I absolutely believe social media had an impact on January 6th, but I do not believe everything happened as the media reports.

At the time, I was a member of many pro-America groups on Facebook, and participated daily in the conversations had there and on Twitter. People were angry because there were many discrepancies during and after the 2020 election. Videos were released showing ballots being put in dumpsters, boxes of ballots showing up in the middle of the night that contained votes 90%+ in favor of Biden, poll workers discarding ballots. These groups were convinced the election was stolen and were furious.

Apart from the topic of the election, the amount of propaganda being spread was insane. Q people believed JFK Jr. was still alive and would be revealed as Trump’s VP, that the military still operated under Trump’s orders and the Biden administration was an illegitimate government, that all the major players were actors in masks, that there was a second White House built and being used by the Biden administration, one possible location being the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, CA, and another location near Fort Benning in Georgia.

It's difficult to describe what it felt like to be under the influence of propaganda to such an extreme degree, and while I didn’t believe most of the propaganda, I did believe the election was stolen and that the military had a plan. The propaganda being spread, which I’ve come to believe much of it came out of organizations like the Internet Research Agency, was powerfully effective and took advantage of destabilizing elements of our culture and institutions, driving people who already believed America was being stolen by globalist authoritarians over the edge.

People I was connected with discussed going to DC for weeks ahead of J6, but what’s interesting to me is the messaging I saw did not align with the image this week’s media painted. I saw no calls for violence, and in fact saw the opposite. The vast majority of accounts I was connected with specifically called for peaceful protests, to make the voice of the people heard but not to commit acts that would tarnish the message.

And what I found more interesting was the content I was exposed to following those events versus what I’ve heard and read from others. Many on the right believed the accusations of violence were fabricated because we were exposed to videos of police officers waving protestors into the building, guiding them to where they were trying to go, a few even receiving personal escort while exploring the building. I was not exposed to the footage from the other side of the building showing people behaving violently, breaking and climbing in through windows. And even today, almost 4 years later, I only just learned while reading for this week’s assignments about the violence that was being called for, calls for being armed for “Independence Day”, calls for war on Parler by the III%ers, or allegations that Obama and the Italian government used contractors and satellites to change votes.

Having said all this, I reaffirm my opinion that social media posts and videos had a massive impact on instigating the protests that day, but because of the practical ocean of propaganda on social media and the likely sources of that propaganda, I do not believe this was some kind of “grass-roots” movement that developed into something violent, but rather was a manufactured phenomena where specific messaging targeted to specific groups was pushed to generate a violent event and set the stage for what I’m sure could have become a civil war. Whether that effort was a failure remains to be seen, as sentiments have shifted and, especially given the results of the latest election, it is now the left ramping up the rhetoric and calling for action, up to and including civil war. I’ve even been seeing calls for the left’s own J6 by the very same people who called J6 the worst singular event in our nation’s history.

Having watched the rapidly-shifting zeitgeist over the last 4 years, I wondered then as I wonder now whether these events were orchestrated not to cause a right-wing civil war in 2020, but to prevent the full and irreversible wokification of American culture by immunizing half the country and seeding them with the idea of resisting the incoming administrations attempts to shift culture, leading to the inflammation of the left and what could be a left-wing driven civil war in response to a second Trump term. A civil war on American soil would greatly benefit our global adversaries like Russia and China, and with Russia specifically, the impact of the propaganda from 2016-2020 laid foundations for a further move to traditionally conservative values in America, which in the long-term could prove to be advantageous due to the similarities between the principles held by America’s developing Christian right-wing culture and Russia’s Eastern Orthodox church.

To wrap this up, I think J6 happened exclusively because of social media and wouldn’t have happened if social media didn’t exist. I think it’s an example of how profoundly effective propaganda can be on a population, and I think it demonstrates not only how our adversaries can manipulate the public, inflame tensions, and amplify events, but also how our own media organizations will do the same. People were shown different versions of events for J6, all of which actually happened, but because individual people weren’t exposed to the totality of what happened, we experienced years of debates and arguments with people speaking past each other.