

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OBAMA

JANUARY 6, 2021

History will rightly remember today's violence at the Capitol, incited by a sitting president who has continued to baselessly lie about the outcome of a lawful election, as a moment of great dishonor and shame for our nation. But we'd be kidding ourselves if we treated it as a total surprise.

For two months now, a political party and its accompanying media ecosystem has too often been unwilling to tell their followers the truth — that this was not a particularly close election and that President-Elect Biden will be inaugurated on January 20. Their fantasy narrative has spiraled further and further from reality, and it builds upon years of sown resentments. Now we're seeing the consequences, whipped up into a violent crescendo.

Right now, Republican leaders have a choice made clear in the desecrated chambers of democracy. They can continue down this road and keep stoking the raging fires. Or they can choose reality and take the first steps toward extinguishing the flames. They can choose America.

I've been heartened to see many members of the President's party speak up forcefully today. Their voices add to the examples of Republican state and local election officials in states like Georgia who've refused to be intimidated and have discharged their duties honorably. We need more leaders like these — right now and in the days, weeks, and months ahead as President-Elect Biden works to restore a common purpose to our politics. It's up to all of us as Americans, regardless of party, to support him in that goal.