

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

U.S. Cities Fear More Destruction as Protesters Rage Against Police Brutality

Source Brendan O'Brien, Reuters.com, May 31, 2020

Major U.S. cities feared another night of violent protests over the death of George Floyd in police custody, cleaning up streets strewn with broken glass and burned out cars as curfews failed to stop confrontations between activists and law enforcement.

What began as peaceful demonstrations over the death of Floyd, who died as a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck, have become a wave of outrage sweeping a politically and racially divided nation.

Protesters have flooding streets after weeks of lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic that threw millions out of work and hit minority communities especially hard.

As demonstrators broke windows and set fires, police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse crowds in many cities. In some cases, bystanders and members of the media were targeted.

In one video from Minneapolis, a National Guard Humvee rolls down a residential street followed by what appear to be police officers wearing tactical gear. One officer orders residents to go inside, then yells "light 'em up" before shooting projectiles at a group of people on their front porch. The city's curfew does not apply to residents outside on their private property.

In New York City, police arrested about 350 people overnight and 30 officers suffered minor injuries. Mayor Bill de Blasio said police conduct was being investigated, including widely shared videos showing a police sports utility vehicle in Brooklyn lurching into a crowd of protesters who were pelting it with debris.

De Blasio said he had not seen a separate video showing an officer pulling down the mask of a black protester who had his hands in the air, then spraying a substance in his face.

The closely packed crowds and demonstrators not wearing masks sparked fears of a resurgence of COVID-19, which has killed more than 100,000 Americans.

Violence spread overnight despite curfews in several major cities rocked by civil unrest in recent days, including Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Denver, Cincinnati, Portland, Oregon, and Louisville, Kentucky.

Philadelphia on Sunday moved the city's curfew earlier, to 6 p.m. from 8 p.m. local time, and ordered all businesses to close as local TXF-TV showed images of groups of protesters attacking police cars, setting one on fire while others went into nearby stores and came out with armfuls of merchandise.

Protests also flared in Chicago, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Cleveland, and Dallas, where rioters were seen on video beating a store owner who chased them with a large machete or sword. Police said on Sunday he was in a stable condition.

The clashes in Minneapolis marked the fifth night of arson, looting and vandalism in parts of the state's largest city, and its adjacent capital, St. Paul. The state's governor said on Saturday that he was activating the full Minnesota National Guard for the first time since World War Two.

Thousands of people gathered on Sunday afternoon for a rally in St. Paul as state troopers surrounded the state capitol building.

“There is no real one answer but the beginning is we have to learn to be honest with each other,” said 66-year-old community activist Philip Holmes as he stood among demonstrators holding “Black Lives Matter” signs.

‘DESTRUCTIVE AND UNACCEPTABLE’

About 170 stores have been looted and some burned to the ground in St. Paul, its mayor said.

“We are seeing in St. Paul and obviously around the country this level of rage and anger that frankly is legitimate, as we see this horrific video of George Floyd being just suffocated to death,” Mayor Melvin Carter told CNN on Sunday. “Unfortunately, it’s being expressed right now, over the past week, in ways that are destructive and unacceptable.”

While covering the protests in Minneapolis on Saturday night, two members of a Reuters TV crew were hit by rubber bullets and a Reuters photographer’s camera was smashed as attacks against journalists covering civil unrest in U.S. cities intensified. In response to the protests, Target Corp announced it was closing 100 stores, with about 30 in Minnesota.

The administration of President Donald Trump, who has called protesters “thugs”, will not federalize and take control of the National Guard for now, national security adviser Robert O’Brien said on Sunday.

Trump said on Sunday that the U.S. government will designate anti-fascist group Antifa as a terrorist organization. It was not clear how many, if any, of the protesters participating in demonstrations are from Antifa.

“Get tough Democrat Mayors and Governors,” Trump said on Twitter on Sunday afternoon. “These people are ANARCHISTS. Call in our National Guard NOW. The World is watching and laughing at you and Sleepy Joe. Is this what America wants? NO!!!”

“Sleepy Joe” is Trump’s nickname for Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee for November’s presidential election.

In London, protesters took to Trafalgar Square on Sunday chanting “no justice, no peace.” A crowd descended on the U.S. Embassy in Berlin calling for the police officers to face justice.

The arrest on murder charges on Friday of Derek Chauvin, the police officer seen kneeling on Floyd’s neck, has failed to satisfy protesters. Three officers who stood by as Floyd died have yet to be charged.

Floyd’s name is only the latest to be chanted by protesters over the perceived lack of police accountability for violent encounters that resulted in the death of black men.

Possible Response Questions:

- What are your thoughts on the what is happening? Explain.
- Pick a word/line/passage from the article and respond to it.
- Discuss a “move” made by the writer in this piece that you think is good/interesting. Explain.