



Written by [John Larabell](#) on January 24, 2023

Published in the February 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 03

The Importance of Optics and Rhetoric

January 6, 2021: The day will live on in infamy as the occasion of a violent, armed insurrection designed to obstruct the peaceful transfer of power and possibly even overthrow the U.S. government, all masterminded by none other than Donald J. Trump. At least that is what the Left wants us to believe.

The truth, as readers of *The New American* know, is quite different. Donald Trump did not orchestrate, or try to orchestrate, an “armed insurrection.” Of the thousands of people who (unwisely, it turned out) gathered on the Capitol grounds that fateful day, only a very few engaged in any illegal actions. There is video footage of Capitol Police allowing the mob to enter the Capitol. There are photos and video of known Antifa agitators among the crowd posing as Trump supporters and trying to whip the people into a frenzy to cause a violent riot. There is evidence of federal *agents provocateurs* among the “patriots” marching on the Capitol. And, most importantly, the “mostly peaceful protesters,” to borrow terminology from the Left, were absolutely not a crowd of “armed insurrectionists.” Patriotic Americans know that a true “armed insurrection,” with the aim of marching on the Capitol and overthrowing the government, would have looked much different — we’ll leave it at that.

Nevertheless, over the past two years we’ve been inundated with constant messaging about January 6 — coming from the mainstream media, the Democratic Party, and social media — insisting on a certain narrative of the event. The “official” story of January 6, and the government’s response to the protest, is a perfect example of the Left’s use of *optics* and *rhetoric* to gain and maintain power over the American people. The image of the event, i.e., how it was packaged and made to “look” to the American people, was carefully chosen to accomplish the Left’s goal. The narrative around the event, particularly the words used to describe it, was also carefully curated to paint a certain picture in the minds of the people.

What happened on January 6 has the appearance of a staged event designed with optics and rhetoric in mind to do maximum damage to patriotic, Trump-supporting Americans frustrated over the results of the 2020 presidential election. Did the Left accomplish its goal? To an extent, yes. While not every American followed the J6 Committee hearings or even believed the mainstream media narrative, quite a few did. Even among many conservatives, the Trump brand took a hit after January 6. Trump supporters and patriotic Americans in general have essentially been labeled “enemies of the state,” as we explain in this issue of the magazine, looking at the events of January 6 two years later.

Patriotic Americans need to understand the importance of using optics and rhetoric. In other words, we can’t win this fight with bad optics that play into our enemy’s hands. We also need to be aware of how our rhetoric can be used against us. Ineffective use of optics and rhetoric has been a weakness of constitutionally minded Americans for years. By no means should we resort to lies and deceptive tactics to manipulate Americans, but we need to be wise enough to not be drawn into the traps the Left sets for us. We don’t need to give them any more ammunition to smear us with. For this and other reasons, *The New American* and its parent organization, The John Birch Society, have always been opposed to getting involved in protests and “marches,” since they can be so easily co-opted by those with unsavory purposes.

Liberty is still attractive to most Americans. We have a winning message! Packaging that message effectively and sharing it in an articulate manner will help us greatly in accomplishing our goals. That is part of the strategy of this magazine moving forward into a period of unprecedented growth as we work



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for “less government, more responsibility, and — with God’s help — a better world.” That freedom shall not perish!



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