



Miller Center for Community  
Protection and Resilience

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## Assessment of the Capitol Riots

### *Violent Actors and Ideologies Behind the Events of January 6, 2021*

**New Brunswick, N.J. (January 12, 2021)** — Rutgers' Miller Center for Community Protection and Resilience and Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) released a [report](#) assessing the Capitol riots that took place on January 6, 2021. Authors of, "[Assessment of the Capitol Riots: Violent Actors and Ideologies Behind the Events of January 6, 2021.](#)" found that the causes of these events were seven-fold:

1. Virtually all violent vanguard elements appeared to come from predominantly far-right, fringe groups.
2. Some in the crowd interpreted portions of President Trump's speech as an instruction to march aggressively to the capitol building directly.
3. High profile figures associated with the administration were also inciting violent sentiment and cued instructions previous to the event.
4. Widely subscribed messianic ideology in QAnon, together with situational cues, created conditions that strongly favored mass enactment of its fantasy of insurrection.
5. Explicit plans to "Occupy the Capitol" were circulating across social media suggesting that the capitol building was an explicit target of the violent vanguard from the beginning. Evidence suggests some rioters were armed with weapons and zip-ties.
6. There is no credible evidence that the crowd was infiltrated or led by Antifa activists at this time.

"The political polarization that has been brewing in our country for decades finally boiled over on January 6, 2021. American citizens committed acts of insurrection in our nation's capital in an effort to subvert the process prescribed by our Constitution for selecting the nation's chief executive," said [John J. Farmer, Jr.](#), director of both the Miller Center and the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. "Finding a way to heal our deep divisions has been identified by President-elect Biden as his top priority. In the short-term, however, it is vital that law enforcement officials understand the threat posed by the groups that worked in concert to take over the Capitol building and that remain a threat to the constitutional order that all public officials are sworn to uphold."

This new report comes on the heels of a series of reports the Miller Center and NCRI released in 2020, examining multiple domestic groups using conspiracy theories and social media networks to instigate widespread violence against political opponents and law enforcement.

- [The QAnon Conspiracy: Destroying Families, Dividing Communities, Undermining Democracy](#)
- [Network-Enabled Anarchy](#)
- [Cyber Swarming, Memetic Warfare and Viral Insurgency](#)

The Miller Center, affiliated with Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics and Rutgers Law School, works with vulnerable communities around the world to enhance their safety and standing in society by improving their relationships with law enforcement, with other government agencies and with other vulnerable communities.

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**ABOUT THE MILLER CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION & RESILIENCE**

[The Miller Center](#) was established to assist vulnerable communities, particularly communities of faith, to enhance their safety and their standing in society by improving their relationships with law enforcement, with other government agencies, and with other vulnerable communities. The Miller Center seeks to honor, through remembrance, the human capacity to rebuild, even to flourish, after unspeakable horrors.

**ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS**

[The Eagleton Institute of Politics](#) at Rutgers University—New Brunswick studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve, and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice.

**ABOUT RUTGERS—NEW BRUNSWICK**

*Rutgers University—New Brunswick is where Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world's top 60 universities, Rutgers's flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference's most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists, and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.*