

Steve Bannon expected to turn himself in after new indictment

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Former White House strategist Steve Bannon is expected to turn himself in on reported new state charges [Alex Brandon/The Associated Press]

New York, September 7 (RHC)-- Former U.S. President Donald Trump adviser Steve Bannon has been indicted in a new criminal case in New York, and is expected to turn himself in on Thursday, The Washington Post newspaper has reported. In a statement released to reporters, Bannon pledged to fight what he called the “phony charges” which he claimed were politically motivated.

The Washington Post, citing people familiar with the situation, reported the indictment was expected to “mirror aspects” of earlier federal charges lodged against Bannon, which alleged he had duped thousands of people into donating funds they were told would be used to build Trump’s promised wall along the border between the U.S. and Mexico. In his final hours in office in January 2021, Trump pardoned Bannon of the federal charges.

“They are coming after all of us, not only President Trump and myself,” Bannon said in the statement, parroting allegations that authorities have systematically gone after the former Republican president and his allies.

“I am never going to stop fighting,” added Bannon, who is largely credited with orchestrating the former president’s successful 2016 campaign but acrimoniously left his role as White House adviser just months after Trump took office. “In fact, I have not yet begun to fight. They will have to kill me first.”

The latest indictment comes after Bannon was convicted in July on contempt of congress charges stemming from his refusal to comply with a subpoena from a congressional panel probing the January 6, 2021 riot at the US Capitol building in Washington, DC.

Federal prosecutors had previously alleged that Bannon collected \$25 million from donors for his “We Build the Wall” effort, but diverted at least \$1m for his personal use. His arrest on a 46-metre (150-foot) yacht worth \$35 million off the coast of the U.S. state of Connecticut in August 2020 undercut his carefully crafted persona of a populist champion and firebrand.

While Bannon was pardoned, two other men later pleaded guilty to their involvement in the scheme. Presidential pardons only apply to federal charges and do not relate to criminal prosecutions pursued by state authorities.

The Manhattan District Attorney’s Office has been examining Bannon’s case since Trump issued the pardon, according to The Washington Post. The office is currently also investigating Trump and his organisation for possibly criminally manipulating the value of assets. It is one of several probes the former president currently faces.

The Department of Justice is investigating classified documents removed from the White House in stored at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Prosecutors in Georgia are also conducting a criminal probe of Trump’s alleged efforts to pressure an election official to manipulate the state vote count following the 2020 presidential election, which he lost to Joe Biden, a Democrat.

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