

Biden considers preemptive pardons for U.S. officials in Trump's firing line



Washington, December 6 (RHC)-- U.S. President Joe Biden is considering whether to issue blanket pardons for current and former public officials who risk being targeted by President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration.

The president has discussed the preemptive measure against potential revenge attacks with senior aides, but no decisions have yet been taken, according to sources who spoke anonymously to The Associated Press and Reuters news agencies on Thursday.

The discussion picked up steam after Trump tapped Kash Patel, who has promised retribution against critics of the president-elect, for the role of FBI director, the notion gaining further currency when Biden pardoned his son, Hunter Biden, on Sunday.

The sources revealed that fearful former officials had reached out to the White House in a bid to avoid damaging and financially costly investigations, but aides worried that granting immunity in cases where no crimes had been committed could backfire, inviting claims of guilt from Trump and his allies.

The U.S. Constitution gives a president broad pardon powers, but preemptive pardons for offences that have not yet been charged are largely untested.

Among those allegedly being considered are former Republican legislator Liz Cheney, an outspoken critic of Trump, Dr Anthony Fauci, who helped coordinate Biden's COVID-19 response, and California's Senator-elect Adam Schiff, who led the first impeachment effort against Trump.

Trump has previously circulated social media posts calling for the jailing of Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, former Vice President Mike Pence, and others. He also promoted a social media post that suggested he wanted military tribunals for supposed cases of treason.

The preemptive move, first reported by the Politico news outlet, would mark a novel deployment of the president's constitutional powers. Trump had reportedly considered the measure for himself and his supporters after a failed bid to overturn the 2020 presidential election that led to rioting at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Biden has pardoned his son not just for his convictions on federal gun and tax violations, but for any potential federal offence committed over an 11-year period, providing a model for further protections that could be granted to officials.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters earlier this week to expect more pardons from Biden before the end of his term.

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