

Storms of Protest in Washington and Hong Kong

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Global Research, January 11, 2021

Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)
Theme: [Intelligence](#)

The coverage of groups of people, described as mobs, rioters, or protestors depending on one's prejudice or adherence to accurate reporting, who "stormed" the Capitol in Washington and the Legislative Council in Hong Kong is revealing for how media and politicians react.

The American media ran headlines such as:

- "Trump supporters storm Capitol," Washington Post
- "Inside the mob that swarmed the US Capitol," CNN
- "A pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol in Washington," LA Times
- "In Photos: Mob Storms U.S. Capitol Building" New York Times
- "Pro-Trump mob sends US Capitol into chaos," Chicago Tribune

State/corporate media headlines were similar in Canada and the UK.

The "mob" was encouraged by the words of president Donald Trump. Included in the mob were extreme right-wingers and white-supremacist groups. Of note were the participation of the [Falun Gong](#) and Trump-supporting Tibetan sovereignists. The raising of the Tibetan flag at the Capitol Hill imbroglio [caused](#) "outrage and alarm" among some in the Tibetan online community. Imagine what would be the reaction if sovereignist Hawai'i flags were raised in Beijing.

CCTV surveillance, for which China is often criticized in the West, has led to some Capitol hill rioters being [identified and losing](#) their jobs.

Wei Ling Chua, author of [Democracy: What the West Can Learn from China](#), commented that "unlike US government trained Hong Kong terrorists, Trump supporters did not use arrows, fire bombs, throw stones, or attack the public who expressed different opinions."

Political leaders were [quick to condemn](#) the violence that erupted on Capitol Hill Wednesday after protestors stormed buildings and at least one woman was injured in a shooting.

UK PM Boris Johnson said, "Disgraceful scenes in U.S. Congress. The United States stands for democracy around the world and it is now vital that there should be a peaceful and orderly transfer of power."

Earlier when speaking of the Hong Kong protestors, Johnson [said](#), "So yes I do support them and I will happily speak up for them and back them every inch of the way."

Canadian PM Justin Trudeau told the News 1130 Vancouver radio station, “Obviously we’re concerned and we’re following the situation minute by minute. I think the American democratic institutions are strong, and hopefully everything will return to normal shortly.”

Speaking of the protests in Hong Kong, Trudeau directed his criticism at Beijing, “We have worked with some of our closest allies including the U.K., Australia and others to condemn the actions taken by China in Hong Kong.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the people who stormed the US legislature were “attackers and rioters” and that she felt “angry and also sad” after seeing pictures from the scene.

When it came to the Hong Kong protestors, Merkel focused on the rights of the protestors; she “[pointed out](#) that these rights and freedoms must of course be guaranteed.”

David Sassoli, president of European Parliament, [tweeted](#), “Deeply concerning scenes from the US Capitol tonight. Democratic votes must be respected. We are certain the US will ensure that the rules of democracy are protected.”

Concerning the unruly situation in Hong Kong — where rioters disrupted the passengers and flights at the international airport, ruined the LegCo, vandalized the metro, trashed university campuses, etc. — the European Parliament put forth a resolution that reads in part: “whereas the people of Hong Kong have taken to the streets in unprecedented numbers, peacefully exercising their fundamental right to assemble and to protest; whereas on 12 June, tens of thousands of protesters assembled around the Legislative Council building and its nearby roads, calling on the government to drop its proposed amendments to Hong Kong’s extradition law...”

What triggered the protests in Hong Kong? Some citizens were [opposed to extradition](#) of alleged criminals? How has China responded to [rioting](#), [sabotage](#), [terrorism](#), [separatism](#), and even [murders](#) by the so-called protestors? Hong Kong is a territory that was under British colonial administration from 1841 to 1997. There was no democracy until 18 directly elected seats were introduced to LegCo in 1991, shortly before the handover to China. When Hong Kong reverted to mainland China as a special autonomous region; it must be noted that once the original demands for rescinding the extradition bill were met, the goal posts of the NED-supported protestors transformed into a purported democracy movement.

“Hong Kong democracy fighters face a dire choice: Go abroad or go to jail,”
Washington Post

“Hong Kong police fire tear gas on pro-democracy protesters,” CNN

“China is desperate to stop Hong Kong’s pro-democracy movement,” LA Times

“Hong Kong Police Arrest Dozens of Pro-Democracy Leaders ...” New York Times

“Hong Kong’s pro-democracy protest movement left reeling by China’s recent power grab,” Chicago Tribune

Did China respond with military force? No. With arrests of law-abiding journalists? No. With police brutality? Many observers will acknowledge that police have been incredibly [restrained](#), some would say too restrained in the face of protestor violence.

The protestors, largely disaffected youth, as is apparent in all or most video footage, by and

large employ random violence as a tactic, which some of them [do not condemn](#).

I agree that individuals and the citizenry should have the right to protest against acts/measures/situations that are perceived to be unjust. However, when the goal of the protests has been achieved, for subsequent demands to be added by the protestors creates an appearance of disingenuousness.

Furthermore, whether one section of a citizenry have the right to [inconvenience](#), [disrupt](#), create conditions of insecurity, economic hardship for another section of the citizenry calls into question the legitimacy of protests. This is especially called into question when authorities have acceded to the initial demand(s) of the protestors.

A [2017 poll](#) found that 78.4% of Hong Kongers responded affirmatively to the statement "Belief that activities demanding political reforms in Hong Kong should be peaceful and non-violent."

Chinese media have tried to expose the western mass media [disinformation about the Hong Kong protests](#). The *Global Times*, an English-language Chinese newspaper, [notes](#), with a hint of *Schadenfreude*, the hypocrisy in the pronouncements of western politicians and mass media comparing rioters at the Capitol Hill and in Hong Kong.

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