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Israel revisits military options on Iran as officials wary of Biden's changes

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Report: Wary of Biden track on Iran, Israel revisits military options

According to Israel Hayom, IDF crafts 3 options to 'undermine Iran's nuclear efforts' ahead of Biden's inauguration, who Israeli officials believe will rejoin 2015 nuclear agreement with Tehran

Reuters| Published: 01.14.21 , 15:27

Israel is revising military options for a possible clash with Iran, an Israeli newspaper reported on Thursday, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government braces for differences with the incoming U.S. administration on Iranian nuclear policy.

U.S. President Donald Trump delighted Netanyahu by quitting the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and reimposing sanctions on it that had been lifted in return for limits on activities that could, potentially, produce nuclear weapons in the future.

Tehran responded by breaching many of those restrictions. U.S. President-elect Joe Biden wants to rejoin the deal if Tehran - which denies seeking the bomb - returns to strict compliance.

Israel, alarmed by Iranian rhetoric that it is a state that should not exist, is wary of the softer line, even though threats of U.S. military action from Trump did not curtail Iran's nuclear moves.

A front-page article in the Israel Hayom publication said the military is crafting **three options to "undermine Iran's nuclear efforts** or, if need be, counter Iranian aggression, which will soon be presented to the government".

Israel Hayom, did not cite any sources. But it went on to quote Defense Minister Benny **Gantz** as saying: "Israel needs to have a military option on the table."

Israel has long had plans in place to counter Iran. The article appeared designed to signal that these were now being updated.

During the previous Democratic administration of Barack Obama, which championed diplomacy with Iran, Israel occasionally threatened preventive airstrikes against Iranian nuclear sites.

Some U.S. officials at the time doubted that Israel - whose advanced military includes a reputed nuclear arsenal - could effectively hit Iranian targets that are distant, dispersed and well-defended.

Israeli officials have voiced hope that Biden will maintain Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign on Tehran, involving tough sanctions, until the Iranian nuclear program is dismantled.

But one of them, Finance Minister Israel Katz, acknowledged on Army Radio: "There are disputes (with **Biden**) regarding the perspective on Iran, and of course that **will prove challenging.**"

Katz sounded encouraged by Biden's intent to include Iran's ballistic missile program in any renegotiation of the nuclear deal. Biden's pick for U.S. national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, signaled openness, during a Jan 3 CNN interview, to consulting "regional players" - a possible allusion to Israel.

Intelligence Minister Eli Cohen told Ynet TV the Netanyahu government was not yet in formal dialogue with the incoming administration. But asked if Israel was trying through informal channels to sway Biden on Iran, Cohen said: "Yes. There are efforts."

**01.14.21**

**Iran-Yemen drones extend range; Israel sets Iron Dome to Jordan & Egypt border**

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**Iran sending 'suicide drones' to Yemen that could reach Israel**

**Iranian-made UAVs have range of 2,200 km, most likely deployed with Yemeni allies so Tehran can maintain plausible deniability for such an attack; IDF deploys Iron Dome to Eilat area amid warnings of Iranian retaliation for killing of key officials**

Ynet| Published: 01.14.21 , 13:34

Iran has recently sent its Houthi allies in Yemen unmanned aircraft loaded with explosives known as "suicide drones," which can reach and operate against a variety of targets including Israel, American outlet Newsweek reported.

An expert who "follows Iranian activities in the region" told Newsweek that Houthi soldiers deployed the explosive drones - known as Iranian Shahed-136 - in the northern Yemeni province of Al-Jawf.

The province is under the control of Ansar Allah, a Shiite Houthi rebel movement sponsored by Iran that is fighting against the Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen. According to the expert, the Shahed-136 has a range of up to 2,200 km (1,367 miles). It was most likely deployed in Yemen so that a drone attack against U.S., Saudi, Gulf, or Israeli targets would be traced back to the rebels, giving Iran plausible deniability against any kind of retribution.

"The Iranians have delivered to their Houthi proxies in Yemen advanced UAVs," the expert told Newsweek. "They are forward deploying or prepositioning these drones in order to stage an attack against a variety of targets they have within range." He added: "What they're trying to achieve is plausible deniability... as in being able to strike either a U.S., Saudi, Gulf, or Israeli target and then having the strike traced back to Yemen, and hoping for deniably against any kind of retribution."

In September 2019, several oil facilities in Saudi Arabia were attacked using suicide drones and cruise missiles in an operation attributed to Iran. U.S. officials offered satellite images of the damage at the heart of the kingdom's crucial Abqaiq oil processing plant and a key oil field, alleging the pattern of destruction suggested the attack came from either Iraq or Iran - rather than Yemen, as claimed by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.

Such drones were also used to instigate a major terrorist attack against the Yemeni government in the city of Aden some two weeks ago. The devastating attack left 26 people dead and 50 wounded. Israel's defense establishment recently warned of possible Iranian retaliation for the death of top general Qasem Soleimani at the hands of the U.S. in January 2020 and the assassination of senior Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh last November that was attributed to Israel.

Officials warned that such revenge attacks could originate from states such as Iraq or Yemen. Israel has since deployed its Iron Dome missile defense system in the south, close to the Red Sea city of Eilat that shares a border with both Jordan and Egypt.

01.13.21

UN “inadvertently” put books full of Israel hatred & jihad praise in PA schools

01.13.21

UN textbooks in Gaza, PA full of Israel hatred, praise of jihadists

Report by IMPACT-se shows study material distributed by UNRWA to Palestinians, contains inciting material in nearly all subjects, across all grades; calls to defend 'the motherland' with blood; Israel never referred to by name

Itamar Eichner | Published: 01.13.21 , 22:15

A report published Wednesday shows that textbooks distributed by the United Nations' Palestinian refugee agency includes incitement against Israel and glorifications of terrorists who committed atrocious acts of violence.

The report published by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) found that textbooks produced by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) include inciting material, across all subjects and grades.

UNRWA has been left severely crippled in 2018 after the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump decided to cancel all U.S. funding to the organization, citing anti-Israel bias and misuse of funds.

The report shows that UNRWA's study material frequently references and sometimes directly reproduces, texts and phrases from the Palestinian Authority's textbooks, which include glorification of violence and sacrificing of one's life in order to defend the “motherland.”

Examples include Arabic grammar exercises that use the language of jihad and passages that celebrate known Palestinian terrorists, such as Dalal Mughrabi, who participated in the 1978 Coastal Road massacre in Israel which resulted in the death of 38 Israeli civilians, including 13 children.

In the past, UNRWA officials explicitly denied teaching students the curriculum from PA's textbooks that discuss Dalal Mughrabi, making the inclusion of these passages in the study material even more concerning.

According to the report, the UNRWA-produced material fails to mention possible peace with Israel, while the term "peace" is also never mentioned, neither as an ideal nor as a concrete goal.

The UNRWA study material also references discredited conspiracy theories against Israel and Zionism, which perpetuate hostility and hatred towards the Jewish state and its population.

Examples of this include accusations that Israel was involved in the 1969 Al-Aqsa Mosque fire, deliberately dumped radioactive and toxic waste in the West Bank and was systematically stealing Palestinian antiquities.

The study also found the UNRWA-produced material often refers to Israel as “the Enemy,” creating an “us versus them” dichotomy. In one math exercise, for instance, students are asked to tally the number of dead “martyrs” in the First Intifada. The material also almost never refers to Israel by name, but rather as “the Occupation,” “the Zionist Occupation,” “the Zionists,” or simply as the “the Enemy”. According to the study, UNRWA has adopted the Pan-Arab narrative found in the PA curriculum. This included terminology such as “the Arab Homeland”; “the Racist Expansion and Annexation Fence,” referring to the West Bank security barrier, and “Zionist aggressions” as a way to characterize military engagements between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The textbooks also refer to the territory that used to be British Mandatory Palestine as Palestinian or Palestine, including the UN-recognized 1949 the Armistice Demarcation Lines.

The UNRWA-produced material also appears to ignore Jewish history, including historical Jewish presence in the region. The majority of references to Jews and Judaism includes allegations that Israel is striving to systematically “Judaize” Jerusalem. Prior to the publication of the IMPACT-se study, UNRWA’s new Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, said in a speech to the European Parliament that “there is no place for any provision that encourages violence, discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism. Let’s be clear, the glorification of terrorists is not taught in UNRWA schools.”

IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff said that “in its branded material, UNRWA is a partner in radicalizing the next generation of children by glorifying terrorists, encouraging violence and teaching blood libels to Palestinian children. Mr. Lazzarini needs to explain how it happened under his auspices.”

IMPACT-se’s Chief Operating Officer Arik Agassi said, “UNRWA has for years refused to publish the content and method of study it uses, which it claims prevents students from being exposed to incitement in Palestinian textbooks. Now we know why.”

UNRWA stated in response: “An in-depth review of the self-learning material received by UNRWA students during the closure was conducted within weeks. It showed that content was inadvertently put into textbooks that the agency had previously flagged as inappropriate. To avoid the dissemination of content that UNRWA considers inconsistent with UN principles, the Agency has decided to upload all online learning materials to a secure platform. The platform will be accessible in the coming days.”

“UNRWA reiterates that it has no tolerance for discrimination and incitement to hatred and violence in its schools. Any reported violation is treated firmly. The agency adheres to the highest standards of neutrality and humanity. ”

01.13.21

IDF under fire clearing border fence shrubs & high crops used as terrorists cover

01.13.21

IDF troops on Gaza border come under fire from Strip

No injuries reported in incident which came as soldiers were clearing shrubbery close to perimeter fence, although armored bulldozer sustains some damage; army says it responded with tank fire at Hamas post  
Yoav Zitun | Published: 01.13.21 , 13:59

An IDF engineering force operating in the buffer zone along the Israeli border with Gaza came under fire Wednesday close to the Kissufim Crossing in the southern Strip.

According to the troops, the shots were fired at their D9 armored bulldozer from the Gaza Strip.

The IDF armored bulldozer was damaged in the attack on troops close to the Gaza border. There were no injuries reported among the troops, but there was damage sustained to the bulldozer.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit confirmed that the incident took place, saying the army had responded to the attack.

"Several bullets were fired at an engineering vehicle during engineering activity on the western side of the perimeter fence in the southern Gaza Strip," the military said.

"In response to the shooting, an IDF tank fired on a position of the Hamas terrorist organization. There were no casualties to our forces and the vehicle sustained minor damage."

Hamas has been in charge of the Gaza Strip since seizing power and expelling the Palestinian Authority more than 10 years ago.

According to the Palestinians, the troops were clearing an area next to farmland east of the Gaza city of Khan Yunis and close to the perimeter fence.

The IDF distributed leaflets to Gazan farmers warning them not to keep cultivating land close to the fence due to the concerns that terrorists would use high crops as cover to approach the fence and plant explosives.

The Palestinians also reported that the IDF fired smoke bombs to provide them with their own cover.

Officials at Eshkol Regional Council on the Israeli side of the border said: "A shooting took place targeting IDF troops operating along the border in the central area of the council. There were no casualties in the incident."

The council also sought to reassure local residents that the gunfire had ceased.

"The IDF is operating at the site and the incident is under control," it said.

"We are in constant contact with the army and there is no change in the guidelines for local residents."

01.14.21

Iran in breach of UN nuclear deal, knowing Biden will waive sanctions

01.14.21

UN watchdog confirms another Iranian breach of nuclear deal

IAEA says Islamic Republic began installing equipment for production of uranium metal, which could be used for a nuclear bomb and is strictly prohibited under 2015 deal  
Associated Press| Published: 01.14.21 , 21:40

The United Nations' atomic watchdog agency confirmed on Thursday that Iran has informed it that the country has begun installing equipment for the production of uranium metal, which would be another violation of the landmark nuclear deal with world powers.

Iran maintains its plans to conduct research and development on uranium metal production are part of its “declared aim to design an improved type of fuel,” the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said.

Uranium metal can also be used for a nuclear bomb, however, and research on its production is specifically prohibited under the nuclear deal — the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — that Tehran signed with world powers in 2015. The ultimate goal of the deal is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, something Iran insists it does not want to do. Iran now has enough enriched uranium to make a bomb, but nowhere near the amount it had before the nuclear deal was signed. On Sunday, IAEA inspectors visited the Isfahan plant where Iran has said it plans to conduct the research, and officials were informed by Tehran on Wednesday that “modification and installation of the relevant equipment for the mentioned R&D activities have been already started,” the agency said.

Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Kazem Gharibabadi, repeated that in a tweet on Wednesday, adding that “natural uranium will be used to produce uranium metal in the first stage.”

He told Iran's official news agency IRNA that the move will elevate Iran to the level of “progressive nations in production of new fuels.”

Although uranium metal in theory can be geared toward generating electricity, experiments with metal alloys are prohibited under the nuclear deal because uranium metal is a key material in the making of nuclear weapons. The process involves converting high-enriched uranium gas into metal that provides the cladding, or outer covering, for the fuel rods that power a nuclear reaction.

“Iran had not previously experimented with this step in the process, but in order to make a bomb, you would have to,” said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, based in Washington.

It was the latest in a string of violations of the nuclear deal that Iran has undertaken since President Donald Trump pulled the United States unilaterally out of the accord in 2018, saying it needed to be re-negotiated.

Tehran has been using the violations to put pressure on the other signatories — Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia — to provide more incentives to Iran to offset crippling American sanctions re-imposed after the U.S. exited the deal.

President-elect Joe Biden, who was vice president when the deal was negotiated during the Obama administration, has said he hopes to return the U.S. to the deal.

The timing of the uranium metal announcement, Kimball said, left **little doubt about Iran's intentions.**

“**They know** there's someone named **Biden** who's going to be in the White House next week and they want him to **act** as soon as possible **to waive** nuclear-related **sanctions,**” he added. “They are looking for ways to underscore that their patience has run out.”

Britain, France and Germany said last week, however, that Iran “risks compromising” chances of diplomacy with Washington after Tehran announced another violation — that it was **starting to enrich uranium to 20% purity,** a technical step away from **weapons-grade levels of 90%.**

The foreign ministers of the three European nations said in a joint statement then that the Iranian activity “**has no credible civil justification.**” They said the enrichment was a **clear violation** of the deal and “further hollows out the agreement.”

Germany's Foreign Ministry had no immediate comment Thursday, but the announcement on the production of uranium metal now further complicates trying to get Washington back on board.

Those working to save the deal also note that despite the violations, **Iran continues to allow inspectors to access all sites** in the country.

**01.13.21**

**Pelosi-Democrats & 10 defective Republicans voted to impeach Trump again**

**01.13.21**

**U.S. House votes to impeach Trump after Capitol riot**

**Democratic-controlled chamber votes 232-197** in favor of **impeachment** over an incident that saw a Trump mob storm the Capitol that left 5 dead; Trump becomes the first president to be impeached by the House twice

Reuters| Published: **01.13.21** , 23:35

A majority of the House of Representatives voted on Wednesday to make Donald Trump the first U.S. president ever to be impeached twice, formally charging him in his waning days in power with inciting an insurrection just a week after a violent mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol.

Lawmakers in the Democratic-controlled chamber voted 232-197 in favor of impeachment over an incident that represented a deadly assault on American democracy. Ten Republicans joined the Democrats in the decision.

But it appeared unlikely that the **extraordinarily swift impeachment** would lead to Trump's ouster before the Republican president's four-year term ends and Democratic President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated on Jan. 20. The Senate's Republican majority leader, **Mitch McConnell,** **rejected Democratic calls to convene the Senate** in emergency session to begin an immediate impeachment trial, according to a spokesman.



The House passed a single article of impeachment - a formal charge - accusing Trump of "incitement of insurrection," focused upon an incendiary speech he delivered to thousands of supporters shortly before the pro-Trump mob rampaged through the Capitol. The mob disrupted the formal certification of Biden's victory over Trump in the Nov. 3 election, sent lawmakers into hiding and left five people dead, including a police officer. During his speech, Trump repeated false claims that the election was fraudulent and exhorted supporters to march on the Capitol.

With a large presence of rifle-carrying National Guard troops inside and outside the Capitol, an emotional debate unfolded in the same House chamber where lawmakers had crouched under chairs and donned gas masks on Jan. 6 as rioters clashed with police officers outside the doors.

"The president of the United States incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion against our common country," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, said on the House floor before the vote. "He must go. He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love."

No U.S. president ever has been removed from office through impeachment. Three - Trump in 2019, Bill Clinton in 1998 and Andrew Johnson in 1868 - previously were impeached by the House but acquitted by the Senate.

The impeachment comes at a time of gaping political divisions in a pandemic-weary United States near the end of a tumultuous presidency in which Trump governed with a right-wing populist message preaching "America First."

Democratic congressman Julian Castro, a former presidential candidate, called Trump "the most dangerous man to ever occupy the Oval Office." Congresswoman Maxine Waters accused Trump of wanting civil war and fellow Democrat Jim McGovern said the president "instigated an attempted coup."

Some Republicans argued that the impeachment drive was a rush to judgment that bypassed the customary deliberative process such as hearings and called on Democrats to abandon the effort for the sake of national unity and healing.

"Impeaching the president in such a short time frame would be a mistake," said Kevin McCarthy, the House's top Republican. "That doesn't mean the president is free from fault. The president bears responsibility for Wednesday's attack on Congress by mob rioters."

Trump's closest allies, such as Ohio Republican Jim Jordan, went further, accusing Democrats of recklessly acting out of pure political interest.

"This is about getting the president of the United States," said Jordan, who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Trump in a private White House ceremony this week. "It's always been about getting the president, no matter what. It's an obsession."

**'I'M CHOOSING TRUTH'**

A handful of Republicans backed impeachment, including Liz Cheney, the No. 3 House Republican.

"I am not choosing a side, I'm choosing truth," Republican Jamie Herrera Beutler said in announcing her support for impeachment, drawing applause from Democrats. "It's the only way to defeat fear."

In a break from standard procedure, Republican House leaders refrained from urging their members to vote against impeachment, calling the vote a matter of individual conscience.

Under the U.S. Constitution, impeachment in the House triggers a trial in the **Senate**. A **two-thirds majority would be needed to convict** and remove Trump, meaning at least 17 Republicans in the 100-member chamber would have to join the Democrats.

McConnell has said no trial could begin until the Senate was scheduled to be back in regular session on Jan. 19, one day before Biden's inauguration. The trial would proceed in the Senate even after Trump leaves office. McConnell said in a memo to his fellow Republicans he has not made a final decision on how he will vote on impeachment in the Senate.

The Capitol siege raised concerns about political violence in the United States once considered all but unthinkable. The FBI has warned of armed protests planned for Washington and all 50 U.S. state capitals ahead of Biden's inauguration.

Trump on Wednesday urged his followers to remain peaceful, saying in a statement, "I urge that there must be NO violence, NO lawbreaking and NO vandalism of any kind. That is not what I stand for, and it is not what America stands for."

'HIGH CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS'

Impeachment is a remedy devised by America's 18th century founders to enable Congress to remove a president who has, according to the Constitution, committed "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors." If Trump is removed, Vice President Mike Pence would become president and serve out his term.

The House impeached Trump after he ignored calls for his resignation and Pence rebuffed Democratic demands to invoke a constitutional provision to remove the president.

The House previously voted to impeach Trump in December 2019 on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress stemming from his request that Ukraine investigate Biden and his son Hunter ahead of the election, as Democrats accused him of soliciting foreign interference to smear a domestic political rival. The Senate in February 2020 voted to keep Trump in office.

Wednesday's article of impeachment accused Trump of "incitement of insurrection," saying he provoked violence against the U.S. government in his speech to supporters. The article also cited Trump's Jan. 2 phone call asking a Georgia official to "find" votes to overturn Biden's victory in the state.

During his Jan. 6 speech, Trump falsely claimed he had defeated Biden, repeated unfounded allegations of widespread fraud and irregularities in a "rigged" election, told his supporters to "stop the steal," "show strength," "fight much harder" and use "very different rules" and promised to go with them to the Capitol, though he did not.

"If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore," Trump told his supporters.

Democrats could also use a Senate impeachment trial to try to push through a vote **blocking Trump from running for office again**.

Lawmakers delivered speech after speech, wearing masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This is a moment of truth, my friends," Democratic congressman Gerry Connolly told his colleagues ahead of the vote. "Are you on the side of chaos and the mob or are on the side of constitutional democracy and our freedom?"

01.13.21

U.S. House begins debate on impeaching Trump for his role in Capitol assault

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U.S. House begins debate on impeaching Trump for his role in Capitol assault

At least five Republicans have said they would join Democrats in voting to formally charge president from their own party with inciting an insurrection, seven days before he leaves office and President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in

Reuters| Published: 01.13.21 , 17:13

A week after President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol, the House of Representatives gathered on Wednesday to consider impeaching him for his role in an assault on American democracy that stunned the nation and left five dead.

At least five Republicans have said they would join Democrats in voting for an article of impeachment - a formal charge - of inciting an insurrection just seven days before he is due to leave office and President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in on Jan. 20.

If the House approves it, Trump would become the first president impeached twice. A majority vote in the House to impeach would trigger a trial in the Republican-controlled Senate, although it was unclear whether such a trial would take place in time to expel Trump from office.

As lawmakers debated the matter, National Guard troops and police were stationed around the Capitol to provide security.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, the No. 2 Democrat, said Democrats intended to send the impeachment charge, once approved, to the Senate "as soon as possible," and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi named nine impeachment managers who would present the House's case during a Senate trial.

The extraordinary swiftness with which Democrats were moving reflects the ongoing danger that Trump poses to national security, according to top Democrats.

It also increases pressure on Mitch McConnell, the Republican Senate leader, to consider holding an immediate trial.

McConnell has said no trial could begin until the chamber returns from its recess on Jan. 19. But Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, who is set to become the majority leader after two newly elected Democratic senators from Georgia are seated and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris is sworn in later this month, told reporters the Senate could be recalled to handle the matter if McConnell agrees.

'Crime scene'

Washington is on high alert after the riot and with a week to go in Trump's term. Thousands of National Guard troops were to be on hand and some service members wearing fatigues, with weapons at hand, could be seen sleeping inside the Capitol building on Wednesday ahead of the session.

The House convened just after 9 a.m. (1400 GMT) in the same chamber where lawmakers hid under chairs last Wednesday as rioters clashed with police in the halls of the Capitol.

"We are debating this historic measure at an actual crime scene," Democratic Representative Jim McGovern said as the session opened. "This was a well-organized attack on our country that was incited by Donald Trump."

Democrats moved forward on an impeachment vote after Vice President Mike Pence rejected an effort to persuade him to invoke the 25th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to remove Trump.

As the House prepared for the impeachment vote, there were signs Trump's hold on the Republican Party was beginning to ebb.

At least five House Republicans, including Liz Cheney, a member of her party's leadership team, said they would vote for his second impeachment - a prospect no president before Trump has faced.

"There has never been a greater betrayal by a President of the United States of his office and his oath to the Constitution," Cheney, the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, said in a statement.

Trump "summoned this mob, assembled the mob, and lit the flame of this attack" on the Capitol, she said.

Republicans Jaime Herrera Beutler, John Katko, Adam Kinzinger and Fred Upton also said they supported impeachment.

In a break from standard procedure, Republican leaders in the House have refrained from urging their members to vote against impeaching Trump, saying it was a matter of individual conscience.

The New York Times reported that McConnell was said to be pleased about the impeachment push, another sign Trump's party is looking to move on from him after the attack on Congress.

No remorse

In his first public appearance since last Wednesday's riot, Trump showed no contrition on Tuesday for his speech shortly before the siege in which he called on his supporters to protest Biden's victory by marching on the Capitol.

"What I said was totally appropriate," Trump told reporters.

At a meeting to set the rules for Wednesday's impeachment vote, Democratic Representative David Cicilline, who helped craft the impeachment measure, said it had the support of 217 lawmakers - enough to impeach Trump.

House Republicans who opposed the impeachment drive argued Democrats were going too far, as Trump was on the verge of leaving office.

"This is scary where this goes, because this is about more than about impeaching the president of the United States. This is about cancelling the president and cancelling all

the people you guys disagree with," said Republican Representative Jim Jordan, one of Trump's staunchest defenders when the president was impeached in 2019 after encouraging the government of Ukraine to dig up political dirt on Biden.

A two-thirds majority of the Senate is needed to convict Trump, meaning at least 17 Republicans in the 100-member chamber would have to vote for conviction. Democrats could also use an impeachment trial to push through a vote blocking Trump from running for office again.

Only a simple Senate majority is needed to disqualify Trump from future office, but there is disagreement among legal experts as to whether an impeachment conviction is needed before a disqualification vote.

A different part of the Constitution, the 14th Amendment, also provides a procedure for disqualifying Trump from future office with a simple majority of both chambers.