

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH

112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

MERCER

4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

OCEAN

405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(609) 585-7878
By Appointment



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, AFRICA, GLOBAL
HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE SUBCOMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, CONGRESSIONAL-
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

www.chrissmith.house.gov

Corporate Sponsorship of the 2022 Beijing Olympics

*Excerpts of remarks by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ)
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
July 27, 2021*

Today's hearing is the second in a series which began with a hearing I chaired joined by Co-Chair McGovern and Chairman Merkley on May 18, 2021, entitled "[China, Genocide and the Olympics.](#)"

While that hearing featured testimony from civil society human rights experts, today's hearing will focus on the corporate sponsors of the Beijing Olympics – in effect those who underwrite, and help legitimize the "Genocide Olympics."

For let's be very clear what we are talking about here, and why multiple hearings and concrete action on this topic are called for—first and foremost we not only see genocide and concentration camps directed against Uyghurs and Kazaks in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in particular, but also the ongoing eradication of the culture of Tibet, the harvesting of organs of Falun Gong practitioners, the destruction of Christian churches, and the dismantling of freedom in Hong Kong.

And yet, for many American corporations, it is business as usual when it comes to China, notwithstanding the Communist government's repeated unwillingness to abide by its obligations and written agreements, including in the case of Hong Kong a bilateral treaty with the government of the United Kingdom.

And while I appreciate that several corporations have sent their representatives to testify at this hearing, I cannot but shake my head in dismay when I read the preening about compliance with ESG, or Environmental, Social and Governance, principles and the virtue signaling about their support for Olympic athletes.

For example, we have a submission from Visa's Amanda Fairchild which touts ESG compliance, yet not once mentions Xinjiang or the underlying violations of human rights which have prompted this series of hearings.

Nor is she the only one.

In fact, unless I overlooked something, the only submission that even mentions Xinjiang, and makes an attempt to deal directly with at least some of the underlying issues, appears to be the submission of Intel's Steve Rodgers.

To help clarify the issue before our witnesses begin speaking, what we are talking about are State crimes up to and including genocide – a determination made by two secretaries of State in succeeding Administrations, one Republican, one Democrat.

And if it helps crystalize the issue further, unlike 1936 and the Berlin Olympics where Hitler sought to showcase the superiority of Nazism, much as the Chinese Communist Party is seeking to use the Olympics as a platform to tout its alternative vision of global governance – the world in 2022 cannot claim that the extent of the PRC's genocide remains unknown.

In light of this, my colleagues and I – Senators Merkley and Rubio, Lantos Commission co-chair Jim McGovern – wrote to the International Olympic Committee's President Thomas Bach last week, stating unequivocally that “No Olympics should be held in a country whose government is committing genocide and crimes against humanity.”

Nor should this be any surprise, as in [October 2018](#), Senator Rubio and I had also written IOC president Bach, asking the IOC “to review and ultimately reassign the location of the 2022 Winter Olympics given credible reporting of the mass, arbitrary internment of one million or more Uyghurs or other Muslim ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and other ongoing human rights abuses by the Chinese government.”

Did any of you convey opposition to the IOC regarding Beijing as host of the 2022 Winter Games, and if so, can you provide the Commission with that documentation?

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 when we are resolute and serious and penalize barbaric behavior.

The PRC was eventually awarded the Olympics in 2008—over the rigorous 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.

It is these issues which our corporate witnesses need to squarely address today, and how they can reconcile their ostensible commitment to human rights with subsidizing an Olympics held in a country which is actively committing human rights abuses up to and including genocide.

Moral posturing notwithstanding, they need to squarely address why we should not conclude that their motive is the short-term pursuit of profit, and not the loftier aspirations their submissions are cloaked in.

Granted, these corporations are not as directly complicit in China's abuses as, say, Thermo Fisher Scientific, whose [DNA sequencers](#) were used to collect the biometric data of Uyghurs.

Further to that point, [in 2006, I held a hearing](#) where representatives of Google, Cisco, Yahoo! and Microsoft testified as to their role in assisting the repression in China.

The year before, Yahoo! had shared information with China's secret police which led to the arrest and imprisonment of cyber dissident Shi Tao. Yahoo! also handed over data regarding one of its users, Li Zhi, who had criticized corrupt local Chinese Communist Party officials in online discussion, for which he was sentenced to eight years in prison.

While your complicity might not be so direct, your corporate involvement in the Olympic Games nonetheless does further the interests of the government of China, which will utilize the Olympics as a platform to showcase its governance model, all while signaling that crimes up to and including genocide should not interfere with business as usual.

I also want to address a claim that we often hear when the issue of an Olympic boycott is broached – what about the athletes who have sacrificed so hard to make it to the Olympics?

Yes, their willingness to sacrifice is admirable, exemplified by their commitment to rigorous training regimens and time spent away from family and friends. But sometimes greater sacrifice is called for, from each of us, athletes too.

I think of Ted Williams, the last baseball player to hit .400. He sacrificed some six years during the prime of his career to serve his country in both World War II and the Korean War. He flew a jet fighter, a Navy F9F Panther, in 39 combat missions in Korea. In one of those missions, his plane was hit and badly damaged, forcing him to crash land.

Finally, I want to close by mentioning where this genocidal mania against the Uyghurs and other Central Asian Muslim minorities like the Kazaks originates – at the very top.

In 2014, Xi Jinping, labeling all Uyghurs who dissented as terrorists, told his officials to “wipe them out completely. Destroy root and branch....show no mercy”.

This has led not only to massive interment in concentration camps in Xinjiang, but also to tracking down Uyghur dissidents from around the globe and seeking to have them extradited or renditioned back to China, often from Muslim countries such as Egypt and even Turkey, which in the past had provided refuge.

One particularly egregious example of this came to my attention yesterday, where a 34-year-old Uyghur activist named Yidiresi Aishan, who had landed in Morocco from a flight originating in Istanbul, was arrested by Moroccan authorities, apparently at the request of Chinese government officials. I understand Yidiresi is in imminent danger of being repatriated to the People's Republic of China. I intend to reach out to the Moroccan foreign ministry to ask that they withhold any removal proceedings, given the danger that Yidiresi faces in the PRC. Perhaps my colleagues would like to join me.

One reason I mention this individual, is that I would like our witnesses to keep in mind that at the end of the day, in this case as in so many others, it is a person, with a name, who is being oppressed. The fanfare of the Olympics cannot drown that out.

With that, I look forward to your testimony.