

D.C., on edge, sees few security threats

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Troops in riot gear lined the sidewalks, but there were no crowds. Armored vehicles and concrete barriers blocked empty streets. Miles of fencing cordoned off many of the nation's most familiar landmarks.

Joe Biden was safely sworn in as president in a Washington on edge, two weeks after rioters loyal to former President Donald Trump besieged the Capitol. Law enforcement officials

contended not only with the potential for outside threats but also with rising concerns about an insider attack. Officials monitored members of far-right extremist and militia groups, increasingly concerned about the risk they could stream into Washington and spark violent confrontations, a law enforcement official said.

There were a few scattered arrests but no major protests or serious disruptions in the city during Biden's inauguration

ceremony.

In the hours before the inauguration, federal agents monitored "concerning online chatter," which included an array of threats against elected officials and discussions about ways to infiltrate the inauguration, the official said.

In right-wing online chat groups, believers in the QAnon conspiracy theory expressed disappointment that top Democrats were not arrested for sex trafficking and that Trump did

not seize a second term.

Twelve National Guard members were removed from the security operation a day earlier after vetting by the FBI, including two who had made extremist statements in posts or texts about Wednesday's event. Pentagon officials would not give details on the statements. The FBI vetted all 25,000 members in an extraordinary security effort in part over the presence of some ex-military in the riot.



John Minchillo/AP

Military personnel march outside the U.S. Capitol the morning of Inauguration Day. More than 25,000 troops and police were called to duty. The National Mall was closed, and checkpoints were set up at intersections in an unprecedented security lockdown in the nation's capital.

Inauguration brings hope to some state capital residents

'Fantastic to see the president... denounce and repudiate white supremacy,' says Salem business owner struck by recent vandalism

BY ANDREW SELSKY

Associated Press

SALEM — Normally quiet streets around U.S. state capitol buildings have looked more like battlegrounds recently, putting those who live and work there on edge.

More than most people, these Americans will have front-row seats on whether the change of leadership Wednesday in the White House will lead to a lessening of tension that has been afflicting the nation. They'll be watching what the next chapter brings from storefronts and the porches and stoops of their own homes.

Their sense of foreboding was lightened, just a little, by Wednesday's inauguration. As President Joe Biden was sworn into office, demonstrations at state capitols were scant, with only a few protesters showing up, and some cities, none at all.

Some expect Biden's focus on unity — a word he used eight times in his inaugural address — will have an effect, but they say how the people react will be key.

Jonathan Jones' front-row seat to what happens next is his restaurant that is decorated with Black Lives Matter signs and art near the Oregon State Capitol. Epilogue Kitchen and Cocktails has been vandalized by a white supremacist. One day, police showed up as Jones, who is Black, and his friends were being accosted by neo-fascist Proud Boys. The police at first confronted Jones' group as if they were the threat.



Noah Berger/AP

In Salem, Epilogue Kitchen & Cocktails owner Jonathan Jones speaks with a customer while serving free meals in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday. Streets around state capitols have looked like battlegrounds recently. Jones' business was recently vandalized by a white supremacist.

"There's not a person who stood with me that day who didn't think that they might die," Jones said. "And the most awful part was not knowing if it was going to come from the police or from the Proud Boys."

Jones watched Biden's inauguration on TV, and in the afterglow called it "a beautiful moment."

"It was fantastic to see the president of the United States denounce and repudiate white supremacy multiple times and to acknowledge that we're long overdue as a country to actually achieve some form of racial justice," Jones said. "My hope

is that things are dealt with quickly, but my expectation is that it will take quite some time to see any actual change." Brian Henderson, minister of First Baptist Church of Denver that sits across an avenue from the shuttered Colorado Capitol, was so close to the upheavals of 2020 that he was struck in the left knee with a pepper ball. Henderson had been handing out water from the front steps of his small brick church as thousands battled police during riots over George Floyd's killing.

"We can't let fear stop us from doing what we have to do," Henderson said.

Henderson watched the inaugural with church staff and then stepped outside to reflect and bask in the historic moment.

"There was this strong breeze. The sun was warm. The sky was blue. The air felt fresh. It's a new day. We have a new president," Henderson said.

In Washington, D.C., a restaurant named We, the Pizza is located just one block from barricades surrounding the U.S. Capitol, where Biden was sworn in. The pizzeria has been feeding thousands of National Guard troops and other security and first responders, using donations from around the nation.

Manager Rob Earley said a girl around 6 years old brought in a check for \$1,000 on Tuesday — money she had raised to feed the soldiers.

"I had tears in my eyes," Earley said. "It's good to see people that young that are wanting to be so involved in what's going on and wanting to be part of making change."

Back in Oregon, Jones has been buoyed by people coming out in support of his restaurant, as customers and guardians. On Sunday, Robert Fox, a glass-blowing artist, sat in his sedan parked in front of the restaurant, keeping watch before Jones and his wife, Maura Ryan, showed up to prepare meals, available only for takeout during coronavirus shutdowns.

"I'm just making sure nothing happens," Fox said as a dozen gun-toting, far-right protesters stood outside the Capitol, three blocks away.

Jones said actions like that give him hope.

"I think that in spite of how loud the far right is, I think the bulk of the country is not that," Jones said. "And I think that the more that we can embolden people to show that solidarity and be willing to stand up and stand next to everybody and present that unified front, then I think the quicker we'll get to the end of this."

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