



The Chinese Media's Take on US Unrest

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The state-controlled Chinese media enthusiastically covered the protests and rioting attending the George Floyd killing. It compared the American protests to the protests in Hong Kong and used the rioting and violence in the US as evidence that the democratic system is hypocritical and morally bankrupt.

A cartoon was recently published in the Chinese Communist Party newspaper *The People's Daily* depicting the Statue of Liberty with a police officer's arm smashing a bloodstained White House while stepping on the head of a helpless George Floyd. The headline, "Human Rights Disguise," was meant to convey the hypocrisy of a US that supposedly seeks to educate the world on how to behave while "murdering" its own citizens.

The Chinese attempt to link the protests in Hong Kong, the coronavirus pandemic, and Floyd's death stems from a desire to undermine the democratic basis of the Western system in the hope that the protests in Hong Kong will wane. If the American democracy is associated with anarchy, it will be seen as less of a model to emulate. In addition, the Chinese authorities seek to divert global attention away from Beijing's responsibility for the coronavirus outbreak. Extensive coverage of America's supposed hypocrisy serves as useful misdirection.

The Chinese media eagerly displayed images of the violent protests across the US, with captions like "This is not Syria—it is the US!". The media's emphasis on the lack of law and order and weak governance in the US is meant to imply that in China, such things would never happen. According to Beijing, the Chinese form of government results in a greater sense of security for its citizens and a better life. While US stores were looted and burned, China managed to overcome the coronavirus quickly and efficiently with far fewer

dead than were reported in the US. It even, according to the Chinese media, ended the protests in Hong Kong efficiently and quickly.

A Chinese newspaper called on the US government to “stand with Minnesota residents,” an allusion to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s recent statement that he and the American people “stand alongside Hong Kong residents.” The paper suggested that Pompeo first stand with his own country’s citizens before intervening in other countries’ affairs.

In a similar attempt to cast the Americans as hypocrites, a Chinese FM spokesman said that while American officials denounced the protesters across the US as “thugs,” they call the protesters in Hong Kong “heroes.”

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