In my International Journalism class this past week, we had to choose a story that caught our attention and bring it into class. One angle my professor said we could take was looking for stories that we thought were not getting enough attention. I took this angle, and it brought me to the Sudan protests.

As someone who reads the news religiously every morning, it is surprising that I am still shocked that major news from certain parts of the world is so systematically excluded from our media. The protests in Sudan, continuing now as they have been for weeks, are an incredible, peaceful attempt on behalf of the Sudanese people to overthrow a 30-year strong dictator. We talk about revolutions and courageous people protesting injustice in our classes, movies, history, pop culture, etc., all the time, but it’s happening right now in Sudan and the brave people leading it are dying.

I think one of the important forms of soft power America has in the world is in what Americans choose to pay attention to. How we direct our attention, and how loudly we do so, does have an impact on the world. For one, newspapers prioritize what they think Americans will be interested in; they go with stories that they believe will sell. News is a customer/company relationship, it’s not unbiased coverage but, instead, a commercial industry.
One of my teachers explained this to me in terms of the conflict between Ireland and Britain. He asked me how I thought our country would react if Britain or Northern Ireland invaded the Republic of Ireland, pointing out that because we have such a large Irish diaspora and have popularized things like St. Patrick’s Day, the reaction would be strong. In comparison, when Saudi Arabia launches a war in Yemen, or Russia invades Ukraine, the reaction is not nearly as strong as it might’ve been. Or when a bomb goes off in Paris, our newspapers treat it very differently than a similar incident in Tehran. I have no doubt this sort of public and media attention influences governmental foreign policy, and clearly vice versa.

Here are some stories I think deserve more attention (or I was shocked that they aren’t getting attention), but there are I’m sure much more:

- Sudan Protests
- The refugee crisis in the Mediterranean
  - 130 migrants missing after their boat sunk
- 20,000 survivors of human trafficking out of Nigeria found in Mali
- Everything surrounding the Yemen War

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