



# THE BIG LIE:

## The Intersection of Conspiracy & Civil Unrest

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# Introduction

Dear Clients, Partners, and Friends,

We've all recoiled in disbelief and horror as we watched scenes of violence stream across our TVs. The violent insurrection we saw in the U.S. capitol was unprecedented. That is to say nothing of the collapse in security measures and barriers that allowed rioters to breach our nation's capitol. Deservedly so, leaders are alarmed about how this could happen in one of the most heavily protected cities in the world. People want to know what comes next, how they can navigate this new wave of politically-inspired violence, and who might be most at risk.

[According to the FBI](#), armed protests are being planned in all 50 state capitals for inauguration day (Jan 20th). There is also actionable intelligence that the country is headed for a period of protracted civil unrest and less-than-peaceful protests throughout the beginning of this year. As always, our team is here to help you prepare and harden your facilities so that this sort of politically-inspired violence has a minimal impact on your operations.

**Currently, we are in a heightened state of alert at all of our managed properties.** VPs, managing directors and site managers are reviewing emergency plans and contingency plans and making any necessary arrangements and adjustments.

Our VPs and leadership team is in constant communication with the field as we continue to monitor the situation through our global network of resources. We will continue to review and adjust our posture and staffing levels as more information comes to light. That being said, here's what we know:

## Monitoring Social Media

Chesley Brown continues to monitor blogs and social media calling for current and former military personnel to be in the front ranks of any protests taking place this weekend or in the time leading up to, and including, the inauguration of President Elect Joe Biden. Open source intelligence (OSINT) indicates that online chatter often preceded large demonstrations, as it did before the January 6th



riot. Many of the contributions discuss planned activities not only for the day of the inauguration, but also for the weekend before. Social media discussions on open websites such as Facebook and Twitter became more frequent, particularly with regard to possible riots on the weekend of January 16-17. As a result, Mayor Muriel Bowser, Washington, D.C., has sought assistance from the Department of Homeland Security in increasing the security presence in and around the Capitol, canceling all permit demonstration requests. Business owners and residents have begun posting the hashtag "#DontRentDC" to discourage property managers from inadvertently granting short term rentals to people traveling from out of town with the intent to participate in the riot.

Of particular concern is the so-called " Million Militia March ". Plans by extremist groups to return to the Capitol on Election Day are posted on multiple social media forums and demand armed marches and violence. T-shirts and posters for the event have been made and posted on numerous social media platforms. Other locations mentioned in social media posts include Salt Lake City, Utah, state buildings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Columbus, Ohio. Given the many posts calling for action on various social media and blogging sites, demonstrations are likely.

The recent removal of Parler, an application that advertises strict adherence to the right to freedom of expression, from Apple and Google application stores and Amazon web servers may increase the likelihood of demonstrations at the offices of these companies. The decisions of these companies to remove Parler was followed by posts on various social networks and blogs advocating violence against employees of these technology companies. However, the probability that the crowd size will be similar to those observed in D.C. on January 6 for any potential anti-technology demonstrations remains low.



## Avoid Capitals and “Parade Routes”

Businesses near government buildings are encouraged to track demonstration activity in and around their locations and opt for early closings for the next seven days. Additionally, it is recommended that employees living in the immediate areas of the planned demonstrations limit movement.



With protests popping up at the homes of congress people more and more, politicians are likely to draw the ire of protestors for the foreseeable future. If you work for a politician, or are located near a politician’s home or office, you are much more likely to be in the crossfire. The Proud Boys and other extremist groups are planning to carry out armed protests in all 50 state capitols on Sunday, January 17th, according to multiple sources. Although it is a broad statement, these announced plans should be taken seriously by residents and businesses near the state Capitol buildings in cities like Seattle, Portland, Atlanta



and Washington D.C., where local businesses and storefronts are highly susceptible to vandalism.

According to Chesley Brown's Managing Director of Corporate Investigations and retired FBI investigator, Dell Spry, "Just stay home, that's the best advice I can give." According to his contacts within the FBI and NSA, the threat of white nationalist violence has never been higher than it is today. We simply don't know the full scope of the situation, and as such, we're encouraging everyone to stay away for safety.

## The Threat of QAnon and Workplace Violence

While QAnon is not an organization, it is a contagious ideology that has spread throughout the country and the world. While not all believers in QAnon's ideas are members of extremist groups, they all subscribe to a basic set of beliefs: that they or their way of life is threatened, or that others are threatened by dark forces that they must expose and defeat. It is a deeply paranoid mindset. Paranoia is an established risk indicator for violence in the workplace. Employees who are convinced that their co-workers, supervisors, or organization present imminent risk can act proactively to protect themselves or others they believe are in danger.

## Businesses *Must* Develop a Layered Security Approach to Harden Facilities

Regardless of whether your organization is large or small, public or private, there are basic security tactics that can protect your building and residents from unwanted attention or attack. The goals of hardening your facility are to deter, deflect, divert, and deny. By projecting the image of a safe, impenetrable operation to someone performing pre-operational surveillance, a site for political action, or looking for a crime of opportunity you can stop the fight before it even starts. Hardening can and should be considered an effective offensive strategy to threat management.



## Fail to plan, Plan to fail.

As you look further inward, offices, conference rooms, and restrooms should have doors that open out into the hallway to prevent entry. Doors should be locked inside, either with no window to the hallway or with a window. Keep bottles of water and snacks like protein bars stocked in your safe room in case of an extended shelter in place situation. You should also maintain a separate communications system for your safe room in case cellular services fail or become overwhelmed.

Practice your plan regularly for crises and have a clear communication plan. Talking about threats reduces the fear. Giving them the knowledge for how to take care of themselves and each other can inspire confidence across your entire organization. By enacting a few of these tips you can protect your property, people, and assets behind layers of security. As former CIA and FBI Director William Webster said, “Security is always seen as too much, until the day it’s not enough.”

## Conclusion

Every hour we continue to learn more about this situation from our network of resources. This is a dynamic situation that continues to evolve. We, along with our partners, will continue to plan for and manage on-the-ground events. Below is a list of resources organizations can use to help understand and plan for ongoing civil unrest in your area. As always, if you think you, or your organization may be at risk, our security experts are here to help. For over 30 years we’ve helped businesses anticipate and navigate risk before it becomes a crisis. If you would like to learn more about how we can help you protect what matters most, let’s talk.

### Additional Resources

- [Preparing for Civil Unrest Checklist](#)
- [What Achilles can Teach us About Threat Management](#)
- [Q-Speak: The language of QAnon](#) (ASIS)
- [Preparing for post-election Civil Unrest](#) (ASIS)

