense of how
16 the conversation flowed.

17 A Meadows calls me back. He called me back. So I think our first
18 outreaches, I may even have staff calling the White House. I may have called him
19 directly and didn't get him, but he called me back for sure. And that was -- actually I
20 have a note. That was about 2:56 p.m.

21 Q And that was to let you know that the President had approved the request?
22 And I'm assuming that was a request for the National Guard?

23 A That's correct.

24 Q Okay. And any other conversations with anyone else from the White
25 House or White House staff?

1 A Not -- I didn't have any other conversations with the White House.

2 Q Okay.

3 BY [REDACTED]

4 Q I'm sorry, Mayor. Can we just go back to the Meadows call briefly?

5 A Sure.

6 Q Was the call placed by you to inquire about whether the -- about the D.C.
7 National Guard? I'm just -- I just want to know --

8 A We had two urgent requests of the President, the National Guard being one.
9 The second was that he make a statement to get people to leave, to leave the building
10 and to get out of the city, to stop.

11 Q And did you relay that prior to -- if he called you back at 2:56 -- sorry to drill
12 down on the times here.

13 A Yeah, sure.

14 Q If you reached out to him, what time would you estimate in terms if he
15 called you back at 2:56?

16 A I -- if I did, and I'm not sure that I did because a lot was going on, and this
17 was something I dispatched my team members to do, to call everybody that we -- any and
18 everybody that we can get ahold of. It would have been right after that call, the call
19 with the DOD.

20 Q And the conversation when he called you back, was that directly to you or
21 was it to a staffer?

22 A It was directly to me.

23 Q Okay. And what -- were you able to address both of your concerns,
24 meaning the D.C. National Guard and whether --

25 A I feel the President had spoken by then, but I don't remember.

1 Q I think there was a tweet at about 3:30. And there's a statement in the 4 to
2 4:30 range. I think 4:17 --

3 A I feel like he said that he had approved the Guard. I don't remember
4 talking about the statement. So he may have said something like he's going to make a
5 statement.

6 Q And in terms --

7 A He was talking about it. So either it was done or it was about to be done.

8 Q Was it your understanding that he -- that the President had to approve the
9 Guard at that time?

10 A Um --

11 Q Or let me -- or was it did you make that call to Meadows, hoping that it
12 would occur faster, that the D.C. National Guard would arrive quicker if you made that
13 call?

14 A I believed that it was -- it was not in the hands of the DOD alone. So I do
15 believe that there was some White House involvement.

16 Q And do -- and can you explain that a little bit more why you have that belief?

17 A The -- DOD should have been able to turn it around pretty fast. Like, there
18 are people running up the steps of the Capitol.

19 Q I get it.

20 A They should have made that decision in an instant.

21 Q Understood. And then just to close the circle on the statement that he
22 made -- that the former President made, did you watch it in real time or did you learn of
23 it afterwards?

24 A I don't believe I watched it in real time, no.

25 Q Did -- in your -- as you sit here now, even then on January 6th, did you

1 believe it made any impact on the crowd in terms of quelling the violence?

2 A I don't know. I don't know. I don't know, like, if outside did people stop
3 advancing? I'm not sure.

4 Q Okay. And just one more thing, just in terms of the timing. As far as
5 obviously we have timelines from DOD, from Capitol Police, from various organizations.
6 And it -- I think everybody agrees that the -- at 2:30 was the official kind of request by
7 Capitol Police to -- for the D.C. National Guard. There might have been calls between
8 General Walker and Chief Sund before. But as far as that request -- and I think my
9 colleague talked about that 2:30 call with Chief Sund and Chief Contee, or will in a bit.

10 But when you -- when your officers, when MPD arrived prior to the D.C. National
11 Guard obviously, did you -- obviously, you didn't need an invitation from Chief Sund at
12 that point. You said you hadn't spoken to him. Do you typically need an invitation
13 from the Capitol Police for MPD to arrive, to go to the Capitol?

14 A Yes. And I hadn't spoken to him, but Chief Contee had. So he had earlier
15 in that day asked for backup early in the day, around the time that I was leaving one
16 building, I think, and going to the other. I think that was in motion.

17 [REDACTED] I see. Okay. Thank you.

18 [REDACTED] Thank you, [REDACTED]

19 BY [REDACTED]

20 Q All right, ma'am. So -- so sort of moving through the rest of the day. So
21 you've -- by this time, you've made several phone calls. You've spoken with the White
22 House. You've spoken with your own folks. You've spoken with the Speaker. Walk
23 me through sort of how your day concluded in terms of what you did for the District of
24 Columbia that day.

25 A Probably the next big thing, I started to say that the Secretary of the Army

1 showed up. At that point, we were all concerned about a perimeter for the Capitol.
2 Like, what was the ongoing threat? Keep in mind that we still have two bombs and a
3 bomber on the loose.

4 And we had a meeting about setting up a fence with the Secretary of the Army.
5 We had some calls about making sure that the building was now safe for the Members to
6 return. I think part of all of our conversations with the Members, I neglected to
7 mention, was making sure that they knew that everybody's goal was their safe return to
8 the building so that they could finish their business.

9 And so we spent a lot of time probably after that, once everybody was out of the
10 building, making sure that it was safe for them to return. So there was a kind of a big
11 meeting in our MPD headquarters about fencing and the perimeters and a lot of logistical
12 stuff between D.C. National Guard, SecArmy, and members of my administration.

13 We -- let me think. Anything else that stands out. I gave a briefing, a press
14 briefing. I was joined, I think, by the chief, my Homeland Security, Fire and EMS. And I
15 don't think anybody -- anybody else. I'm trying -- and the next day, the Secretary of the
16 Army joined me for a briefing.

17 Q Thank you, ma'am.

18 A I then drove the city. Spoke to some of our officers. Looked at some of
19 the conditions where we thought these insurrectionists were -- still were in the city, and
20 to make sure we had what we needed to keep the city safe.

21 Q Thank you, ma'am. And you said the SecArmy showed up. He showed up
22 at your headquarters?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. And was anyone with him? General Walker? Anyone else join?

25 A I don't think Walker was there. But a number of his team were there, a lot

1 of his team, maybe a dozen people.

2 Q And you also mentioned that you took the opportunity to drive the city to
3 sort of get an assessment of how things were. I understand from public reporting, at
4 some point, you issued a curfew. Do you recall on what time of day that was or when
5 that decision was made?

6 A I issued the curfew early in the day -- or I made the decision pretty early. I
7 think we got it out about 3 for a 6 p.m. curfew, I think.

8 Q Okay. And then after you drove the city sort of for your assessment, sort of
9 what happened next in your day?

10 A I probably went home.

11 Q Makes sense. That was a long day.

12 A Uh-huh.

13 [REDACTED] Okay. Before I move on to sort of the threat landscape and the
14 specific requests for assistance you made to the National Guard, I'll ask [REDACTED] if you
15 have anything else on this topic area before we move on.

16 BY [REDACTED]

17 Q I just wanted to ask about -- I know it was -- was Mr. Meadows the only
18 White House contact you had on January 6th?

19 A Yes. As I recall, yes.

20 Q Do you know if there were or did you make any attempts to contact
21 President Trump directly?

22 A If I did, and I may have, I have a num -- I had the -- a number for his assistant
23 who sat outside of his office. And that would be the only way that I would be able to get to
24 him other than Mr. Meadows.

25 Q Did you -- so you don't know if you made that contact?

1 A I don't remember if -- like, we all kind of scattered. This one made this call.

2 This one made that call. And I don't -- I just don't remember if I made that call.

3 Q As -- as the Mayor of the District --

4 A I didn't talk to them.

5 Q I understand that. As the Mayor of the District, though, did you expect to
6 hear from the President during this period of crisis that the city was going through?

7 A No.

8 Q Why is that?

9 A If I would hear from anybody, it would be from Meadows.

10 Q Okay.

11 A And so --

12 Q And I know we're going to go back and talk about the summer. But is that
13 how the communication was in the summer as well?

14 A A direct -- yes, if I -- if any -- if Meadows was calling me, it was likely because
15 it was something that the President had directed.

16 Q But never directly from the President?

17 A I can't recall anytime the President ever was on the other end of my phone.

18 Q Okay. Thank you.

19 A Like, without -- yeah, I honestly I can't recall a time that that happened.

20 [REDACTED] Okay. Thanks.

21 [REDACTED] Thanks, [REDACTED]

22 BY [REDACTED]

23 Q So, ma'am, now I'm going to switch to the specific written request from
24 Dr. Rodriguez and you on December 31st to the National Guard for assistance.

25 And, first, just so I understand sort of how the logistics work in my head, I have

1 two letters, one from you and Dr. Rodriguez, and then a separate one just from you, both
2 to General Walker. Is that how that process normally works, or how does the written
3 request for assistance sort of work?

4 A HSEMA handles that for me. And I think that is typical that there is kind of
5 a general 30,000-foot, it's like, this is coming. And then there's a more specific followup.

6 Q Okay. Okay.

7 A I believe -- I don't think that's unusual.

8 Q Appreciate that, ma'am.

9 And as you mentioned earlier, the National Guard on the 6th had been deployed
10 prior to the riots breaking out at certain -- at certain places for traffic control, crowd
11 management. And that was the gist of, I think, your request on the 31st. Is that
12 accurate? Do I have that right?

13 A That's -- that's accurate.

14 Q Okay. And what informed your request for the specific -- your specific
15 request for the type of support you needed? I guess what I'm really asking is: What
16 threat information or what factors sort of played a role in your decision about how you
17 were going to craft your specific request to the D.C. National Guard?

18 A I think largely we were informed by events in December where we had some
19 of these white nationalist groups show up in D.C. and vandalize some of our churches,
20 and they were also becoming aggressive with the police. So that was the first time we
21 saw those groups really disrupt and vandalize and were very aggressive with the police.

22 So our thinking was that the National Guard would allow us to have our box, our
23 traffic box to keep people -- or reduce the number of people in the downtown, while
24 making sure MPD could deal with anybody who was going to be violent.

25 Q I see. So the National Guard were going to handle the traffic issues, freeing

1 up MPD to handle more of the police issues?

2 A Exactly.

3 Q And you mentioned that you were informed by events that happened earlier
4 in December. Were you or any of your staff privy to any threat information about how
5 January 6th might play out itself? There's been -- there's a lot of political reporting that
6 there was sort of a lot of social media and other information. I'm wondering if any of
7 that information made its way to you or your office and if it impacted sort of your
8 planning.

9 A Yeah. So it did impact. We had leading up to this a number of, like,
10 briefings, one main one I think right at the end of December where Homeland Security
11 and the police are kind of advising what they see out there and what we need in terms of
12 resources.

13 Q Okay. And was this information information that you and your team
14 gathered? Or was this information provided to you by other partners? Sort of I'm just
15 trying to get a -- I'm really trying to get a sense of what the interagency cooperation was
16 like, if any, prior to January 6th. Like, were there discussions about January 6th, that
17 sort of thing?

18 A Yes. So I think that our -- the first answer is both, that we have a fusion
19 center that collects information, you know, intelligence. I don't know all their tactics,
20 but they're doing scans of what's out there and how it impacts us locally. I think, you
21 know, they participated in a number of calls.

22 Also, MPD participates in a number of regular communications around -- we call
23 them the First Amendment demonstration meetings. So they're always scanning the
24 environment for what the demonstrations are out there for us.

25 And, likewise, I believe that the Capitol Police held a similar call in advance of

1 January 6th, keeping in mind that our focus was -- there was a big permit for The Ellipse
2 that had been approved and then another one over here for I think Freedom Plaza. So
3 that had a lot of our attention.

4 Those -- towards approaching January 6th, those permit requests were upped to a
5 pretty significant number. So that's why you see a lot of the MPD attention are on the
6 D.C. streets to see The Ellipse crowd, possibly a Freedom Plaza crowd as well.

7 Q I appreciate that, ma'am. There was also reporting about an increase in
8 the number of people staying in D.C. hotels and, like, there was an increase in the number
9 of people who were going to be in D.C. Is that information that made its way to you as
10 well? And did you -- was that --

11 A I distinctly --

12 Q -- unusual?

13 A -- remember hearing about an increase in D.C. hotels. Like, kind of the first
14 that we, the big increase, I think somebody called me on the 6th to say that they were
15 seeing like more than usual metro activity, like at kind of the far-out metro stations.

16 Q Okay. Okay. And so going back to the requests themselves, so
17 Dr. Rodriguez --

18 A That's actually something that we would look at, hotels and buses and bus
19 requests to park in our parking lots and things like that.

20 Q Thank you, ma'am.

21 Going back to the requests themselves, walk me through sort of what the process.
22 You make the request and then it goes to whom, and then sort of how does that process
23 play itself out from a 30,000-foot view?

24 A Well, it's changed some. And then we would send our request to the
25 Secretary of the Army.

1 Q Okay. And then from there, it sort of makes its way through the chain of
2 whatever's happening on the DOD side?

3 A From there, my -- my experience would be that the President had delegated
4 his authority to the Secretary of Defense.

5 Q Uh-huh.

6 A And the Secretary of Defense would make the sign -- would do the sign-off.

7 Q So you would make your request to General Walker as the general. As a
8 leader of the National Guard, he would then take that information up his chain. It's
9 already delegated from the President to SecDef. SecDef has a conversation with the
10 Secretary of the Army. And then that's sort of how the process is -- proceeds.

11 A Right. That was the formal process, but we always proceeded as if the
12 Secretary of the Army was doing the sign-off.

13 Q Okay. And is that how you proceeded in this particular instance as well?

14 A We didn't do anything different.

15 Q And I know that we talked earlier in our conversation on the day of about
16 how DOD sort of was not immediate in their response to -- to requests to respond to the
17 Capitol.

18 What -- how would you characterize their response to your written requests?
19 What -- did it sort of fall into the normal line that you're used to? Was there anything
20 unusual about it that stood out to you?

21 A I think in -- and I can't remember if I had this feeling at the time. But in
22 retrospect, the limitations put on the -- the geographic limitations put on our request was
23 interesting.

24 Q And we're going to talk about December in a little bit. But juxtaposing that
25 to the summer, would you consider it, you know, those limitations, sounds like they were

1 unusual compared to what your experience had been in the past? Is that a fair
2 characterization?

3 A I don't recall, and I could be wrong, but I don't recall them putting any
4 geographic limitations on where we could deploy the Guard, nor do I recall such an
5 explicit statement about it -- not being able to change their mission during the mission.

6 Q And did you get a sense or did anyone ever explain to you why these
7 limitations were being put into place and why there had to be specific permission for
8 the -- for their -- for them to be remissioned?

9 A I think we assumed that the Guard had been badly embarrassed in June and
10 that especially I think that they were undergoing their own investigation about the use of
11 their helicopters. And I assumed that they wanted a tighter rein on what the Guard did
12 for that reason. But they had been badly, I think, embarrassed by the events of the
13 previous June.

14 Q Thank you, ma'am.

15 And in terms of operationally -- and, again, I understand I'm asking this from sort
16 of a 30,000-foot executive level -- did you get the sense that those limitations were going
17 to impede MPD's mission? Were they still going to be helpful? Like, in other words,
18 was that going to get in the way of what you needed them to do for MPD?

19 A One of our chiefs would be better to answer this question, but it limited how
20 far we could make our traffic box. So, like, just with the thing that we really wanted
21 them to do, we were limited in how far east we could make our traffic box. So we
22 couldn't get as close to the Capitol as could have been helpful. And I think, my
23 recollection is we had a scenario where we would have had a broader traffic box.

24 Q Okay. So I want to shift gears from that request on the 31st to a letter that
25 you wrote on January 5th --

1 A Uh-huh.

2 Q -- to the Acting Attorney General, to the Secretary of Defense, and to the
3 Secretary of the Army.

4 A Yeah.

5 Q And I guess start with: What prompted you to write this letter?

6 A We had gotten a report that there were some Federal, like, police
7 somewhere in the District like we had had the previous summer and that they were
8 either at the -- at the DOJ or -- and we wanted to reiterate that any forces coming into the
9 District needed to coordinate with us.

10 We'd also -- I'd also been cc'd on a letter from one of the, I think, Senators that
11 was also, I think, to this group, that was reiterating what the new law was, stating that
12 anybody who was Federal police had to be identified.

13 Q Ma'am, did you ultimately get any clarity as to who these police were that
14 were on the street or who they were with or why they were there?

15 A I don't know who they were. I'm pretty sure they were at the Justice
16 Department.

17 Q Okay. And what was the response from the attorney -- Acting Attorney
18 General, SecDef, and SecArmy to your letter?

19 A We never got any response.

20 Q Oh, really?

21 A I would say -- I take that back. We got a response from -- he's not even on
22 this letter. The -- is it -- there was a Homeland Security Director who left abruptly. I'm
23 not remembering his name now.

24 Q The Homeland -- the DHS Homeland Security Director?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Chad Wolf?

2 A Chad Wolf.

3 So Chad Wolf, I think, responded to my letter, you know, many weeks later, the
4 day he resigned. But we had no indication that anybody received the letter or certainly
5 changed anything because of the letter.

6 Q I see. And you said former Secretary Wolf's response came days after you
7 sent this letter. Do I have that right?

8 A I don't remember when it came. But it was -- I feel like it came the day he
9 resigned, whatever day that was.

10 Q And do you recall what the gist of his response was to you?

11 A I can't. Just like I received your letter, this, that, the other.

12 Q Okay. Prior to the 6th itself -- and I know we've spoken with Chief Contee
13 and some others in Metropolitan Police Department. I know that they were involved in
14 a number of interagency inter-department calls, as you mentioned, sort of the First
15 Amendment type calls --

16 A Uh-huh.

17 Q -- prior to the 6th. Were any of those at your level that you were
18 specifically involved in or was it just folks from your team?

19 A Yes, folks from my team.

20 [REDACTED] Okay. Okay. [REDACTED] any -- any questions about the request
21 themselves before I move on to the next topic area?

22 BY [REDACTED]

23 Q I just have a question about that January 5th letter and how it's kind of been
24 spun in the press as that it was a -- that the D.C. government was not requesting or
25 almost dismissing help from the -- from DOJ and DHS, whereas the letter essentially asked

1 for the Federal agencies to coordinate with the D.C. government.

2 A Correct.

3 Q Do you want to add anything to that to clear that discrepancy up?

4 A No. I reread it today. And, one, it states very plainly: To avoid
5 confusion, we ask that any request for additional assistance be coordinated using the
6 same process and procedures.

7 And so that's -- that's what we wanted to make clear.

8 Any additional deployment without immediate notification to and consultation
9 with MPD if such plans are underway.

10 So we wanted to make very clear that we couldn't have unidentified folks that
11 were doing anything in the city, but a consultation with MPD was what was appropriate.

12 Q And just to compare that with the summer, was that -- was there a lack of
13 coordination and notice to the D.C. government about the use of Federal agents on D.C.
14 streets?

15 A It's hard to, like, compare the incidents, because it was such a blatant abuse
16 of, I think, United States Army, you know, our mutual assistance agreements, the D.C.
17 National Guard, you name it.

18 Q And when you look back on that, at the time, were you aware of who was
19 leading that effort in terms of the summer posture, what -- if there was one agency in
20 charge?

21 A Oh, I think it was the attorney general.

22 Q Do you -- why? Why do you believe it was AG Barr at the time?

23 A Any kind of outreach to the D.C. gov -- D.C. police, it was coming through AG
24 Barr.

25 Q To get to the D.C. police, you went to through AG Barr? Is that --

1 A No. Any outreach from them to us --

2 Q Oh, sorry. Okay.

3 A -- it was through AG Barr to MPD

4 Q Was that unusual, in your experience, for the attorney general to be that
5 involved in civil disturbance protests?

6 A I don't know that I have anything to liken it to. But he seemed to be, like,
7 the chief law enforcement officer for the President. So whoever it was, whether it was
8 National Guard, whether it was, you know, mutual assistance, he was on point for that.

9 Q Was there -- was there a point of contact under him or was it the AG
10 himself?

11 A I think it was the AG himself. And, strangely, you might find it strange, but I
12 think the fact that he wasn't there on January the 6th was also -- it was problematic,
13 because I think he would have had a little bit more control over some of the situation.

14 Q Well, let me -- sorry, [REDACTED].

15 Let me unpack that as well. So one of the inquiries of the committee is kind of
16 the narrative between DOD versus -- I shouldn't say versus -- between DOD and DOJ
17 about a lead Federal agency in charge. And it seems that during the summer, it was
18 clear that AG Barr, DOJ was in charge of that coordination.

19 Was there a lead for January 6th? And to your point that you made, would there
20 have been a benefit to having a lead?

21 A I think -- and this is how I sum it up. I sum it up as a -- a particular
22 vulnerability at a time of transition and because Barr had gone. And a lot of the people
23 in charge, they were there, but they were checked out. And none of them really had the
24 kind of institutional knowledge to deal with, you know, frankly, somebody who is so
25 unpredictable that the average, rational person can't believe how he would act. But

1 Barr did know how he acted.

2 So I -- I -- I see this as a particular point of vulnerability. While, you know, I think
3 that Barr was leading the charge against some pretty outrageous conduct in the summer,
4 he -- I think he also had the ability to push back on the President.

5 Q Did you have knowledge of that directly from your position as the mayor or
6 from --

7 A Knowledge of what?

8 Q Of pushing back on the President from -- by the AG at the time during the
9 summer.

10 A I will say I saw -- I saw them back off of some of their positions after
11 conversations that I had with Barr. So I think that he was effective in doing that.

12 Q And that was lacking on January 6th?

13 A I -- I just -- um, I don't -- I don't -- I don't know who -- the only people that I
14 know that could have gotten any faster action would be the -- would have been the chief
15 of staff. I don't think we ever heard from the acting attorney general in any case.

16 [REDACTED] Okay. [REDACTED] I'll turn it back to you.

17 I might come back to that, Mayor Bowser.

18 Mayor Bowser. Okay.

19 [REDACTED] Sorry. Did we lose [REDACTED] here?

20 I guess, you know, to keep this going, we'll just talk about some of the events that
21 happened during the summer.

22 Or, [REDACTED] are you taking over now?

23 [REDACTED] If you don't want to go to the summer, I have some -- oh, it looks
24 like [REDACTED] back.

25 [REDACTED] Okay.

1 [REDACTED] Sorry. I just stepped out for a moment.

2 If we can, let's talk about the summer next. And then, [REDACTED] we'll have you sort
3 of jump in with the concluding questions, if that's okay.

4 [REDACTED] Perfect.

5 [REDACTED] All right. Thank you so much.

6 Apologies. I just had to step away for a quick break.

7 BY [REDACTED]

8 Q So, ma'am, let's talk about the summer of 2020 specifically. And earlier in
9 our conversation, I understand that sort of what happened and how the summer of 2020
10 played out impacted sort of how you all approached working with the National Guard in
11 particular before January 6th.

12 Sort of walk me through from your perspective. I guess I'm really interested in
13 two buckets of questions. One, what went wrong in 2020? And, two, compared to the
14 support that was offered in 2020 to the support that you got from the National Guard for
15 January 6th, how is it different?

1

2 [1:51 p.m.]

3 Mayor Bowser. What went wrong with the National Guard in 2020?

4

BY [REDACTED]

5

6 Q With the National Guard, with sort of, everything -- I am interested in
7 actually everything from your perspective about what went wrong in the summer of
8 2020. Because I think all of it is informative, globally, in terms of our global view of
9 January 6th.

10

11 A I think that the President used not just the National Guard, but he used
12 Guards from other places -- the D.C. National Guard, other Guards, other parts of the
13 Army, other parts of our normal regional infrastructure to make a national point and to
14 use the District as just a way to do it. And he could in the District because he is in
15 control of the D.C. National Guard.

16

17 Q And for January 6th, you made a specific request for assistance. Was there
18 a similar request for assistance in the summer of 2020? How did the D.C. National
19 Guard come to be involved, I guess, during the summer of 2020?

20

21 A You know, I don't remember if we had a specific Guard request. We
22 probably did at some point. I don't think we did initially. But I will have to check that
23 following the George Floyd murder.

24

25 Q Okay. And assuming that there was, it would have sort of followed the
same process as you laid out for me in January 6th, in other words, a request from Dr.
Rodriguez or his office? And that sort of would have been the process that was used, or
was there a different process in place?

26

27 A That would be the process.

28

29 Q Okay. And do you recall if there was anything -- let me ask it this way. So

1 for January 6th, we have talked about how it was unusual and it impacted your ability to
2 draw your box or expand your box, given the level of involvement DOD had in sort of the
3 minutia of where people could be and what they could do.

4 A Right.

5 Q Was there a level of involvement present, do you recall, in 2020? In other
6 words, was DOD sort of directing, excuse me, in what I will call the tactical level during
7 the summer of 2020 like they did on January 6th?

8 A Now, you're testing my memory. So I believe at one point, we requested,
9 or either it could have been the Park Service requested Guard support at Lafayette
10 Square. If we requested Guard support, it would have been for traffic operations. So
11 D.C. Guard was deployed in the summer, I am pretty sure, but I think it was a National
12 Park Service request.

13 Q I see. So the request would have come from the National Park Service, not
14 necessarily from your office?

15 A From my office. Now, we may have had an additional request, and we had
16 an ongoing request for COVID support.

17 Q Okay.

18 A I forgot that.

19 Q Yes, so we are all still living with COVID.

20 A Right.

21 Q So it sounds like you already had made a request for COVID, you may have
22 had a supplemental request with the Park Police. But it sounds like in terms of the bulk
23 of the support in the summer of 2020, that that might have been linked to the Park
24 Service request. Does that sound right?

25 A That may be. It could have been us or Park Service. But we had Guard

1 out at Lafayette Square for sure. I just don't member if we made the request.

2 Q And with respect to the summer of 2020, comparing it to January 6th, we
3 talked about how you had meetings with the Secretary of the Army and with General
4 Walker, sort of as things played out. Any sort of comparable meetings or discussions
5 with respect to summer of 2020?

6 In other words, about what they were doing, and how they were doing it? And,
7 actually, I understand completely sort of where they went off the rails. I guess, I am
8 wondering was there any coordination like there was on January 6th during the summer
9 with you or people from your staff and Sec Army, or Sec Def or General Walker?

10 A Not that I recall.

11 Q Okay. And explain to me a little more, what, specifically, about the
12 experience in summer of 2020 influenced your decision about how you were going to
13 request help for January 6th?

14 A I don't know that I make the same connection --

15 Q Okay.

16 A -- that your question leads to. I mean, the biggest link is Trump.

17 Q So, in your mind, and not necessarily apples to apples, right; that January 6th
18 is different than the summer of 2020?

19 A For sure.

20 Q Okay. Okay. And maybe I misunderstood, but I thought you said that
21 part of what informed your decision for request in January was the summer of 2020. I
22 guess, I am trying to understand what you meant by that unless I misunderstood that.

23 A I say it was December of 2020.

24 Q Oh, that's right. You said December of 2020. My apologies.

25 A In December, I don't remember what the occasion was, but we had a flurry

1 of these White nationalist groups come in and vandalize, they vandalized some of our
2 churches; Proud Boys, so-called Proud Boys, and the like. So we had a lot of, like, just
3 kind of street antagonism and violence.

4 Q Understood. And so the antagonism, the violence, the vandalism from
5 earlier in December of 2020 is what impacted the request to increase the perimeters so
6 the MPD could be freed up to do more law enforcement activity and not have to worry
7 about traffic control and crowd management issues?

8 A Right. But also allow us to keep fewer people in the downtown in what had
9 become like a protest area.

10 Q One of the things that we've heard in talking with folks is that there was a
11 difference -- and I am moving away from the summer and sort of focusing on the 2020,
12 December 2020 timeframe -- was the crowds themselves in previous protests seemed to
13 be law enforcement-friendly. But for January 6th, they were antagonistic towards law
14 enforcement?

15 A What protests are you talking about that were law enforcement-friendly?

16 Q For example, the Proud Boys and some of the other White nationalist
17 groups. One of the things that we have heard from Capitol Police and others, when we
18 were exploring the question of, well, why did the attack on the Capitol itself catch you off
19 Guard; why did people break in the perimeter catch you off Guard? One of the things
20 they said to us was, well, these groups, notwithstanding their White supremacist
21 agendas, were friendly towards law enforcement. Right? They did not attack law
22 enforcement. They were not antagonistic to law enforcement. And so when
23 January 6th happened, we thought it was going to be the same, and it wasn't. And I was
24 just wondering if you heard about that or sort of had any thoughts about that?

25 A I did hear that. And I think actually that informed a lot of the kind of the

1 intelligence failures. Because people thought they were friendly to law enforcement
2 and that they loved their country. I think our experience with them in December
3 showed us that they were antagonistic to law enforcement.

4 Q And you say intelligence failures. What do you view the intelligence
5 failures to be and who --

6 A That people didn't think that these White nationalist would overthrow the
7 Capitol building.

8 Q Uh-huh. And do you think that that's an intelligence failure that was
9 shared by everyone, by certain groups, or did everyone sort of suffer from that same false
10 assumption?

11 A I think that the impact was felt differently, depending on the entity --

12 Q Okay.

13 A -- that you're responsible for.

14 Q Okay. Well, I think that's all the questions I have about the summer of
15 2020, ma'am.

16 A Okay.

17 [REDACTED] I will first ask, [REDACTED] Do you have any additional questions on
18 summer of 2020 before we turn it over to [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED] Yes.

20 BY [REDACTED]

21 Q I just wanted to get a sense of kind of the timeline. So if it's the end of May
22 with George Floyd's murder, and the protests started beginning around end of May into
23 June. And, obviously, there was a D.C. National Guard presence for a number of weeks
24 through the summer. When those inflexion points were?

25 And if there was a perception of aggressive postures, who did you have

1 conversations with to kind of understood what was happening and how to kind of change
2 what was going on within the city?

3 And we can take it from June 1st on or whatever. Obviously, June 1st is at
4 Lafayette Square?

5 A I don't have those dates in front of me. If you have a specific question, I'll
6 try to recall.

7 Q I guess the June 1st incident at Lafayette Square would --

8 A Just clearing the -- okay.

9 Q Correct. Did you have any conversations with anyone within Federal
10 agencies about that incident prior to any knowledge that he would be doing that or
11 afterwards because of the criticism that occurred?

12 A If I recall correctly, this threat from the White House to federalize the D.C.
13 police happened that day, if I recall. Or 2 days before, something like that. So that our
14 experience happened like the -- even though it started the weekend before -- when the
15 President started making like really violent, racist statements.

16 Something happened on the other side of the White House, and there was a
17 scuffle between the Secret Service. And he accused MPD of not protecting. It started
18 like days before, and it just ramped up and up from there. So your question was --

19 Q Go ahead.

20 A -- who did we talk to to get them out of the city?

21 Q If there was such a conversation.

22 A Oh --

23 Q Or just to voice your concerns about the rhetoric that was coming. What's
24 the avenue to kind of remedy the situation for --

25 A I believe we had a President who talked via Twitter, and that's how we

1 talked to him.

2 Q Can you give an example, sorry?

3 A I can't like off the top of my head. But we had a lot of demands. I did a
4 lot of press. We talked to, you know, the agency directors. Probably Barr is the one
5 that we talked to. I'm not sure how soon after all of these. It wasn't right in the heat
6 of these events, but I did talk to him afterward.

7 Q Did you speak to anyone within DOD, do you remember?

8 A I wouldn't have, no.

9 Q And did you feel that the AG was listening to you heeding your concerns and
10 able to push back on the White House posture in some form?

11 A I do feel like he didn't agree with threats to overtake MPD. But I don't
12 necessarily think that the others agreed with it either, but they were saying so.

13 Q In the White House attempt to federalize the MPD, did that come through a
14 tweet or a document or a request? How did that get relayed to the D.C. Government?

15 A Meadows called me, and I think Barr called Chief Newsham.

16 Q Do you remember that conversation with Meadows?

17 A Oh, yes, I do.

18 Q Could you describe it?

19 A I actually think it happened first that Barr called Newsham, and Newsham
20 called me. And I gathered my team. And I was at home. I was getting out of my car
21 to go into the house, and I am stopped literally in my driveway taking this call from the
22 chief. And I got back in the car. I told the team we would all meet down at City Hall.
23 And I had to make a call to our counsel, our attorney general for the district all because
24 this is a real kind of threat to our governance.

25 And then I get in the car to come down, and that's when I got a call from Barr. I

1 stopped at one of my team's homes who was close by so that could get on this call
2 together. And we had that call. The general counsel, I believe, was on the call,
3 Cipollone is his name.

4 Q Uh-huh. Okay.

5 A And we just had that conversation.

6 Q So in the conversation, you're obviously saying, you as the Mayor do not
7 want this to happen?

8 A Yes. I'm telling them it would be a complete disaster; we're going to lose
9 the city. I was concerned that we would have a riot in the district. I mean, a real one.
10 A real riot.

11 Q And who was speaking on behalf of the White House?

12 A Meadows.

13 Q And what was his response?

14 A His basic tenor was that this was going to happen; there was nothing I could
15 do about it. And, legally, the law, our home rule charter permits it. And I wasn't
16 looking at our home rule charter. Keep in mind, I took this call about to get it, you
17 know, walking into my house from the driveway. And so I am literally -- you know, it
18 was a pretty heated conversation about how we weren't going to let that happen; it was
19 going to be a disaster; we're going to push back; they can't do it. And what is it that
20 they wanted anyway?

21 Q Which is my next question, what was the answer?

22 A They didn't want protests outside of the White House.

23 Q Did you find that to be credible in terms of that would be the need to
24 federalize the MPD, considering they have Secret Service and other Federal agencies?

25 A Well, that would be kind of a push for them to police local laws. And all of

1 it was bad, like for them. The protests were on D.C. streets. These were peaceful
2 protestors. Now, part of the problem is we had some violence. Like, it's true. We
3 had some violence, we had looting, and we some bad actors in the crowd. But I think,
4 ultimately, the President didn't want any of these protests happening in any American
5 city. And the place where he could stop it was D.C.

6 Q Do you remember if Mr. Cipollone voiced any opinion during that call?

7 A I don't. Actually, I don't remember him saying much.

8 Q Do you remember if AG Barr was in agreement with you or offered an
9 opinion at all during the call?

10 A He wasn't on the call. It was Cipollone and Meadows.

11 Q And then I think you said you called Barr after that? Is that right? After
12 that?

13 A I don't think I spoke with Barr. I had the chief speak with Barr.

14 Q Ultimately, though, the MPD was not federalized?

15 A The MPD was not federalized.

16 Q And do you know why?

17 A I think it was a real threat. Like, I don't think it was an empty threat, but I
18 also think that they recognized that we were not going to just like roll over for it; it was
19 going to be a big fight against the district; and it wasn't going to be good for the city or for
20 them. So I think they realized that. I think they also knew that we weren't a city that
21 was going to allow lawlessness. So we would get control of our streets.

22 Q And then just, finally, when you said that this action of federalizing the MPD
23 would have been a threat to the government, could you just expand on that and explain
24 what you mean. I assume you mean the abuse of power that it would be, but if you
25 could explain it a little bit more.

1 A Well, we already live with the offense of limited home rule, despite being
2 taxpaying Americans. And for this President, especially, to trample on that, we could
3 not abide that.

4 Q And, obviously, the uniqueness of the district understood, was it also in your
5 mind, unusual and problematic, that the Commander in Chief would be trying to direct a
6 local police department whether -- I mean, anywhere even beyond the district?

7 A Would it what?

8 Q Did you see it as problematic that the Commander in Chief was ultimately
9 trying to control a local police department?

10 A No, I see it -- you know, we live with this, you know, offense on a daily basis.
11 And even though this provision is in the home rule charter that the President can
12 federalize the MPD harkens to an ugly segregationist past of the district. It really does.
13 Everything balled up in this is bad for our democracy and is bad for our self-governance.

14 ██████████ Okay. Thank you.

15 ██████████ Thank you, ██████████

16 So, ma'am, I am going to turn the table over next to my colleague, ██████████ who I
17 think has some questions, a little more questioning on the intelligence piece. So, ██████████

18 ██████████ Thank you, ██████████

19 BY ██████████

20 Q Good afternoon, Mayor.

21 A Hi.

22 Q Thank you so much for joining us. I wanted to ask you, go back a little bit
23 to the December 30th briefing, before your December 31st letter, requesting the D.C.
24 National Guard. And so you spoke with Dr. Chris Rodriguez out of HSEMA who briefed
25 you on sort of what he was seeing, what him and his team and also the intelligence from

1 MPD were seeing.

2 And one thing his sort of briefing notes had, it said, quote, there is greater
3 negative sentiment motivating conversation in the last two events in November and
4 December 2020. Those being the November 14th first MAGA march, and the December
5 12th second MAGA march, which I believe you were alluding to earlier that, you know,
6 your city had some issues with folks coming in and protesting and creating trouble.

7 I wanted to get from you if that was your feeling, if that was your sense from the
8 briefing and from what you had been seeing that January 6th was going to be different in
9 kind; that you were going to see there was a level of violence or animosity or concern for
10 January 6th, than even the previous two MAGA marches in D.C., which, of course, had
11 some violence, particularly, between counter protesters. Was that something that you
12 thought yourself?

13 A I thought myself that there would be more of them. I think that we
14 thought that the number of them would be more as evidenced by the permit application.

15 Q Okay. And there is some reporting in the Washington -- there's a
16 Washington Post article that talks about how Donell Harvin had a ventic (ph) seeing things
17 that were concerning to him; ran it up the chain to Dr. Christopher Rodriguez; Dr.
18 Rodriguez got together with Chief Contee. And in that briefing is sort of when they
19 presented to you all that they were seeing in terms of January 6th.

20 I guess I'm trying to get a sense from you, was that surprising to you, that briefing?
21 Was there a sense of urgency and newness to the information they were presenting to
22 you? Or had you sort of heard those things leading up to that briefing; was it nothing
23 too surprising or new to you?

24 A I wouldn't say that there was anything surprising about it. I think that it
25 was a briefing that I get from my public safety officials any time there is kind of a

1 large-scale event that we need to plan for and support our federal agencies, in particular.

2 So I don't think that it was anything surprising. I think the thing that we were
3 concerned about was Trump.

4 Q Okay. Tell me about that, what do you mean?

5 A I mean, I think that probably the only difference was that the President had
6 sent the tweet, and that was something to make sure that we were watching for with the
7 numbers.

8 Q And so was it your understanding that sort of December tweet in which, you
9 know, be there, D.C., it's going to be wild. Did that concern you? And did you
10 see -- did you or your team -- did they brief you about either a rise in either violent
11 rhetoric or maybe it's just the numbers, what about that tweet made you apprehensive?

12 A I just think that my experience, and you want to talk about June, was that
13 the President could be, you know, could be unpredictable. And that is what was the
14 thing that made it different, in my view, than the previous two MAGA marches.

15 Q Okay. The notes from Dr. Rodriguez as to what he briefed, you also said,
16 quote, others are calling to peacefully storm the Capitol and occupy the building to halt
17 the vote. Not sure what "peaceful" means, but they are calling to occupy the building.

18 If you recall that sort of line, that sort of piece of intelligence, what did you make
19 of that?

20 A I am not sure I recall that, specifically.

21 Q Okay. The Washington Post, an excerpt from one their stories also
22 reported -- and you tell me if you agree with this; if this is correct; if it's accurate or
23 inaccurate. It said that yourself, Mayor Bowser, was concerned, quote -- or excuse me.
24 Mayor Bowser was, quote, reluctant to request the National Guard concerned that the
25 troops could be given orders by the President and abandoned their posts.

1 A That's not true.

2 Q Stripping the reluctance part out of it, did you have any concerns that the
3 President might attempt to use the National Guard for his ultimate aim, his ultimate goal,
4 which was to stop the certification of the election?

5 A I actually never had that concern. I think the National Guard had that
6 concern, or the DOD had that concern. I actually never had that concern.

7 Q Can you tell me how you know? Go ahead, I am sorry.

8 A If that was my concern, I would not have made a request for the Guard.

9 Q Okay. And was that just not your concern because you didn't think the
10 President, it was something he was capable of doing, or you didn't think it was something
11 that would ultimately be successful even if he attempted?

12 A I did not think that the President would -- I don't even think I got that far in
13 thinking about it. But did I think that the President would try to use the United States
14 Army to storm the Capitol? No.

15 Q You mentioned that that might have or you actually speculated that it was a
16 concern either for DOD officials or for the National Guard. Can you tell us why? Did
17 you overhear any conversations or reluctance on their part?

18 A That is a complete speculation on my part trying to understand why they
19 would have limited the geography of where the Guard could stand. And I know the year
20 that they had with especially the use of the helicopters and how they misused their
21 resources on everyday Americans. So I know the year that they had. So if there was
22 any trepidation on how close the Guard could get to the Capitol, it wasn't ours; it was
23 theirs.

24 Q And so I think I know where you are -- go ahead. I am sorry.

25 A Or above them. I don't know. But I had no reluctance in using the Guard,

1 or any other resources. So when we get this briefing, I rely on my public safety officials
2 to tell me what they need and based on everything that they have. They tell me what
3 they need, and my job is to get it for them. And they got everything that they asked for.

4 Q And so I think I know the answer to this, but I'll ask it explicitly too, then.
5 That that sort of, you know, what you call an embarrassment, how maybe the National
6 Guard felt, that they felt embarrassed over the course of the summer of 2020, you know,
7 a low-flying helicopter, that perceived embarrassment, that played no role in your
8 request for the D.C. National Guard?

9 A It played no role. I mean, otherwise, I wouldn't have requested them.
10 And I requested them in the way that they could best help us, and that's to set up that
11 traffic box, keep people out so that MPD could deal with any violence.

12 Q Did you feel confident that, you know, those sorts of embarrassments from
13 the summer, that either those issues had been taken care of, that they wouldn't happen
14 again? What was your view, just generally, about that?

15 A Well, some of our issues with the Guard -- and we had some that you
16 probably don't know about is that we needed them to show up and be where they were
17 supposed to be. And we had that issue in the summer. And that was a concern. If
18 we are relying on you to man the box and you're not there, then that stretches our MPD
19 resources so we can't deal with the violence. So we're sometimes concerned that they
20 didn't show up exactly the way we needed them to show up.

21 Q Let me pull on that thread a little bit. Dr. Christopher Rodriguez told there
22 were instances over the summer, that looking back at the quote unquote delay of the
23 National Guard being deployed, that he thought were sort of precursors. Because there
24 were times when requests were made for the D.C. National Guard and the response was
25 slow; slow in either as you said showing up. What do you think about that sort of

1 connection? Did you see those sorts of issues over the summer that may help explain
2 potentially why there was some delay in them responding on January 6th?

3 A Delay in them responding on January 6th. I don't think that the fastest
4 deployment that they could have had on January 6th were the guardsmen who were
5 already on the street. And they could have responded. The other guardsmen, it would
6 have taken them a little bit longer to get going. But they could have moved,
7 immediately, the guards that were already on D.C. streets.

8 Q And these are the guardsmen who are assisting the traffic control points --

9 A That's correct.

10 Q -- and as opposed to the QRF, Quick Reaction Force?

11 A Correct. For example, if they were under my command, they would have
12 been there as soon as MPD was there.

13 Q Right. So I guess my question then is, you said that with that trouble you
14 had over the summer and the guardsmen not appearing sometimes when the request is
15 made, did you have concerns about that? Let's say, putting aside what actually
16 happened on January 6th, did you have concerns about that leading up to January 6th
17 that that might happen again?

18 A I don't -- I think that our staff level conversation suggested that we would be
19 okay with that. But it was always given that they're not under my command, and I can't
20 hold them accountable. It's always a concern. It was a concern before the summer of
21 2020.

22 Q Uh-huh.

23 A It's a problem for us.

24 Q And is that just institutional? Is that just because of the chain of command
25 being what it is in terms of mobilizing the National Guard? Or do you feel that there

1 was a personnel issue all the way up to if it's true Donald Trump, President Trump -- what
2 do you think was creating that problem?

3 A I think it's leadership.

4 Q I am sorry. Do you mean leadership in the executive branch, leadership in
5 the National Guard itself?

6 A I don't know exactly where the problems are, but when all of my teams -- I
7 always look to the leader making sure that the troops have what they need in terms of
8 training and materials and supplies, and it's very clear that they can meet the mission.

9 Now, it is -- they have an accountability problem because of the kind of -- they
10 don't really have a boss. And I think that the other guards, they're real clear on who
11 they work for.

12 Q I want to ask, you know, the briefings of December 30th and then, of course,
13 the letter requesting assistance in December 31st. The Washington Post characterized it
14 as quote, a narrow request to the Pentagon for troops to assist with mostly traffic
15 control. Do you agree or disagree with that characterization that the request was
16 narrow?

17 A The request speaks for itself. It is to assist with the mission that we
18 outlined to assist us with traffic ops, Metro, so that MPD can focus on violent criminals.

19 Q Okay. Well, so the answer may be obvious. And we've heard from other
20 witnesses. But I would like you to explain, if you could to me. So why not request that
21 the National Guard assist with civil disturbance as opposed to just traffic control?

22 A Our experience is that that's best for law enforcement.

23 Q Can you flesh that out a little bit more? Why is it better for civilian
24 disturbance to be left to law enforcement as opposed to National guardsmen? Is there
25 a difference in training in your mind? What's the reason?

1 A Well, there's absolutely a difference in training. And I don't know any law
2 enforcement person who would suggest that urban disturbances aren't best handled by
3 the police.

4 Q What was in -- and maybe you didn't have an expectation -- but what was
5 your expectation of other departments like Capitol Police or Park Police asking the
6 National Guard for assistance with civil disturbance?

7 A I think there was a statement that Sund made early on that I think
8 characterized their whole preparation for the event. And it was something to the effect
9 that we were prepared for a demonstration and what we got was a riot. And I think that
10 just characterized how they approached it.

11 I also did an update on the Monday -- I think this was a Wednesday; 6th was a
12 Wednesday. And on Monday, I had just my regular press briefing, and I invited the
13 Capitol Police, the Metro Police, MPD, our police, and the Park Service Police. And they
14 all came. And then the Capitol Police person who was there to speak got pulled out of
15 the press conference. And I just -- that should have been like a trigger to me. Like
16 these people, they don't want to answer questions about their preparation.

17 We had like a little pre-meet, and I asked them something like, you know, where
18 does your perimeter start? He gets up out of the room, calls somebody. And the next
19 thing I know he can't participate in the press conference. So that, like, it just kind of
20 should have been a trigger that they just approached it differently.

21 Q And to that point, you know, if National Guard were going to be used for civil
22 disturbance, did that make sense, given the intelligence you were seeing, that it would be
23 at the Ellipse with the Park Police; that would be at the Capitol with the Capitol Police?
24 Is it fair to say that civil disturbance wasn't what MP -- or your city, the city of District of
25 Columbia, outside of the Federal jurisdiction that other police departments are on top of,

1 that that wasn't your need, but it may have very well been the need of other agencies
2 who would have been the ones to make that request?

3 A Yes. I think certainly in retrospect everybody would say -- and I don't even
4 think it would be Guard necessarily but a fence that would have been the most helpful for
5 them.

6 Q Did you at all ever speak to, like, Chief Sund in the lead-up to January 6th
7 about either whether he was contemplating taking it to the police, Capitol Police Board
8 request of the D.C. National Guard for assistance?

9 A I wouldn't have, but I think that the chief did.

10 Q And you mean Chief Contee of the Metropolitan Police Department?

11 A Chief Contee.

12 Q What was your understanding of how quickly the main units, the National
13 guardsmen who were at the traffic control points, or even the Quick Reaction Force could
14 be repurposed and remissioned in the event of an emergency? Obviously, there is that
15 January 5th or letter that had some restrictions that you talked about in terms of a
16 change of mission. Even with that letter, what was your expectation going in that if an
17 emergency happened, these people could be remissioned, repurposed for a different --

18 A Which letter are you referring to?

19 Q And I may be saying the wrong date. I am sorry. What you referred to in
20 terms of the DOD and Secretary of the Army. It may have been actually Secretary Miller
21 who wrote the letter, saying that any change in mission would have to go through the
22 department and would have to be signed off by the Secretary of Defense?

23 A Okay. That must have -- yes. I don't have that one in front of me. So
24 what was -- can you give me that question again?

25 Q Right. And even with any sort of limitations on and how you have to get

1 approval for a change in mission, what was your understanding of how quickly
2 guardsmen, either at the main units at the traffic control points or the Quick Reaction
3 Force could be repurposed and remissioned in the case of an emergency?

4 A I don't think I knew that going into it. I don't recall anybody ever telling me
5 that. I feel like during the course of all of these discussions, however, I was told a
6 number of times that they had to regroup, go to the armory, and then come back.

7 Q And when you mean these discussions, you mean after January 6th looking
8 back?

9 A Or during January. It could -- during January 6th or in post discussions.
10 I'm not sure. But I'm pretty sure I didn't know that going into the day.

11 Q Okay. So when --

12 A I would assume --

13 Q Go ahead.

14 A I got to tell you, I would have assumed just like MPD could drop their patrol
15 and go, that they would have been able to do the same thing. I think it was news to me
16 that they would have to go back to the armory and then come to the scene.

17 Q And did you have any understanding of maybe the people of the traffic
18 control points, whether they had the batons or whatever proper equipment would be
19 needed for civil disturbance?

20 A I didn't know that.

21 Q Okay. But certainly it seems to me that in your letter requesting what you
22 requested, being what was advised to you that the city of D.C. needed, traffic control
23 support. So that, freeing up law enforcement to do law enforcement things. You
24 certainly didn't feel in making that request, that that inhibited your ability to maybe
25 amplify the request -- and let's say in the case of an emergency, obviously, the emergency

1 did not take place on D.C. streets -- but if they had, is it fair to say you felt you could
2 always go back and re-enlarge the mission if contingencies required it?

3 A Absolutely.

4 Q Chief Contee told us that Secretary McCarthy gave him a call after the
5 December 31st request over the weekend.

6 A Uh-huh.

7 Q Speaking to him a little bit about some of his reluctance, asking can we think
8 of another option, perhaps he suggested Federal law enforcement, which, of course, you
9 now today mentioned that was a concern, at least wanting to make sure that if there was
10 going to be Federal law enforcement, that they were identified, and that, of course, you
11 and Metropolitan Police Department knew about it.

12 But Chief Contee went on to say that that conversation was -- you know, he said
13 that they didn't think it was going to be good to have boots on the ground at the Capitol.
14 So on and so forth.

15 Had you yourself had any conversations with Secretary McCarthy in which he
16 conveyed reluctance about sending the National Guard to your request to do traffic
17 control points?

18 A Not that I recall.

19 Q Okay. And so when it was ultimately approved, there was nothing in
20 between; there was not even a delay or any sort of -- anything communicated to you that
21 there was some reluctance to even fulfill that request?

22 A Well, I feel like it took a few days. I don't remember exactly when it was
23 approved. But if we made the request on the 31st, and it was a holiday, but you know,
24 people -- these are jobs where people work over the holidays. And so I feel like it -- I
25 don't remember when it came in, but I do think it took a few days.

1 Q And do you mention that because you recall that standing out to you that it
2 was unusual that it took that long?

3 A It takes a few days. Again, I won't go back to my soap box. But it
4 shouldn't take that long. We should be able to -- because this is time where these
5 soldiers or the guardsmen and women could be mobilizing, getting themselves together,
6 getting there. So it took longer than I think it needed to.

7 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] if I can just jump in and ask a question.

8 [REDACTED] Yes, please.

9 BY [REDACTED]

10 Q Mayor Bowser, you mentioned earlier about your assumptions about what
11 was going on within DOD, whether it's the criticism about the June 1st Lafayette Square
12 incident or the low-flying helicopters. And that assumption is probably correct. DOD's
13 acknowledged that there was lessons learned, as they couched them, from the summer
14 and how it impacted their guidelines for the D.C. National Guard. Are you familiar with
15 some of those statements DOD has put out?

16 A Generally, I guess.

17 Q Generally, yeah. I mean, they're somewhat acknowledging what happened
18 during the summer and how --

19 A Yeah.

20 Q Using my words, it's an overcorrection. I'm just curious of understanding
21 kind of their big picture, what you think they could -- again I understand you are not in
22 DOD -- but can you understand that they weren't able to pivot quickly, as Chief Contee
23 said? And what could have helped with that; if there had been better communication,
24 or prepositioning, what might have made a difference there?

25 A I actually think you have to step back, because I think part of the issue -- and

1 I may have already mentioned it -- is we have a kind of an executive branch, legislative
2 branch issue that we haven't really discussed. And I actually -- the thing that would
3 have made the biggest difference for the National Guard is to say, hey, United States
4 Capitol, we can help you; we can help you get a fence. You know we can -- that
5 conversation didn't happen because I think you have the legislative branch over here who
6 is used to running their complex. And the only time that doesn't happen is when there
7 is a special security event, and there is one command where all of the resources of the
8 United States are brought to bear no matter whose yard it is.

9 And so I think that one of the big takeaways that I have, and I have said it over and
10 over, is any joint session of Congress has to be a National Special Security Event. They
11 work. And so now is not a question of should the National Guard stop at 9th Street?
12 Can, you know, we wait for Sund to give us the command to go up into the Capitol? Like
13 that whole command structure is codified under the Secret Service.

14 Q I have heard you speak about the need for an NSSE for the joint session. I
15 think when we talk about recommendations, I think that's an important one to make.
16 Do you have any concern about kind of making it a security event, meaning this kind of
17 sacred event and kind of typical event that happens before inauguration would now be
18 deemed as a security concern? Or do you view it as just helping treat the inauguration,
19 we should treat the joint session?

20 A The only difference is the President isn't there. You have your entire
21 Congress in the building. The fact is, like, we have never done it before. Right? Like
22 we have had these certification votes happen every 4 years. It's never been a problem
23 until it was, and it was a big one.

24 So that is -- I just see -- and I can be like kind of -- if I took a pessimistic view of
25 kind of everything that happened at DOD or a political view, I can do that, and that may

1 be true. Or it may really be that somebody said, hey, you can't send the Army to the
2 steps of the Congress. You know.

3 Q Right. There was a deep concern about the military interfering with the
4 election process?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And how do you --

7 A Wasn't there this op-ed that these generals wrote a few weeks before that?

8 Q Yes. All these things come into play, the January 3rd op-ed. You know,
9 obviously, there is the rhetoric by General Michael Flynn. All these things come to play.
10 And I think you're absolutely right about the NSSE, the categorization would have solved
11 this.

12 Let me just ask then, if there was an NSSE event -- this is again looking back on
13 what happened -- what differences would there have been? Like primarily, as you see
14 Secret Service would have been in charge, or a lead agency would have been in charge,
15 how would that have impacted, you know, all these different areas of responsibility to
16 occur in the national Capitol region, in your experience?

17 A The biggest thing -- and I haven't like thought through every aspect of this.
18 But there would have been a fence around that Capitol. Period. Like you may have
19 had -- we may have had a bigger problem on the streets, but you would not have had
20 people take over the Capitol.

21 [REDACTED] Okay. [REDACTED] back to you.

22 BY [REDACTED]

23 Q Yes, Mayor, I would like to ask now, just get some clarification on the 2:30
24 phone call. I think you were present on it, it sounded like, or no?

25 A We were -- yes, I was present. We were in a hallway outside of our JOC,

1 and we were speaking into a phone like this. I wasn't speaking, but I was there.

2 Q And so at that point Chief Contee had not made his way over to you. Is
3 that fair? Physically?

4 A Sorry?

5 Q Were you with Chief Contee; physically or no?

6 A A group of people. The call was initiated by, I believe, Director Rodriguez.

7 Q Okay. And you were with Chief Contee physically at MPD headquarters?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Okay. Can you then tell me -- in essence, did you hear talk about -- and I
10 know you don't know exactly who was on the other line -- but from people who you
11 figured were or had identified themselves as DOD personnel, did you hear them talk
12 about optics? Did you hear them use the phrase "peaceful protesters," those sorts of
13 things that had been reported in the media?

14 A I don't remember exactly hearing about peaceful protesters. I heard the
15 optics, boots to the ground, doesn't look right throughout the day. So I can't necessarily
16 pin it into that conversation. But I think that the big takeaway of that conversation was
17 it wasn't an immediate yes. They were looking for some kind of specifics from the
18 Capitol. The Capitol just wasn't in a position to provide. They needed help, and that
19 was the bottom line.

20 Q How do you reconcile your earlier call to Secretary McCarthy who seemed to
21 indicate, you know, you were sort of thinking like, you know, is the National Guard going
22 to show show up? And he says, well, I haven't received a request from Chief Sund.
23 And then in that call, there's a request, right? Chief Sund is making the request. And
24 yet there was still -- I don't know if you would characterize it as pushback; you were on
25 the call. But so what did you think? Well, he is making the request, why is there this

1 delay or hemming and hawing?

2 A I think at the time we were very focused on, in my mind, getting on the call,
3 on the record what needed to be said was that Capitol Police made a request to the DOD
4 for help. The Capitol had been overrun. I think the other officials, the DOD, I presume,
5 officials were trying to be -- get them to be specific in what they needed. So I think at
6 that kind of -- the point, our job was to convene everybody and try to get as much
7 information out, but get the troops moving.

8 Q Did anyone at all mention to you that, you know -- well, were you
9 aware -- could you tell whether Secretary McCarthy or even Secretary Miller were on that
10 conference call, or was it clear to you that they were not?

11 A It wasn't clear to me who was on the call. I know that we initiated a call
12 with Walker. And all of the D.C. Government people who needed to be listening were in
13 the room. The fire chief, the police chief, our Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and
14 Justice -- I am missing something -- and Rodriguez.

15 Q Did anyone at any point -- or do you recall make -- say, oh, Secretary
16 McCarthy's running off to go see Secretary Miller right now presumably to talk about the
17 request?

18 A I don't remember Secretary McCarthy being referenced at all. And I don't
19 believe that I had the impression that he was on the phone.

20 Q Okay. And so certainly no one was telling you where he was at that
21 moment during these conversations?

22 A No, and keep in mind, I had recently, like, within minutes, I believe, had a
23 conversation with him.

24 Q Did anyone -- oh, did it appear that the answer was, no, or was it a "not right
25 now"? Were you getting the sense that it was a no or just that they were not saying

1 yes?

2 A That they were not saying yes.

3 Q Do you recall if there was any talk of, in my best military advice, in essence,
4 not deploying the National Guard; that it would not be in their best military advice?

5 A I never heard that statement.

6 Q Okay. Do you recall anyone -- I don't want to use the word threat, but
7 threaten to recommend to yourself that you were the Mayor, that you would get on -- go
8 to the press, basically, have a press conference, and tell everyone that the Department of
9 Defense is denying Chief Sund's request to have the National Guard respond?

10 A Who said that?

11 Q Well, do you recall hearing that? I don't know who would have been on
12 the call who said that, but do you recall if someone said that, made that? And, again, I
13 don't want to use the word "threat," but made that the --

14 A I don't know if I was still present for that, if it was said. But it was certainly
15 going to be something that I would do.

16 Q Okay. Is that fair that maybe -- did you hear about that, I guess, from aids
17 afterwards that that was either --

18 A I got a call about that from somebody. Somebody asked me about that.
19 Somebody asked me about that.

20 Q Okay. You don't recall who?

21 A I don't. One of these interviews. I don't think it was in the press.

22 Q And so you don't mean that someone asked you about that on January 6th,
23 you mean afterwards asking --

24 A Yes.

25 Q -- asking --

1 A Yes.

2 Q -- asking about January 6th, someone asked you about that.

3 A Yes.

4 Q And, although, you don't recall or you weren't -- or you don't believe you
5 were on the line when anything was referenced, you know that that was something that
6 either was on your mind if it appeared that it was going to continue to be a denial. Is
7 that fair?

8 A That's fair.

9 Q And so when you left the phone call -- at the end when you left the phone
10 call, was that then did you feel as though there was a denial, or you still felt it was a "we'll
11 get back to you"?

12 A I felt that I was waiting for somebody to get back to us.

13 Q Did you speak at all on the call?

14 A I did not.

15 Q I want to ask about the press conference you held because there is a little bit
16 of a discrepancy between the Department of Defense when they say authorization
17 ultimately was rendered as to deploying the National Guard. They say it was at 4:30
18 p.m. And the National Guard says that it was at 5:09 p.m. That that's ultimately when
19 Walker was given the go-ahead by, I believe, General McConville to deploy the National
20 Guard.

21 What I want to ask you about is, was it your understanding when you held the
22 press conference, which I believe was between 4:30 or 4:45, that approval had been
23 given? Did you at that press conference announce the D.C. National Guard is coming, or
24 had you not, which would potentially lead us to believe at least you had not heard yet
25 that the green light had been given?

1 A I will have to look back at my notes. I can't imagine that I did a press
2 conference without knowing that. So I want to say that they had been deployed, or I
3 had heard from Meadows that they would be deployed or approved.

4 Q I -- go ahead. I'm sorry.

5 A If there is a discrepancy, I wonder if it is between them actually being
6 deployed and when someone told us that they -- it had been approved.

7 Q Because do you recall -- I take it then you recall from the press conference
8 that you feel as though you had gotten word that the National Guard had --

9 A I actually don't recall my statements from the press conference. But I'm
10 thinking that I would not go to press without having that information.

11 Q Oh, okay. But potentially at that point even if there was a delay, if they had
12 not yet given the green light, you think you would have pushed off your press conference
13 until you heard word that the National Guard --

14 A I would have remembered the press conference because that's all I would
15 have been talking about.

16 Q Got it. Okay. I see. That there was -- okay. So then did you
17 independently remember when you found out that the National Guard was finally given
18 the green light?

19 A I had a note to myself of a call with Chief of Staff Meadows, and I know that
20 he told me that.

21 Q Was that the same call that we were talking about earlier, or was this a
22 separate call with --

23 A Yeah.

24 Q This is the same one. Okay.

25 A Uh-huh.

1 BY [REDACTED]

2 Q Was that the only call with Chief of Staff Meadows that day?

3 A I think so.

4 Q That was the 2:56 call.

5 [REDACTED] Go ahead then, [REDACTED]

6 BY [REDACTED]

7 Q Well, I mean, I was going to say, you know, McCarthy, Secretary McCarthy is
8 with you at the Metropolitan Police Department, right? At a certain point?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And he is even there at a point where yet the Guard has yet to be approved
11 or deployed. Does he have -- and you may have been -- I am sure you are doing quite a
12 number of things, but did you guys ever have a conversation as to what the holdup was;
13 what was it that everyone was still waiting for to have the National Guard respond?

14 A I don't actually remember what time he got there, and if it was before or
15 after that.

1

2 [2:50 p.m.]

3 A I don't actually remember what time he got there and if it was before or
4 after that.

5

BY [REDACTED]

6

Q Well, he was around for your press conference, or no?

7

A He would have been there, but I don't think he participated in the press
8 conference.

9

Q And I know in terms, you know, the 4:30 versus 5:09 is when the green light
10 happens. But I think that everyone agrees that they were not deployed I think until
11 about like 5:20, 5:21.

12

A Okay.

13

Q So -- and so it may be you may not recall any conversations about the
14 National Guard, the delay. I know you had obviously that earlier conversation with him.
15 Do you recall any other conversations with Secretary McCarthy while he's physically there
16 with you at MPD where, you know, he's either explaining if there was a holdup, what the
17 holdup is? Or does, you know -- do you recall any of that?

18

A I don't, but I do recall him being called away a number of times to talk to
19 people, who I don't know he was talking to. He was getting a lot of calls. Members of
20 Congress were calling him. So I don't know. I don't remember what time he got there
21 and what time they were approved.

22

[REDACTED] Hey, [REDACTED]

23

[REDACTED] Yes. Go ahead.

24

[REDACTED] Do you mind if I jump in?

25

[REDACTED] Please.

1

BY [REDACTED]

2

Q I have to depart the conversation in a minute, so I just had one final question

3

before I turn it back over to my colleagues for you, Madam Mayor. And this is a

4

question that we ask all of our interviewees. But from your perspective, what -- what

5

can we do to prevent something like this from happening again?

6

A I think the National Special Security Event for joint sessions is very important

7

for us to have. I think D.C. needs to have control of its National Guard. I think those

8

are very critical -- very critical points to think about. I think you've already done some

9

things with the Capitol Police, but that Capitol Police Board would seem to be a problem.

10

That's -- that -- I don't know, but the chief of the police there has to work for somebody,

11

not a board, in my -- in my humble opinion. But that -- that has to happen. And I think

12

we -- we have to have a very critical eye on domestic terrorism.

13

Q Do you think there should be a lead agency responsible for focusing on

14

domestic terrorism? I know it's the FBI from a criminal, law enforcement, case-building

15

standpoint. But do you think there needs to be an agency that's looking at it more

16

holistically, more strategically; in other words, be able to pull together different pieces of

17

the mosaic to see the big picture? Or do you think that's being done sufficiently now?

18

A I don't know the answer to that, but I'm happy to kind of talk to our team.

19

I don't know the answer to that one.

20

Q Thank you, ma'am.

21

Well, I want to personally thank you for your time. It's been an honor and a

22

pleasure to speak with you, ma'am.

23

A Thank you.

24

[REDACTED]. I'll turn it back over to my colleagues. As much as I'd like to stay, if

25

I don't pick up my daughter from the bus stop, I'll have --

1 Mayor Bowser. I got you.

2 [REDACTED] -- that issue to deal with.

3 Thank you for your time, ma'am.

4 [REDACTED] Thank you. My pleasure.

5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] over to you.

6 BY [REDACTED]

7 Q I just have a couple more questions for you, Mayor, and then we'll if [REDACTED]

8 has some more.

9 I wanted to ask, you said, you know, D.C. control of National Guard. Would that
10 mean having the mayor be the commander in chief of the D.C. National Guard like
11 Governors of other States are?

12 A That's correct.

13 Q And I also wanted to -- well, so I wanted to ask if there was any pieces of
14 intelligence that sort of stood out for you in the lead-up to January 6th, just things maybe
15 that were either red flags or shocking or warnings for you?

16 A The biggest red flag was the President's comments. And I think that we
17 didn't have any intelligence that suggested that these were organized, funded groups that
18 would be descending on the Capitol.

19 [REDACTED] Okay. All right. [REDACTED] do you have questions?

20 You're on mute, [REDACTED]

21 BY [REDACTED]

22 Q Just looking perspectively, Mayor, about some of the recommendations, and
23 I know you just said the NSSE and control of the National Guard. About the domestic
24 terrorism threat, what -- what difference do you think it would have made if Federal
25 partners -- the Bureau, DHS -- would have put out a bulletin, a joint intelligence bulletin,

1 about the potential for violence on January 6th?

2 A I think -- I don't know all of the products that they produce, so forgive me if
3 I'm not using the right words. But it didn't -- it shouldn't be some kind of run-of-the-mill
4 bulletin that's blindly emailed. And so I think they -- they have the capacity to say, look,
5 we have identified a real credible threat. It's organized, funded, and this is what we
6 think needs to happen in your jurisdiction. And for the Capitol especially because, as in
7 the words of Chief Sund, they are -- they have the capacity to deal with demonstrations.
8 And so they -- they really don't have -- they would -- they can tap into MPD and our whole
9 regional mutual assistance program. But that is their capacity.

10 Q And just to go back to the mutual assistance program, were those -- did you
11 reach out to kind of your partners prior to January 6th? I think that's what you said. I
12 just want to make sure that I was clear on that.

13 A Uh-huh. And they were -- they were in the area. I have to acknowledge
14 that they played a key role too.

15 Q When you say they, who are you -- who are you referring to?

16 A I think it's Montgomery County for Maryland, Prince George's County also
17 for Maryland, and I want to say Arlington County.

18 Q And then you also said you contacted the National Guards in other States as
19 well.

20 A Correct.

21 Q And does that have to go through -- excuse my ignorance on this. You
22 don't have to go through the D.C. National Guard to request the Maryland National
23 Guard. You as the mayor can do that on your own?

24 A I can do that on my own, but I think they have a process also through DOD if
25 they're going out of the State. I don't know that process.

1 Q Okay. Fair enough. Just another kind of big-picture theme that we're
2 hearing in conducting --

3 A Let me say that I think that involves funding.

4 Q Understood.

5 A Who's going to pay.

6 Q Just another big-picture theme that we've heard is some of the complexity
7 of D.C., from law enforcement's perspective, in terms of jurisdictions. And the Capitol
8 Police covers the Capitol. Park Police covers The Ellipse and surrounding area, and MPD.

9 Do you feel that there are enough kind of task force or meetings, whatever it is,
10 that is effectively communicating how these different organizations communicate with
11 each other about threats and about preparedness?

12 A I actually think they work very well together. And we saw this fissure in
13 June, quite frankly, where the mutual assistance compact was exploited. And I think
14 there became some, like, every man for himself a little bit because some people got
15 burned. Like, I think the Arlington County, Virginia, chief, like, resigned, because they
16 sent the police to -- you know, because they got asked, I think, by Park Police. And then
17 they were used for this photo op.

18 So I think that we spent some time making sure our compact -- you know, like,
19 we're going to be here to support each other. And I felt very strongly in making sure
20 that we as the District did that because we need them. We need them for
21 inaugurations. We need them for big events. And we've always -- we've always
22 worked very well together.

23 So your question, I'm sorry, was do --

24 Q Does it need to -- should it be remedied to get better in any way? It sounds
25 like it's working effectively, from your answer.

1 A I mean, I think generally it works very well. I mean, it was tested by -- and,
2 you know, how can we prepare for any part of our political apparatus not working in a
3 way that we expect, like them to, to support our democracy and, you know, stand up to
4 the oath that they took?

5 And that is -- you know, all of our institutions were tested by someone who
6 shouldn't have acted the way that he did. You know what I mean? So I think that we
7 are all figuring out how to make sure that we can -- we can harden our systems to protect
8 against that.

9 Q Well said.

10 And I wanted to talk just briefly, and we're rounding the corner here, this will be
11 couple end questions, but about the -- you kind of mentioned this, that Trump's the
12 common denominator between the summer and January 6th. And I'm wondering
13 what -- what impact his words, tweets, rhetoric had on your daily governing. Maybe it's
14 not daily. But how much did you as the Mayor of D.C. have to react to what was coming
15 down the street at the White House?

16 A Well, you know, over the years, there were small issues. Like, if he wanted
17 to have a military parade, those are small issues. There were, you know, bigger issues,
18 like taking over the police and deploying the National Guard or other bigger issues like
19 saying really racist things that impacted us.

20 But how we -- how did it affect our governance is just like I mentioned earlier.
21 He sent a tweet which, you know, you can say it was, like, on its face, it's just more Trump
22 bluster. But maybe it's not. So I think that not really knowing if he would act in a way
23 that a person who loves his country would act is something that, not just me, but we've
24 all had to factor into how we plan.

25 Q And how to -- how to discern what's intentional and what's -- what's just not

1 rhetoric is, I think -- do you -- do you have, as you sit here and look back, one -- some of
2 those comments, whether it's rhetoric or racist comments that stood out to you
3 during -- during that timeframe?

4 A Not on January the 6th, but certainly during June. He said he was going to
5 unleash, which was where it all started and I think very intentionally so, he was going
6 to -- he said something. If the looting starts, the shooting starts.

7 Q Right.

8 A That was one.

9 And then he said he was going to unleash violent dogs. This was like the Friday
10 incident on the -- on the south side of the White House. That's where it started.

11 Q When you say that's where it starts, meaning that's where the --

12 A Started in D.C. He started that. It was, I think, a Friday incident where
13 there was a scuffle on the south side of the White House. And he was very critical of
14 MPD and said he was going to unleash the dogs.

15 Q I just -- the one followup we have, Mayor, and I can follow up, obviously,
16 with your staff, is to really kind of drill down whether you as the mayor requested the
17 D.C. National Guard during the summer or whether that was a decision made
18 by -- outside by the President or by DOD. And having said that, once we understand
19 that, from what you saw during the summer, were -- would you have -- did you see the
20 need for the D.C. National Guard to respond?

21 A When?

22 Q During the summer protests.

23 A Where we -- I had no issue with the Guard being on the fence in front of
24 Lafayette Square. And, um --

25 Q So --

1 A But in terms of the Guard trying to move people from protest areas, no, the
2 D.C. Guard -- we did not call on the D.C. Guard to do that. We never called on the D.C.
3 Guard to fly helicopters over the city.

4 Q So if we could just understand that, and we'll follow up with you about it,
5 and we have an understanding from what happened from the DOD side. But it's critical
6 to understand what happened with it.

7 A Yeah. I'm not -- I'm sorry. I wasn't prepared to talk about that in-depth,
8 so I don't -- I just don't remember who our request was beyond our COVID team.

9 [REDACTED] That's totally fine.

10 I think that ends it. We always ask if there's anything that you want to respond
11 to or clear up or add to this interview.

12 Mayor Bowser. I don't think so.

13 [REDACTED] Is there anyone you think, based on the questions that we
14 asked -- and I apologize. There were three people asking questions today. There's a
15 lot of different angles that we come at that, and the team has been really working hard to
16 interviewing as many people as possible. So all of us have little pieces of information.
17 So I'm sorry that there were three questioners instead of one today.

18 But do you have anyone you think we should speak to?

19 Mayor Bowser. I don't think so. If I come up with a name, I'll let you know.

20 [REDACTED] That would be great.

21 And I just want to compliment your staff and everyone there that have been so
22 helpful for us in arranging this, and thank you for your service. As a D.C. resident, please
23 keep the schools open, please, please, please.

24 Mayor Bowser. Those schools, I keep telling people school is first.

25 What school are you in?

1

[REDACTED] [REDACTED].

2

Mayor Bowser. Yay, [REDACTED]. All right.

3

[REDACTED] Thank you.

4

Mayor Bowser. All right.

5

[REDACTED] Anything else, [REDACTED]

6

[REDACTED] No. Thank you so much, Mayor.

7

[REDACTED] Great. And thank you, court reporters. Appreciate it.

8

Mayor Bowser. Thank you. Thank you.

9

Mr. Adams. Thank you, counsel.

10

[REDACTED] Thank you.

11

[Whereupon, at 3:07 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate

12

of Deponent/Interviewee

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14

15

I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the

16

answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

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Witness Name

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Date

