



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

China, Genocide and the Olympics

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
1:00 PM, Washington, DC
Virtual via Cisco WebEx

Excerpts of remarks by Co-Chair Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ)

“...in solidarity with the oppressed and not the oppressor, in solidarity with the victims and not the victimizer ... find a new host city—or boycott...”

Don't enable or sponsor the “Genocide Olympics”

This hearing—China, Genocide, and the Olympics—will come to order.

Special thanks to our distinguished panel of witnesses for your extraordinarily incisive testimonies. I'll introduce each of you to the panel in a moment.

President Xi Jinping, the man who pushed the International Olympic Committee in 2015 to award China as the venue for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, is the same man who—at about the same time—planned and now continues committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other Central Asian ethnic and religious minorities in Xinjiang.

Beginning in 2013, the Chinese government laid the groundwork for a mass internment campaign that would ensnare as many as 2 million Uyghurs. What began with surveillance and collection of biometric data—abetted by U.S. corporations such as Thermo Fisher Scientific—has now morphed into the forced disappearances of Uyghurs into 'detention and reeducation'

camps, the forced sterilization of Uyghur women and the forced aborting of their children, and state absorption of Uyghur children into orphanages far from home to be reared with non-Uyghur upbringing while their parents are tortured.

In 2014, Xi Jinping, labeling all Uyghurs who dissented as terrorists, told his officials to “wipe them out completely. Destroy root and branch.”

Chinese authorities initially denied the existence of mass internment camps and have tried to portray them as vocational training centers. Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) employed lies, censorship and economic coercion to stifle discussion of their crimes.

But documents obtained by the [New York Times](#) and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists exposed the brutality behind Beijing’s plans to radically and coercively transform the culture and religion of ethnic Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims in China.

The leaked internal papers show detailed plans—now being aggressively implemented—to intern between 1 million and 3 million Uyghurs in modern-day concentration camps—where they are subjected to severe human-rights abuses and Orwellian indoctrination efforts for those “whose thinking has been infected.”

At the same time, Beijing instituted plans to erase the influence of Islam in western China—bulldozing mosques and shrines, severely throttling all religious practice, and forcing camp detainees to renounce their faith.

The leaked documents also show that Xi Jinping himself directed the crackdown saying that the Communist Party must put the “organs of dictatorship” to work and show “absolutely no mercy” in dealing with Uyghurs and other Muslims.

In one speech President Xi said: “The weapons of the people’s democratic dictatorship must be wielded without any hesitation or wavering.”

Nor is this hatred of religious and ethnic minorities new—it is the same cruel script that we have seen in Tibet, where the Chinese Communist Party has long sought to erase the culture of a proud people. Also:

- Xi Jinping and the CCP continues to crush democracy and human rights defenders in Hong Kong in violation of solemn promises and treaty obligations previously made,
- Xi Jinping and the CCP use unspeakable methods of torture against prisoners of conscience,
- Xi Jinping and the CCP imposes forced abortion against Chinese women who are with child without government permission as well as forced sterilization,
- [Xi Jinping and the CCP are persecuting religious believers](#) and all manifestations of faith and spirituality—including Christians and Falun Gong practitioners—in ways not seen since the cultural revolution,

- Xi Jinping and the CCP's complicity in the crime of human trafficking has been given the worst grade by the U.S. State Department—Tier 3—egregious violator.
- COVID-19 has killed 26,000 in my home state of New Jersey, approximately 600,000 dead in the United States and 3.4 million worldwide yet more than a year after the Pandemic originated in Wuhan, we still don't have an honest accountability of Xi Jinping and the CCP's role and the lack of transparency is appalling.

Yet, despite this deplorable record—which includes genocide—we see the International Olympic Committee, the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, and a host of major corporate sponsors all affirming the decision to hold the 2022 Winter Olympic games in Beijing.

Big business wants to make lots of money, and it doesn't seem to matter what cruelty—even genocide—that the host nation commits.

Besides money, what else does Xi Jinping hope to achieve?

According to one of our expert witnesses, Susan Lawrence of the Congressional Research Service, among Xi Jinping's stated goals for the hosting the Olympics is "boosting national pride, to be harnessed in the drive for realization of his 'Chinese dream of national rejuvenation' ;¹ demonstrating to the world the alleged superiority of China's political system; boosting the global profile of Chinese brands..."

Ms. Lawrence will testify that "The U.S. Department of Defense characterizes the Chinese Communist Party's quest for rejuvenation as "a determined pursuit of political and social modernity that includes far-ranging efforts to expand China's national power, perfect its governance systems, and revise the international order."

For Xi Jinping, this isn't about athletic competition—it's about power.

Do we want to aid and abet the CCP's efforts to "revise the international order" and dictatorial governance?

Whatever were the paper commitments the government of the PRC made to the IOC with regards to respecting human rights when the IOC decided to award the games to China, it is now absolutely clear that it never intended to honor them.

The "China Fantasy," to adopt James Mann's term, has long been exposed – the notion that bestowing international honors like hosting the Olympics would ameliorate the Chinese government's behavior, just like the PRC's integration into the world economy would improve China's human rights record, has been repeatedly disproven.

¹ "Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress," Xinhua, November 3, 2017.

Since [President Clinton delinked human rights and trade with China in May of 1994](#) and since China joined the [World Trade Organization in 2004](#), it has exponentially enhanced its ubiquitous police and military capabilities and through the use of ever-improving technology implemented the most Orwellian surveillance system in human history and execute one of the most horrifying genocides right before the eyes of the world.

One of our witnesses today, Rayhan Asat, will tell us the story of how her brother, a participant in our State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program, was arrested upon his return to China – targeted apparently because he participated in the IVLP program. While we have a moral obligation to speak out on behalf of all victims, our State Department has a particular obligation to speak out on behalf of Ekpar Asat – whom through his participation in the IVLP program the State Department had adopted as one of its own – and I call upon the State Department, from Secretary Antony Blinken on down, to call for his release each and every time they meet with their Chinese counterparts.

This was the policy of Ronald Reagan—every time a member of the State Department met with their Soviet counterparts, from Secretary of State George Schultz on down, they would hand over a list of Soviet dissidents who were unjustly imprisoned, and demand that each, by name, be released. By repeating the name of individuals such as Ekpar Asat, we give a face to what otherwise might remain an abstraction to those who would dehumanize these individuals, each with a father, a mother, spouse, sisters, brothers, and children who love them.

In the 1980s, I visited the infamous Perm Camp 35 in the Soviet Union and met with those imprisoned in the Gulags. In the early 1990s, when China was seeking to host the 2000 Olympic games, I met the [father of the Democracy Wall Movement Wei Jingsheng in Beijing](#) who had been released from prison to help the CCP persuade the IOC to select Beijing for the 2000 games. After the PRC was denied the games, he was promptly rearrested and tortured, before eventually being released and allowed to come to the United States in 1997.

[Wei Jingsheng testified in 1998](#) before my human rights subcommittee and said that the bullies in the Chinese Laogai and prisons beat and torture prisoners of conscience more when U.S. officials kowtow and appease—and less then we are resolute and serious and penalize barbaric behavior.

The PRC was eventually awarded the Olympics in 2008—over the protests of me and many others—so immediately prior to the beginning of the games, Congressman Frank Wolf and I travelled to Beijing to raise the issue of human rights and highlight the fact that the CCP was arresting dissidents in and around Beijing to prevent contact with journalists.

From this experience, and from having spoken with countless numbers of political prisoners of dictatorial regimes, I have concluded that when the rulers of these countries know that these individuals are remembered, their situation improves. It is when they remain forgotten—and when these oppressive governments are apparently rewarded with business

investments and the ability to host the Olympic games—then their situation worsens, because dictators realize there is no accountability for their actions.

In granting Beijing host status for the Olympic Game, we are crowning a barbarous regime with laurels while we should be condemning their abuse and genocide. The [UN Genocide Convention](#) says a government committing genocide should be “punished.”

In light of what is now known—and in solidarity with the oppressed and not the oppressor, in solidarity with the victims and not the victimizer—I urge the IOC and all interested parties including the United States to find a new host city—or boycott.

To our big corporations, don’t enable or sponsor the “Genocide Olympics.”