



OFFICE of INTELLIGENCE and ANALYSIS
REFERENCE AID

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TERRORISM

(U) Tactics Used to Breach the US Capitol Building on 6 January 2021 Highlight Advanced Preparations

(U//FOUO) **Scope Note:** This *Reference Aid* provides an overview of some tactics employed during the breach of the US Capitol to help state and local authorities prepare for possible future violent events.

(U//FOUO) *The tactics used by domestic violent extremists (DVEs) to assault law enforcement and security personnel and ultimately breach the US Capitol suggests that some of the participants engaged in pre-operational coordination and planning activities.* Following the breach, federal charges were levied against more than 330 individuals, most of whom traveled from outside of the National Capital Region. An increase in security at government facilities in Washington, DC probably has largely dissuaded further targeting of the US Capitol, but conspiracy theories and perceptions of voter fraud and government overreach could inspire individuals to engage in violence at government facilities across the United States.

- (U) At least 10 suspected militia extremists attended paramilitary training in Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina ahead of the breach, according to court documents. The suspected DVEs also coordinated efforts to bring tactical equipment to the event, presumably in anticipation of violence. The 10 individuals are awaiting trial for charges, including conspiring against the United States and conspiring to prevent the government from discharging its duties.
- (U//FOUO) An alleged leader of the Oath Keepers^{USPER}, who is awaiting charges related to conspiracy, encouraged followers to attend the event, reminded them of the firearms restrictions in the Capital, and suggested they bring mace and batons instead, according to court documents.^a Other Oath Keepers implicated in the conspiracy designated a quick reaction force (QRF) outside the city that was prepared to supply the group with firearms if necessary.^b Some social media users shared maps of the US Capitol grounds that showed ingress and egress routes, associated tunnels, and potential rallying points.^c

^a (U//FOUO) The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics does not constitute violent extremism, and is constitutionally protected. Identifying as a "Oath Keeper" alone does not constitute violent extremism.

^b (U//FOUO) A quick reaction force (QRF) is a term traditionally used to describe a military unit prepared to mobilize on very short notice when called upon. This is frequently employed by militia extremists and is used to respond to action against other individuals within the movement.












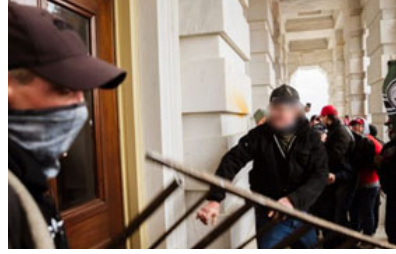



^c (U//FOUO) Discussion of the US Capitol for non-violent purposes, including the sharing of maps, is constitutionally protected.

- (U) DVEs used tactical radios, mobile devices, and encrypted applications to communicate securely during the breach, according to media reporting and a federal indictment. Four alleged leaders of the Proud Boys^{USPER} solicited donations for electronic equipment, purchased radios, and established an encrypted channel used by dozens of associates.^d The four individuals are awaiting trial on a variety of charges, including conspiracy and obstruction of an official proceeding.

^d (U//FOUO) The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics does not constitute violent extremism, and is constitutionally protected. Identifying as a “Proud Boy”, or using encrypted applications, alone, does not constitute violent extremism.

(U) Tactics and Coordination Observed During Civil Unrest on 6 Jan 2021

(U//FOUO) A review of violent tactics employed during the breach of the US Capitol Building in Washington, DC on 6 January 2021 reflects a variety of weapon types, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs), firearms, improvised incendiary devices (IIDs), household items and other opportunistic objects that were used as weapons. Other notable tactics include the staging of firearms and equipment, theft of law enforcement equipment, and the use of tactical movements.

(U) Tactic	(U) Summary	(U) Picture	(U) Tactic	(U) Summary	(U) Picture
(U) Weapons					
(U) IEDs	(U) According to the FBI, an unidentified individual placed two pipe bombs outside the headquarters of the Republican National Committee ^{USPER} and Democratic National Committee ^{USPER} .			(U) Firearms	(U) At least seven individuals were arrested for possessing 12 firearms and thousands of rounds of ammunition before and after the US Capitol riot, according to open source media reports.
(U) IIDs	(U) An individual arrested during the event had 11 containers of homemade napalm, along with several guns and a list of “good guys” and “bad guys”, according to court documents.			(U) Crossbows	(U) An individual possessing a crossbow was arrested during the event.
(U) Batons	(U) An individual was pictured inside the US Capitol Building with a concealed baton.			(U) Tasers and Stun Guns	(U) Multiple individuals at the US Capitol Building were observed carrying various types of tasers and stun guns.
(U) Chemical Irritants	(U) Rioters were seen using a variety of chemical irritants against law enforcement, including pepper spray and bear spray.			(U) Household Items	(U) Various household items were used as weapons during the storming of the US Capitol Building, including basic hand tools such as crow bars and hammers, and other items such as baseball bats and ladders.
(U) Opportunistic Weapons	(U) Opportunistic weapon use was prevalent, including the use of fire extinguishers, pipes from nearby scaffolding, bricks, metal barriers, and furniture from inside the US Capitol Building. According to the US Capitol Police Labor Committee, an officer was stabbed with a metal fence stake, likely taken from security barriers on the scene.			(U) Law Enforcement Equipment	(U//FOUO) Opportunistic stealing of law enforcement equipment – including batons, shields, handcuffs, tactical vests, and helmets – for use against police officers was observed. Individuals also used stolen shields to shatter windows and break into the US Capitol Building. During the event, rioters encouraged each other to steal law enforcement firearms to kill officers. Following the violent protest, a white supremacist extremist group posted images of “trophy” from the event, including a stolen police riot helmet. The group posted images of the helmet online to encourage others to join their organization, according to an open source social media report.
					
					

(U) Tactics and Coordination Observed During Civil Unrest on 6 Jan 2021, Cont.

(U) Tactic	(U) Summary	(U) Picture	(U) Tactic	(U) Summary	(U) Picture
(U) Other Items					
(U) Flex Cuffs	(U) Flex cuffs and other restraints were observed during the event, suggesting preparation for detaining government personnel or perceived enemies.		(U) Ropes and Climbing Gear	(U) Ropes and climbing gear were pre-positioned and used to breach upper levels of the facility and to bypass security.	
(U) Operations					
(U) Use of Hand Signals, Tactical Movements, and Paramilitary Equipment	(U) The rioters used coordinated hand signals and moved in tactical military-like formations. Court documents reveal that a small unit wore paramilitary equipment and “moved in an organized and practiced fashion up the steps on the east side of the Capitol Building.”		(U) Communication Devices	(U) Rioters communicated on General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) and Amateur Radio-capable allocated frequencies during the event. Additional communication methods included two-way radios, earpieces, and encrypted applications for mobile phones that function like push-to-talk radios.	
(U) Discrete Clothing, Operational Security	(U) Court documents indicate a self-identified Proud Boy ^{USPER} avoided wearing certain colors and aimed to attend the event “incognito”, to avoid law enforcement identification. Other examples of rioters’ operational security awareness include turning off GPS functions on phones and leaving electronic devices in vehicles, according to court documents.			(U) Individual referenced in the summary column who was arrested for activity on 6 January 2021 in Washington, DC.	
				(U) Subject of interest involved in property damage during a violent protest on 12 December 2020 in Washington, DC prior to discussions regarding wearing certain colors. Individual is dressed in black and yellow—colors traditionally associated with the Proud Boys ^{USPER} .	

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Definitions	<p><i>(U//FOUO)</i> Domestic Violent Extremist: Individual(s) and/or group(s) based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics does not alone constitute violent extremism, and is constitutionally protected.</p> <p><i>(U//FOUO)</i> Militia Violent Extremists: Individual(s) and/or group(s) who facilitate, attempt to engage in, or engage in acts of unlawful violence dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources and directed at individuals or groups they perceive as threats to their perception of American sovereignty, including but not limited to Muslims and immigrants. Militia extremists oppose many federal and state authorities' laws and regulations, including, but not limited to those related to firearms ownership, and may also justify violence against government officials or entities perceived to have abused their legal authority or incompetently attended to critical tasks, such as public safety. Militia extremists may belong to armed paramilitary groups and engage in paramilitary training designed to violently resist or confront these perceived threats.</p>
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2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive?

3. Please complete the following sentence: "I focus most of my time on:"

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	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate your own regional-specific analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share with partners | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate your own topic-specific analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate resources (e.g. equipment and personnel) | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop long-term homeland security strategies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reprioritize organizational focus | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not plan to use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Author or adjust policies and guidelines | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/> |

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product not address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

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