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Secret Service Director Testimony "worst ever saw" says former committee spokesman; Resigned but Site Dir Also Must

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U.S. Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle took the stand in front of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee on July 22, nine days after the assassination attempt on Former President Trump. Her testimony was the worst we've ever heard.

Director Cheatle began by taking full responsibility for the incident and saying that the Secret Service failed. In fact, she said the event "is the most significant operational failure of the Secret Service in decades." She also made a point of specifically saying that the Secret Service does not blame federal, state, or local law enforcement for the incident. Really? To say "Only nine days" was no excuse for not issuing to Congress a preliminary factual report and assessment.

Yet, Director Cheatle did not reveal much more information. When Committee Chair James Comer, Committee Ranking Democrat Jamie Raskin, and Judiciary Chair Jim Jordan -- quite the bipartisan leadership assemblage -- asked her reasonable questions that the American public wants the answers to, Director Cheatle repeatedly responded by saying that "we are just nine days out from this incident, and there's still an ongoing investigation". While it is true that the FBI is currently conducting an investigation into the incident, that does not mean the Director could not give the general public more answers to the questions plaguing their minds. This strategy meant that essentially, no new information came about from the trial. It was a pointless failure.

Blaming the timing of the trial was simply a cover-up for the Secret Service's lack of preparedness. Instead of copping out, Direct Cheatle should have at least said they are doing everything in their power to clean up the mess. She should have said missing the 140-ft-away roof coverage was a disaster. To not have the site director direct the site was obviously a disaster. The Secret Service had the overall authority to delegate, and the site director was in charge. To us, it seems obvious not just Cheatle, but the Secret Service site director for the July 13 Butler, PA event, should be fired. Director Cheatle and her team knew the hearing was coming. Not having more information or a preliminary report is a failure.

Only after Director Cheatle's poor performance in permitting an assassination attempt against a former president, ridiculous comments while sitting in front of members of Congress, and calls from members of Congress on both sides of the aisle for her to be fired did Director Cheatle finally step down.

In addition, the site agent of the rally dealt with the real-time logistics. That means they knew that there was a suspicious person, as Director Cheatle confirmed in the hearing that the Secret Service was notified two to five times about a suspicious person. The site agent is responsible for the call not to manage the threat earlier and Director Cheatle and especially the site agent are responsible for the larger logistics that even permitted a person on a nearby roof with a gun to have a close, easy shot at a former President. Director Cheatle has finally been removed from her position, and now it's time for the site agent to go as well.

Overall, the Secret Service has failed our country in many ways. First, by letting a former president get shot and almost killed. Second, by not taking adequate action to atone for their ineptitude. And third, by failing to testify effectively in front of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee. Hopefully, the Secret Service will be able to fix its mistakes and continue to serve the American public.

Robert Weiner was a spokesman in the Clinton and George W. Bush White Houses. He was communications director of the House Government Operations and Oversight Committee, and senior aide to Congressmen John Conyers and Charles Rangel, Reps. Claude Pepper and Ed Koch, Sen. Ted Kennedy, and Four-Star General/drug czar Barry McCaffrey.

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