

Insurrection, Proud Boys and Terrorism Drama by David Hodson

On January 6th, 2021, protestors, anarchists and others stormed the Capital Building in Washington, D.C., the epicenter of American democracy and rule of law. Regardless of one's politics, the recorded images were heartbreaking and unsettling. Having served with the Americans in Afghanistan, not to mention experience within the realm of domestic terrorism, tears flooded my eyes as the drama unfolded. The subsequent deployment of National Guard troops throughout the capital only accentuated the damage the protestors had done to the values enshrined within the Constitution, that, ironically, if not sadly, the protestors claimed to be defending.

With multiple platforms to watch the attack on the capital, I was able to compare and contrast the coverage from a variety of media outlets. CNN, Fox News and others, regardless of the media's political affinity, facilitated my observation and understanding of the event and those involved. Anticipating military intervention and more than familiar with the armed underground within the United States and Canada, I actively searched for the indicia of armed militias and other anti-government groups. Not surprisingly, and with concern, said indicia was subsequently accentuated and presented by multiple print and television media sources. Eventually, the general Canadian and American public learned about the armed underground. With continued media coverage, often grounded upon the emotional heartbreak, shock and anger that was experienced, militias and other armed underground groups were vilified. However, the reality may not have been the government narrative or what the media portrayed.

Before continuing, readers should note that I was not present during the attack, nor have I reviewed any primary intelligence or research. Further, I am not privy to the observations and analysis of the Secret Service, FBI or other law enforcement.

entities on the ground. In essence, and recognizing the inherent frailties, my comments are derived from observations during the attack, reviewing numerous media articles and analysis that followed, discussions with those with knowledge and experience in the realm of domestic counter-insurgency, as well as applicable professional experiences.

Watching the drama of 6th January 2021 unfold, I saw multiple Trump flags and countless flags of the United States of America. I did not see a single Confederate Flag, and only one Three Percent Flag (thirteen stars in a circle instead of the traditional fifty-one). However, the next and subsequent days, I saw the "Stars and Bars" or Confederate Flag prominently displayed in the foyer of the Capital Building, as well as a concerted effort, Proud Boys aside for now, to accentuate any badges and other indicia of anti-government groups. The narrative being presented was confusing and inconsistent with my knowledge and understanding of the armed underground.

As a veteran, I was disgusted by President Donald Trump's disrespect of Senator John McCain, Gold Star families and members of the military. However, many members of the military and the law enforcement community supported and still support Trumpism., and the concern for the Democrats is that said members gravitate to and are actively recruited by anti-government groups like Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters. Further, had the Republicans had a more polished and less caustic leader within an environment free from COVID, the Republicans would have won the election by a landslide. Stated in the alternative, in order to discount the reality that a significantly large percentage of the American public favours the conservative right, often as a reaction to progressive left platforms grounded in fiction, a narrative had to be created to blame the turmoil on radical and extreme groups.



The Proud Boys gained fame after former President Trump suggested they "stand by" during a Presidential Debate, but the reality is that the group is more chauvinistic, misogynist and opposed to immigrants than concerned about protecting the Constitution or opposing the government. They are neither comparably armed, organized or disciplined when compared with, for example, Oath Keepers. Further, unlike Oath Keepers or the Three Percenters, which groups are comprised of military and law enforcement members, Proud Boys are often comprised of less successful males – hardly a risk and certainly not worthy of a terrorist label. That said, the Proud Boys appeared to be the most visible organized group, and were likely among the first to enter the Capital Building, but relative to the number of "regular" people protesting, their numbers were small, and any suggestion that the Proud Boys were coordinating or acting as *agents of influence*, is speculative and only bolsters an organization granted credibility by a now disgraced President.

Although Proud Boys originated in Canada, it has had an insignificant history, other than opposing the values the progressive left is attempting to create. The NDP motion was supported and passed adding the Proud Boys to Canada's list of terrorist groups, but the motion and vote was not founded upon research. Although contrary to the government position, it is likely the motion to label the Proud Boys a terrorist organization was politically motivated, and grounded upon the same narrative that the Democrats are fearfully espousing south of the border. Regardless, considering the cultural distrust of government, labeling the Proud Boys a terrorist organization will most likely galvanize anti-government sentiment, while, concurrently, driving the movement deeper underground. Enforcement frailties of the new label will be abundant as the Proud Boys rebrand and become less visible. Many Canadians and Americans celebrate the Conservative Right, but those with more extremist values and beliefs keep a lower profile. For example, 62% of Americans have opinions that they fear sharing and 80% think political correctness is a problem. That said, there are groups within Canada that are aligned with similar groups in the United States. However, said groups, vis-à-vis promoting and protecting a traditional American or Canadian way of life, have less of a need to organize, meet, train and act. In Canada, there is more of a cultural acceptance and agreement of resistance, perhaps leaderless cell or other forms, when the situation demands same. Comparable to what's happening in the United States, it is expected that the Canadian anti-government movement will only grow. The attack in Washington is a warning for people who care about the rule of law. More frightening is the reality that the attack was a significant learning opportunity for those who do not. Violent political action, perhaps in pursuit of a fascist agenda, is now a possibility. Progressive concepts perpetuated by the government, whether grounded in fiction or not, have created an anger within a large

percentage of the American public, which public is becoming organized. Said public welcomes violence and is willing to intimidate in order to pursue the conservative agenda. With a country divided, there is the real possibility that a more refined and politically astute conservative leader, whether Republican or an Independent, will harness the anger, paranoia and resentment that the political left is exacerbating with an agenda that is unlikely to be internalized or cemented within American society. In essence, violence will become a political option, and this violence will lead to a further erosion, suppression and oppression of democratic values, rights and freedoms, perhaps through the imposition of martial law. Fascism may be the inevitable result.

David Hodson is a criminal defence attorney specializing in Canadian firearms law. He has served in Afghanistan and elsewhere within the Middle East. As well, his academic, military and professional experiences have provided him with insight into the American, and to a lesser extent, the Canadian armed undergrounds



My music at work by Jennie Clarke

I thought I would start the trend of "my music at work" as we work from our home offices, or even at our workplaces. If you have spent time in my library office you will know that I always have music playing in the background. Please send me your list of music to feature in our next newsletter!

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