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US announces boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics

Less than a month after US President Joe Biden held his first formal summit with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, the US has announced a provocative diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics, due to open in Beijing in February.



The famous "Cinderella's shoe" big air venue built especially for the 2022 Winter Olympics (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

White House press secretary Jen Psaki told a press briefing that the US would send no official delegation to the Beijing Olympics. That would register its opposition to China's "ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and other human rights abuses." American athletes will compete nevertheless.

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The decision follows an increasingly hysterical campaign in the US media and political establishment, clamouring for a boycott on the basis of lies about China's "genocide" of the ethnic Uyghur population in China's western province of Xinjiang.

The Biden administration has offered no substantive evidence of widespread human rights abuses in Xinjiang, let alone that Beijing is engaged in "atrocities" and "genocide." The use of the term "genocide," without a shred of proof, degrades its meaning and the very real crimes of the past, such as the Nazi holocaust.

Allegations of widespread surveillance, detentions and infringement of religious freedom rest on the tendentious claims of a handful of far-right, anti-communist academics, along with the uncorroborated stories of Uyghur exiles connected to organisations such as the US-funded World Uyghur Congress and the American Uyghur Association.

In the dying days of the Trump administration, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo first accused China of genocide in Xinjiang. That lie was rapidly taken up by the Biden administration as part of its vilification of China. The propaganda campaign is one element of the aggressive US strategy of confronting and undermining China on all fronts over the past decade, including a military build-up throughout the Indo-Pacific in preparation for war.

The US is again cynically raising the banner of "human rights" as the pretext for its actions, with Psaki declaring that "we have a fundamental commitment to promoting human rights."

The rank hypocrisy of this statement is clear from the US-led boycott of the Summer Olympics in Moscow in 1980 to protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Carter administration, which staged the boycott, was instrumental in the huge CIA operation to fund and arm Muslim jihadists against the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul, including the foreign fighters funnelled in via the organisation known as Al Qaeda.

Two decades later the "blowback" from the CIA's dirty war in Afghanistan resulted in the terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda in the US on September 11 2001. Washington seized on the attacks to carry out the illegal invasion and neo-colonial occupation of Afghanistan that

reduced the country to ruins and destroyed countless lives. It proved to be a quagmire for US imperialism in the same way that it had been a disaster for the Soviet Union.

As in Afghanistan, the US has repeatedly exploited the issue of “human rights” as the justification for its crimes and atrocities in its “war on terror.” Its wars include the invasion of Iraq and military interventions in Syria and Libya, which involved the destruction of entire societies. Such acts of sociocide constitute real crimes against humanity.

At the same time, the total disregard of US imperialism for human life is also being visited upon the working class at home. Some 800,000 Americans have died from COVID-19 as a result of the criminal policies of the Trump and Biden administrations that have dropped virtually all health restrictions so as to boost corporate profits and the wealth of the super-rich at the expense of the health and lives of ordinary working people.

In a salutary comparison, more people continue to die from the virus every week in the United States than the total death toll in China since the start of the pandemic. Yet no action is taken against those responsible in the White House.

The pandemic, which is now threatening a massive worldwide resurgence of the Omicron strain, has enormously heightened the social, political and economic crisis facing the Biden administration and the political establishment in Washington as a whole. The demonisation of China is a crude attempt to turn the social tensions at home outward against a foreign enemy.

The Biden administration is staging another contemptuous “human rights” exercise this week, billed as the US Summit for Democracy, to which allies are invited and rivals excluded with scant regard for their record on democratic rights. Biden has pointedly invited Taiwan, despite the fact that the US regards the island as part of China under the One China policy. The event will undoubtedly be used as another forum to condemn China, while encouraging allies to strengthen ties with Taiwan.

Washington will seek to also marshal support for an international boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics. Governments in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom have indicated that a boycott is under consideration.

China reacted angrily to the announced boycott. Its Washington embassy dismissed the announcement as “a pretentious act” and a “political manipulation.”

Foreign ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, declared yesterday: “I want to stress that the Winter Olympic Games is not a stage for political posturing and manipulation. It is a grave travesty of the spirit of the Olympic charter, a blatant political provocation and a serious affront to the 1.4 billion Chinese people.”

Zhao warned of “resolute countermeasures” but Beijing has so far not indicated what it might do.

The boycott is one more sign that the US is deliberately intensifying and accelerating its confrontation with China. The vilification of Beijing over “human rights,” along with the Wuhan Lab lie that China is responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, is going hand in hand with the maintenance of trade war sanctions and other punitive penalties and the US military encirclement of China.

While the boycott recalls the Cold War against the Soviet Union, the US is not preparing for a protracted standoff with China. Unlike its standoff with the Soviet Union, the US regards China’s extraordinary economic growth as the prime threat to its global dominance and will stop at nothing, including war if necessary, to prevent its eclipse by China.

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