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The US boycott of the Beijing Olympics: A murderous state speaks of “human rights”

On Monday, the Biden administration announced that the United States would be staging a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics scheduled to open in Beijing in February to protest China’s “human rights violations.” This means that while American athletes will compete, there will be no official US delegation, a truly provocative action on the part of Washington.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that the boycott expressed Washington’s opposition to China’s “ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and other human rights abuses.”

Washington’s claim of Beijing’s genocide of the ethnic Uyghur population of Xinjiang has been repeated so many times by the White House and American media that it is now widely treated as if it were as well established as basic arithmetical facts.



A man walks past the Olympic rings on the exterior of the National Stadium, also known as the Bird's Nest, which will be a venue for the upcoming 2022 Winter Olympics, in Beijing. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

The word genocide correctly conveys a very concrete, historically-derived meaning. It is associated with the systematic extermination of defenseless populations and conveys images of industrialized mass killing, most notoriously the Holocaust. The Biden White House and American media bandy about this word without definition, insinuating that Beijing is engaged in crimes of Hitlerian proportions.

The Biden White House is recycling the baseless charges made by Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State for the Trump administration. If one digs deep enough, one will find the White House's claim: That the mass internment and restrictions on religious behavior of the minority Muslim Uyghur population, in themselves largely unsubstantiated allegations, amount to an attempt to eradicate Uyghur culture. This was termed "cultural genocide."

To make a false allegation of genocide is itself a political crime. The immensity of the lie expresses the scale of criminal intent lurking behind it. Washington has a long history of invoking "human rights" to justify its imperialist aggression, but the official boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics may well win the gold medal for hypocrisy.

Biden points his finger at China from atop a mountain of corpses. While the White House can supply no proof for its allegations of "genocide," there are real numbers of mass death in the world today, from which the charges against China are designed to distract attention.

Eight hundred thousand Americans have died of COVID-19 in less than two years. The colossal scale of death—which now exceeds the total US war dead in all of America's wars abroad—was entirely preventable. They are the product of a deliberate policy pursued by the Trump and Biden administrations of accepting mass death, prioritizing profits over human lives and refusing to take the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

These figures stand in appalling contrast to the death toll in China. Every week more people die of COVID-19 in the United States than have died *throughout the entire pandemic* in China, which has a population more than four times larger. There can be no doubt that the scientific “Zero Covid” policy of coordinated lockdowns, aggressive testing, contact tracing, and quarantine pursued by the Chinese government saved millions of lives.

But while China’s policy has saved lives, the American ruling class’s response to the pandemic has saved profits, with the wealth of US billionaires soaring more than 60 percent since the start of 2020.

Beyond the pandemic, the United States has waged unending war for more than three decades, with the death toll numbering in the millions. Waging each war under the blood-soaked banner of “human rights,” American imperialism leaves everything that it touches in ruins. Its sole concern is to maintain and extend the economic hegemony of American capital.

The American war in Iraq killed over one million Iraqis. After two decades of US occupation of Afghanistan, its people are starving in the debris of war, as over 20 million people face life-threatening food insecurity. The people of Yemen are starving, bombed with armaments supplied by Washington to Saudi Arabia. Civil war rages in Syria and Libya in the ashes created by the US war machine.

Millions have been displaced, fleeing their homes and communities. Civilizations of the Middle East and Central Asia have been stripped bare, historical landmarks laid waste, entire cultures and language groups scattered to the wind. Surveying the debris of Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, one could throw Washington’s accusation of cultural genocide back in its teeth.

Those displaced by the wars of American imperialism confront hostile borders, possible enslavement, and desperate conditions. Thousands drown in the Mediterranean, and the corpses of migrant children wash up on its shores.

Those huddled masses who attempt to cross the US border and enter the land of “human rights” and “democracy” will likely wind up in cages. Thirty thousand immigrants are

currently imprisoned in the United States for the “crime” of seeking to enter the country, twice as many as when Trump left office.

The CIA, known around the world as Murder, Inc., has funded dirty wars, toppled democracies, and installed brutal dictators from the Shah to Pinochet. While it denounced Beijing, the White House embraced Rodrigo Duterte, the fascist thug who heads the Philippines, inviting him to a Summit for Democracy later this week.

Over the past five years, Duterte has overseen a campaign of mass murder, under the guise of a “war on drugs,” that has killed over 30,000 impoverished Filipinos. Biden’s invitation to Duterte declared, “We recognize and appreciate your partnership in working to build democratic and human rights-respecting societies that allow all citizens to thrive.”

Surplus military equipment, when it becomes obsolete for crushing human rights abroad, are provided to US police departments to suppress democracy at home. Armored military vehicles have been deployed in cities across the United States in response to mass protests against police killings. In the “City Upon a Hill” of democracy and human rights, the police have killed over 30,000 people since 1980.

Now the vast apparatus of hypocrisy and cant that is the American media is directed at China. Invoking “democracy” in Taiwan and Hong Kong, “human rights” in Xinjiang, and “freedom” in the South China Sea, the US has destabilized international relations and brought the world perilously close to global war.

In addition to the geopolitical imperatives of American imperialism and its efforts to contain the economic rise of China, the campaign is motivated by domestic and political considerations. The staggering criminality of Washington’s response to the pandemic – 800,000 dead! – stands utterly exposed by the Zero Covid policy of China. Every day that this continues, it demonstrates to the international working class that their governments are plotting against their lives.

Throughout November, an aggressive campaign was waged in the international media, spearheaded by the *New York Times*, demanding that China end its “isolation” and “open up.” Zero Covid, it was insistently argued, could not be sustained.

The discovery and rapid spread of the Omicron variant, a mutation unleashed on the world by the leading capitalist powers' refusal to adopt a scientific policy of elimination, has temporarily silenced this campaign. The Biden White House has turned to other measures and announced the boycott of the Winter Olympics in the name of human rights and accused China of genocide.

If China followed the US dictates and ended its Zero Covid policy, opening up to the virus, millions would die, doubtless including tens of thousands of Uyghurs. The White House is unconcerned by this. While it speaks of democracy and human rights, Washington demands every government adopt its policy of mass death.

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