

There has been shock around the world at the violent protests in the US Congress. The Kootneeti has been asking experts for their view on how the situation will be seen by China:

Professor Duncan McCampbel, Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Expert in law and Chinese affairs)



The Chinese Communist Party's domestic propaganda organs use such events as the rioting in Washington, the storming of the LegCo in Hong Kong last year, and the occasional legislative tumult in Taipei, to contrast the discord of democracy with stability of China's unelected one-party system. While the Hong Kong unrest opposed a chief executive, and the recent Washington riot was its opposite, the CPC's message is consistent and predictable: only a strong and decisive central government can protect the Chinese people from the unstable democracies and periodic financial crises that plague the West. The Chinese system, they conclude, is superior.

China’s leaders contrast China’s unity and stability with the polarized struggles of leading Western democracies: the tawdry, interminable spectacle of Brexit, a U.S. Congress in constant, unproductive gridlock, and America’s fraught race relations. Who, they ask, could be drawn to “American values” when that means endless foreign military adventures, race riots, devastating periodic financial crises, and the blithe repudiation of multilateral treaties like the Paris Climate Accord and the 5-Nation Iran Nuclear agreement?

The only acceptable view in Beijing’s Zhongnanhai government compound today is that China has perfected a governing model clearly superior (in its results, if not its methods) to Western pluralistic, rights-based liberal democracy. The decadent, declining, unreliable status quo powers—especially the U.S.—foolishly oppose China’s inevitable, righteous rise.

Howard Zhang, China Editor, BBC



The Chinese government and official media outlets are having a field day over the US Capitol Hill riots. Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying, called for calm and restoration of order, but also asked US media and politicians to reflect on the “different evaluation and comments” they had during “Hong Kong riots”. Some official Chinese media when describing the riot in DC borrowed a phrase used by US House speaker Nancy Pelosi

when she commented on Hong Kong protestors storming their local legislature - “a sight to behold”. Some Chinese media and netizens went as far as saying US style democracy is utterly dysfunctional and morally bankrupt.

Steve Tsang, Director, SOAS China Institute, University of London



Beijing can be expected to highlight the chaos of American democracy and the alleged hypocrisy of the USA and other democracies for attacking, say, China’s handling of the protests in Hong Kong when the Lego (Legislative building) was occupied. The US authorities used deadly force, causing one death as US security forces cleared Congress. The events in Capital Hill and the Trump Administration has been a godsend to China in the ‘beauty contest’ between the ‘chaotic and ineffective’ democracy of the USA against the ‘responsible, effective and orderly’ authoritarianism of the CCP.

An expert on Chinese affairs who asked to remain anonymous

Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, as well as other authoritarian leaders, will have looked at the storming of Congress with a mixture of *schadenfreude* and disbelief. The former as it vindicates their belief that the democratic system is hopelessly flawed and disbelief that the

forces of law and order didn't prevent such a catastrophe. It will have weakened the international standing of the USA even further.

Duncan Bartlett, Editor, Asian Affairs & Research Associate SOAS China Institute, University of London



The authorities in China are able to manipulate the public mood by censoring and influencing conversations on social media. This time, they have allowed social media users to be as critical as they like of Trump and the American political system. This drowns out the discussions about Hong Kong. The photographs from Washington of people dressed in bizarre costumes and waving flags with pictures of Donald Trump and Jesus are being shared extensively on Chinese social media, making the US seem a bizarre and dangerous place.

Humphrey Hawksley, Author and Journalist, former Beijing Bureau Chief, BBC



I am worried this signals the absolute end of the democratic mission of the west. How can western countries go to other places in the world and tell them how to run their systems when this is what happens to the parliament in Washington? I believe that China recently clamped down on the protestors in Hong Kong because they foresaw a situation like this in the United States. In fact, any authoritarian regime will now be able to say that the United States has no right to hold us to account on issues of democracy or human rights. It goes to show how fragile the American institutions are and therefore how weak the whole political system is.

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