Twitter Thread by Alex Stamos

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I agree with almost everything Tim Cook said in his privacy speech today, which is why it is so sad to see the media credulously covering his statements without the context of Apple's actions in

> It was an honor to be invited to #ICDPPC2018 in Brussels this morning. I\u2019d like to share a bit of what I said to this gathering of privacy regulators from around the world. It all boils down to a fundamental question: What kind of world do we want to live in?
>
> — Tim Cook (@tim_cook) October 24, 2018

The missing context? Apple uses hardware-rooted DRM to deny Chinese users the ability to install the VPN and E2E messaging apps that would allow them to avoid pervasive censorship and surveillance. Apple moved iCloud data into a PRC-controlled joint venture with unclear impacts.

China is an ethical blind spot for many in tech: We ignore the working conditions under which our beautiful devices are made, the censorship and surveillance necessary to ship apps there, the environmental externalities of coal-powered Chinese Bitcoin farms.

We don't want the media to create an incentive structure that ignores treating Chinese citizens as less-deserving of privacy protections because a CEO is willing to bad-mouth the business model of their primary competitor, who uses advertising to subsidize cheaper devices.

Cook is right, the US needs a strong privacy law and privacy regulator, and advertising companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter need to collect less data and minimize more often.

Apple needs to come clean on how iCloud works in China and stop setting damaging precedents for how willing American companies will be to service the internal security desires of the Chinese Communist Party.

Let's look at some of the most fawning coverage (thanks @Techmeme)!

In @techcrunch by @riptari, "Tim Cook Makes Blistering Attack". The word China isn't included

https://t.co/OZzg48wAez

The Verge, @jjvincent. "Cook has long advocated for strong standards in data privacy..." Really? Would you say he equally advocates everywhere for that?

https://t.co/LAljTjmg8E

In the @washingtonpost, where I would honestly expect better since tech concessions to the PRC are a huge, bi-partisan area of concern for Congress. Same with @thehill.

https://t.co/gNCqMMHhbK

https://t.co/NiZItPndDY

@nytimes reprints a @Reuters article, no mention.

https://t.co/D0dyvhIn5o

Gotta catch a flight. I think the tech press can cheer on calls for more privacy regulation in the US, but they can also use this moment to advocate for the privacy rights of not just Chinese citizens, but those of countries who are looking to follow the PRC model of control.