

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing, and  
Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Hearing  
on  
China, Genocide and the Olympics

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Virtual, via WebEx

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Chairman Smith, Chairman McGovern, and Chairman Merkley, thank you for inviting the Congressional Research Service to testify at today's hearing. My name is Susan Lawrence. I am a Specialist in Asian Affairs. As requested, I will be discussing the role of the Chinese Communist Party in China's preparations to host the 24<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, goals the Communist Party has articulated for the Games, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region's involvement in preparations for the Games.

## Introduction

The 24<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympic Games are to be held from February 2-20, 2022, and the 24<sup>th</sup> Winter Paralympic Games from March 4-13, 2022. Beijing is the first city in Olympic history to be selected to host both Summer (2008) and Winter Olympic Games. The government of China has vowed that the Games will open in Beijing on time despite the challenges of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and despite calls from some in the international community to move the Games out of China in protest over China's human rights record in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and its curtailing of democratic freedoms in Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup>

## The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in Olympics Planning

China's state media have presented China's leader, Communist Party General Secretary and State President Xi Jinping, as personally guiding China's planning for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. A high-level Chinese Communist Party body, the Central Leading Group for the Work of the 24<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympic Games, is overseeing preparations in China for the Games. Official reports on the Central Leading Group's work consistently refer to it as "thoroughly implementing the spirit" of Xi's "important" speeches, including his instruction that the Games should be "Simple, Safe, and Splendid."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Wenwen and Zhang Hui, "China to Host Winter Olympics on Time: IOC Chief Opposes Politicization of Olympics," *Global Times*, May 7, 2021. In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Con.Res. 16, H.Res. 129, H.Res. 160, H.Res. 162, and S.Res. 13 would all urge that the Olympics be moved outside China.

<sup>2</sup> "韩正在主持召开第24届冬奥会工作领导小组全体会议时强调 突出“简约、安全、精彩”办赛要求 扎实有序推进各项筹办工作” (“Han Zheng Chairs, Convenes Plenary Meeting of the Leading Group for the Work of 24th Winter Olympic Games, Emphasizes Need To Highlight Requirement of Ensuring ‘Simple, Safe, Splendid’ Games; Promote Various Preparations in a Solid, Orderly Manner”), *Xinhua*, February 23, 2021.

The Central Leading Group is headed by Han Zheng, China’s ninth-most-senior official and a member of the Party’s top decision-making body, the nine-man Political Bureau (Politburo) Standing Committee. His deputies are both members of the 25-member Politburo, the Party’s second-most senior decision-making body.

**Table 1. Leadership of the Chinese Communist Party’s Central Leading Group for the Work of the 24<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympic Games**

Name	Leading Group Position	Other Positions
Zhang Gaoli	Head	Party Politburo Standing Committee Member; Vice Premier of the State Council
Sun Chunlan	Deputy Head	Party Politburo Member; Vice Premier of the State Council
Cai Qi	Deputy Head	Party Politburo Member; Beijing Party Secretary; President and Party Secretary of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG)

**Sources:** Xinhua and the Beijing Government website, <http://www.beijing.gov.cn/gongkai/sld/>.

**Note:** Following Chinese convention, family names precede given names.

The international-facing Chinese entity in charge of planning for the Olympics is the Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (BOCOG), which answers to the Central Leading Group. In addition to serving as a deputy head of the Party’s Central Leading Group for the Games, Beijing Party chief Cai Qi also serves as President and Party Secretary of BOCOG.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2. Leadership of the Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (BOCOG)**

Name	BOCOG Position	Other Positions
Cai Qi	President; Party Secretary	Party Politburo Member; Beijing Party Secretary; Deputy Head, Party Central Leading Group for the Work of the 24th Winter Olympic Games
Gou Zhongwen	Executive President	Party Central Committee Member; Minister and Party Secretary, General Administration of Sport of China; President, Chinese Olympic Committee
Chen Jining	Executive President; Deputy Party Secretary	Party Central Committee Member; Beijing Mayor and Deputy Party Secretary
Xu Qin	Executive President; Deputy Party Secretary	Party Central Committee Member; Hebei Province Governor and Deputy Party Secretary
Zhang Haidi	Executive President	Chairperson of the China Disabled Persons’ Federation, Member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

**Sources:** Websites of BOCOG, the Beijing Government, General Administration of Sport of China, Hebei Province Government, and the CPPCC.

**Note:** Following Chinese convention, family names precede given names.

## Chinese Leader Xi Jinping’s Stated Goals for the Olympics

A review of Xi Jinping’s remarks related to the Winter Olympics suggests that he sees Beijing’s hosting of the Games for a second time as serving multiple national purposes. They include spurring progress on one of his signature initiatives, the development of a new megacity in north China; boosting national pride, to be harnessed in the drive for realization of his “Chinese dream of national rejuvenation”;<sup>4</sup> demonstrating

<sup>3</sup> “Leadership,” Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, accessed May 7, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> “Full text of Xi Jinping’s report at 19th CPC National Congress,” Xinhua, November 3, 2017.

to the world the alleged superiority of China's political system; boosting the global profile of Chinese brands; and developing winter sports in China, including in Xinjiang. Each of these purposes is discussed below.

## **Catalyzing a New Megacity**

In “important instructions” Xi issued in November 2015, ahead of the first meeting of the Central Leading Group, he presented doing a good job of hosting the 2022 Games as both “a solemn promise to the international Olympic family” and “an important measure to implement the strategy for coordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei.”<sup>5</sup> Xi envisions that “integrated development” yielding a new metropolitan area of 130 million people, to be known as Jingjinji, that will serve to ease population pressure in the capital.<sup>6</sup> In part to catalyze Xi's vision, China's Olympic planners selected three far-flung locations for Olympic venues: central Beijing; Yanqing, an outlying district of Beijing adjacent to the border with Hebei Province; and Chongli District of Hebei Province's Zhangjiakou, a city 125 miles from Beijing.<sup>7</sup> A new high-speed rail line and a new expressway link them. China's government presents its leveraging of the Games for the development of Jingjinji as consistent with the International Olympic Committee's (IOC's) Olympic Agenda 2020, which supports Olympic projects “that are better aligned with future hosts' long-term development plans.”<sup>8</sup>

## **Boosting National Pride**

Xi has frequently spoken of the national morale-boosting power of the Olympics. In 2016, he predicted that having the world's eyes on Beijing for the Games, “is bound to greatly stimulate the national spirit and will be conducive to rallying the sons and daughters of China at home and abroad to strive hard in unity for the achievement of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”<sup>9</sup> The pursuit of “rejuvenation” is a Party rubric for fostering national effort to propel China “closer to center stage” in the world by 2049, the hundredth anniversary of the 1949 founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).<sup>10</sup> Xi has said that achieving rejuvenation will require sacrifices and hard work.<sup>11</sup> 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.”<sup>12</sup>

## **Showcasing the Alleged Superiority of China's Political System**

Xi has sought to present China's Olympic preparations, in the midst of a global pandemic, as demonstrating the superiority of China's political system. Inspecting competition venues in January 2021,

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<sup>5</sup> “习近平对办好北京冬奥会作出重要指示” (“Xi Jinping Issues Important Instructions on Doing a Good Job Holding the Beijing Winter Olympics”), Xinhua, November 24, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Ian Johnson, “As Beijing Becomes a Supercity, the Rapid Growth Brings Pains,” *The New York Times*, July 19, 2015. The Jingjinji name derives from the proposed megacity's component parts: Beijing (“Jing”), the port of Tianjin (“Jin”), and Hebei Province, whose traditional name is “Ji.”

<sup>7</sup> “Competition Zones,” Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, accessed May 7, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> “Xi Focus: President Xi Delivers on Olympic Promises,” Xinhua, January 31, 2021; International Olympic Committee, “Olympic Agenda 2020 Closing Report,” December 2014.

<sup>9</sup> “习近平听取北京冬奥会冬残奥会筹办工作情况汇报” (“Xi Jinping Listens to Report on Preparatory Work for the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics”), Xinhua, March 18, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> “Xi Focus: Xi Stresses Racing Against Time to Reach Chinese Dream,” Xinhua, January 23, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> “Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress,” Xinhua, November 3, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020,” September 1, 2020.

Xi suggested that China’s speedy construction of Olympic-related infrastructure and rapid training of winter sport athletes “fully reflects the Party’s leadership and the nation’s system, and the institutional advantages of being able to focus efforts to do big things.”<sup>13</sup> China’s state news agency amplified Xi’s words in a dispatch that declared the “smooth progress” of preparatory work for the Olympics to be “a profound manifestation of the advantages of our country’s system.”<sup>14</sup>

## Boosting Chinese Brands

BOCOG has presented corporate sponsorship of the Games as an opportunity to “showcase to the world the strength and appeal of Chinese brands,” and share “extensive benefits from the Olympic brand, and achieve both economic and social returns.”<sup>15</sup> BOCOG has so far signed 40 corporate sponsors, almost all of which are based in China. Sponsors include iFLYTEK Corporation, exclusive supplier of automated translation software to the Games. The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security added iFLYTEK to its Entities List in 2019, saying the firm was “implicated in human rights violations and abuses in the implementation of China’s campaign of repression, mass arbitrary detention, and high-technology surveillance against Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other members of Muslim minority groups” in Xinjiang.<sup>16</sup> BOCOG corporate sponsors also include Snickers, a brand of U.S.-based Mars, Inc., and Yum China, which operates and sub-licenses the KFC, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell brands in China.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 3. Beijing 2022 Corporate Sponsors (40)**

As of April 25, 2021

Category of Sponsorship	
Official Partners (11)	Bank of China, Air China, Yili Group, ANTA Sports Products Ltd., China Unicom, Shougang Group, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) Group, State Grid, People’s Insurance Company of China (PICC) Group, and China Three Gorges (CTG) Corporation.
Official Sponsors (11)	Tsingtao Beer, Yanjing Beer, Arawana (a blended oil brand of Singapore-based Wilmar International Ltd.), Shunxin Holding Group, Cultural Investment Holdings, Beijing Beiao Group, Hengyuanxiang (HYX) Group, QI-ANXIN Technology Group Inc., Yuanfudao Online Education, Yum China, and Panpan Foods.
Official Exclusive Suppliers (9)	EF Education First, iFLYTEK Corporation, China Post, Hylink Group, Snickers, Hongyuan Group, 3TREES (Sankeshu) Paint, Dongdao Creative Branding Group, and Landsky Technology Group Co, Ltd.
Official Suppliers (9)	PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) Zhong Tian LLP, Suirui Group, Kingsoft Office, I rock Technology, Beijing Gehua Cable TV Network (BGCTV), Hebei Radio and Television Information Network Group (HBTN), BBKA Biochemical, KeesonTechnology Corp., and BBMG Tintan Furniture Co., Ltd.

**Source:** BOCOG website, <https://www.beijing2022.cn/cn/presscentre/officialrelease.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> “习近平在北京河北考察并主持召开北京2022年冬奥会和冬残奥会筹办工作汇报会时强调 坚定信心奋发有为精益求精战胜困难 全力做好北京冬奥会冬残奥会筹办工作 韩正出席汇报会” (“Xi Jinping Conducted an Inspection Tour in Beijing and Hebei and Presided Over a Meeting to Hear About the Work of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Winter Games Preparations, Emphasizing Strengthening Confidence, Working Hard, Striving for Perfection, Overcoming Difficulties, and Doing Good Preparatory Work for the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics; Han Zheng Attended the Meeting”), Xinhua, January 20, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> “学习网评：制度优势是办好北京冬奥会的最大底气” (“Study Xi Online Commentary: Institutional Superiority Provides the Greatest Confidence of Doing a Good Job of Holding the Beijing Winter Olympics”), Xinhua, January 21, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Beijing 2022, “China Three Gorges Corporation Announced as Official Partner of Beijing 2022 Games,” December 17, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Department of Commerce, “Addition of Certain Entities to the Entity List,” October 9, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Beijing 2022, “Yum China Announced as the Official Retail Food Services Sponsor of Beijing 2022 Games,” July 20, 2020.

A separate group of 16 mainly global companies participate in The Olympic Partner (TOP) program, a global sponsorship program managed by the IOC. TOP program revenue from the 2022 Winter Games is shared equally between BOCOG and the Olympic Movement.<sup>18</sup> The TOP program includes two Chinese companies, Alibaba Group and China Mengniu Dairy Company, Ltd., with the latter in a joint TOP partnership agreement with U.S.-based The Coca-Cola Company.<sup>19</sup> The IOC's other TOP program partners are Airbnb, Allianz, Atos, Bridgestone, Dow, The General Electric Company (GE), Intel, Omega, Panasonic, Procter & Gamble (P&G), Samsung, Toyota, and Visa.<sup>20</sup>

## Promoting Winter Sports, Including in Xinjiang

Xi has stated that he sees the 2022 Olympics as an opportunity to promote mass participation in winter sports and to develop competitive Chinese talent in snow sports, in which China sees itself as relatively weak. In 2016, Xi presented popularizing winter sports as a way “to strengthen the physique of the people.”<sup>21</sup> In January 2021, Xi declared that building China into a “sporting power” was an important part of “comprehensively building a modern socialist country.”<sup>22</sup>

Xinjiang has been a focus for the efforts to popularize winter sports because unlike most of China, areas of Xinjiang are endowed with natural snow suited to winter sports. According to *Xinjiang Daily*, Xinjiang's government has been building winter sports facilities to support the Olympics. In 2017, the General Administration of Sport of China designated an ice sports center and two ski resorts in Xinjiang as “national sport training bases.” A ski resort in Xinjiang's Altay Prefecture has since received that designation, too.<sup>23</sup> Altay, located in northern Xinjiang, borders Russia, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia, and has a majority ethnic Kazakh population.<sup>24</sup> In addition to hosting national team athletes, the prefecture has reportedly been training locals to serve as Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics volunteers and offering ski lessons to students.<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

To conclude, China's leader, Xi Jinping, has associated himself closely with the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. He appears to view hosting the Games as an important part his vision for achieving China's “national rejuvenation” and as an opportunity to promote China's system of governance and its economy on a global stage. Authorities in distant Xinjiang appear to have expended significant effort to support the Games, even as those same authorities were undertaking a program of mass internment and re-education of ethnic and religious minorities that has drawn global condemnation.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> International Olympic Committee, “What is the TOP Programme?” accessed May 11, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> The Coca-Cola Company, “The IOC, The Coca-Cola Company and China Mengniu Dairy Company Ltd announce Joint Worldwide Olympic Partnership to 2032,” June 24, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> International Olympic Committee, “The Olympic Partner Programme,” accessed May 11, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> “习近平听取北京冬奥会冬残奥会筹办工作情况汇报” (“Xi Jinping Listens to Report on Preparatory Work for the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics”), Xinhua, March 18, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> “习近平在北京河北考察并主持召开北京2022年冬奥会和冬残奥会筹办工作汇报会...” (“Xi Jinping Conducted an Inspection Tour in Beijing and Hebei and Presided Over a Meeting to Hear About the Work of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Winter Games Preparations, . . .”), Xinhua, January 20, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Shi Liuyun, “助力北京冬奥会 新疆在行动” (“Boosting the Beijing Winter Olympics, Xinjiang In Action”), *Xinjiang Daily*, January 27, 2021.

<sup>24</sup> “阿勒泰概况” (“About Altay”), Xinjiang Altai (Altay) Prefecture Administration, accessed May 12, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Ren Jiang, “中国雪都”助力北京冬奥” (“‘China's Snow Capital’ Boosts the Beijing Winter Olympics”), *Xinjiang Daily*, December 29, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Emily Rauhala, “U.S., E.U., Canada and Britain Announce Sanctions on China over the Abuse of Uyghurs,” *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2021.