

Beijing 2022: A Golden Opportunity to Hold China Accountable

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By Tony Perkins - Family Research Council

As much as China wants to dominate the ice and slopes at this year's Olympics, winning medals is only part of the goal. Its greatest victory, the regime knows, would be rehabilitating its global image. And in some ways, the propaganda game has already been won. Not only did Beijing win the hosting job from the International Olympic Committee over the world's objections, but it managed to convince some of the planet's biggest advertisers to pour their money into a country that spends its free time committing mass atrocities against its own people. Atrocities, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) argues, our athletes should ignore.

"I know there's a temptation on the part of some to speak out while they're there," [Pelosi said Thursday](#). "I respect that, but I also worry about what the Chinese government might do... to their reputations, to their families... We wish all of the athletes well. We wish them safety -- and that safety includes: Don't for one moment believe what the Chinese government might tell you about freedom of expression. You take a risk." The comments -- a "shut up and play" moment from the third most powerful person in Washington -- sent shockwaves through the sports community. The NBA's Enes Kanter Freedom, who's spent a lot of personal capital shining a light on the Uyghur genocide, couldn't believe his ears. Pelosi's message "broke my heart," he told reporters. "Athletes need to use their platform to bring awareness to the world."

If the world stays silent, China wins. Noah Hoffman, an Olympic skier in 2018, is already distressed at the human rights blackout. Scrolling through social media posts from Team USA, he says there's almost no mention of China's crimes against humanity or the disappearance of tennis star Peng Shuai. "Let's be clear," [he wrote in passionate op-ed for the Daily Mail](#), "these athletes are not silent on human rights issues out of ignorance or indifference. They are not attempting to 'keep politics out of sport' or to 'limit distractions.' They are silent out of fear." And it's entirely the IOC's fault. They're using the athletes like "pawns." "The behind-the-scenes truth of these Olympic games... is that 'political neutrality' is an excuse for the IOC and its U.S. sponsors to pursue power and profit at the expense of athletes." Given the choice between them, the Chinese Communist Party always "comes out on top."

Congress has done what it can to fight the rosy picture the Olympics are painting. Over the last several weeks, Republicans have launched a number of efforts to register their outrage at the U.S.'s participation. Just this week, there was an onslaught of letters to everyone from Beijing's American sponsors to NBC. The GOP's China Task Force members called the U.S. Olympic Committee on the carpet, [pointing out](#), "The 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing will be the first Olympic games to take place in a country that is conducting an ongoing genocide. Therefore, these games are an unprecedented threat to American values, inalienable human rights, and the spirit of the Olympics." They urge the committee to inform every athlete about the "human rights situation in China," along with an explanation of what they plan to do to keep our team safe.

Taking direct aim at the IOC, Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher (R) decided Thursday night to introduce [a bill](#) that would sanction the committee if any part of the U.S. delegation -- athlete, fan,

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Journalist or participant "falls victim to gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." In Gallagher's mind, it's not enough to boycott these Olympics, it's time to "call the IOC out for their complete cowardice" and "complacent role."
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Republicans also had strong words [for NBC](#), who they fear is under the regime's influence during the next few weeks' broadcasts. What input, they want to know, did the \$7.7 billion dollar deal buy the Chinese government? Did the IOC or CCP take any steps to sanitize their coverage? And are those steps being taken "to shed light on China's history of human rights abuses?" The network took some cautious steps toward that end during today's Opening Ceremony, hosting a panel of experts on the "[alleged](#)" program of Uyghur suppression taking place in Xinjiang. Savannah Guthrie carefully couched the criticism, saying, "Some have said there's a cloud over these Olympics," as if the mass persecution was merely unconfirmed hearsay. NBC's Andy Browne, desperately trying to help the network have it both ways, insisted on making the point that "the Chinese government emphatically denies all of this. They say that accusations of genocide are the lie of the century."

If it's a lie, then it's an elaborate one. [Satellite images](#), [witness testimony](#), and thousands of pages of China's own documents urging "[no mercy](#)" prove what too many American companies refuse to admit: they are complicit in the largest ethnic cleansing campaign in the modern age. Top executives at Visa, P&G, Airbnb, Coca-Cola, Intel, Procter & Gamble, and Toyota have been trying to lie low for months -- some, the Wall Street Journal [points out](#), not even talking or tweeting about their participation in the Games. They're trying to "weather the storm," marketing experts say. Easier said than done. Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) has already [fired off a missive](#) to every U.S. sponsor demanding to know: Where is the red line? If it's not human rights, if it's not slave labor, if it's not silencing and disappearing citizens -- what is it?

Politics has no place in business, [they reply](#). It's a convenient lie, told in the shadow of concentration camps. One they will not repeat back home, the second a liberal cause comes knocking.