

# United States Senate

June 14, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write seeking more information about the U.S. government's preparations for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing. I continue to advocate for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to rebid the 2022 Games to a free country. But if the IOC refuses and the United States chooses to compete in the Games, our government must take all necessary steps to protect American athletes who travel to China.

Under ordinary conditions, the U.S. government must prepare for years in advance of each Olympics to protect American athletes and guarantee U.S. media access.<sup>1</sup> But these Games won't occur under ordinary conditions. Unlike Olympics held in friendly, free nations, the 2022 Beijing Games will pose unique challenges for the safety, security, and privacy of Americans who attend.

First, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) operates the world's most invasive domestic surveillance system. Chinese authorities closely monitor internet traffic within the country and block or censor online information that the Party views as adverse to its grip on power. The CCP also continuously tracks persons in Chinese cities through a network of facial-recognition cameras and other advanced sensors. Further, members of the American delegation should expect their rooms in the Chinese Olympic Village to be bugged with audio or visual surveillance equipment and all their onshore electronic devices to be hacked by Chinese authorities.

Second, the CCP also considers DNA collection a vital intelligence-gathering objective. As the U.S. National Counterintelligence and Security Center recently noted, "The PRC views bulk personal data, including health-care and genomic data, as a strategic commodity to be collected and used for its economic and national-security priorities."<sup>2</sup> The CCP has reportedly conducted tests to develop biologically-enhanced soldiers and intends to use DNA data to catapult Chinese biotechnology companies to global market dominance.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> GAO, "Olympic Security: U.S. Support to Athens Games Provides Lessons for Future Olympics," GAO-05-547, May 31, 2005, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GAOREPORTS-GAO-05-547/html/GAOREPORTS-GAO-05-547.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> The National Counterintelligence and Security Center, "China's Collection of Genomic and Other Healthcare Data from America: Risks to Privacy and U.S. Economic and National Security," February 2021, [https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/SafeguardingOurFuture/NCSC\\_China\\_Genomics\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_2021.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/SafeguardingOurFuture/NCSC_China_Genomics_Fact_Sheet_2021.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> John Ratcliffe, "China Is National Security Threat No. 1," *Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-is-national-security-threat-no-1-11607019599>.

In 2022, thousands of world-class athletes will gather to compete in China. Their DNA will present an irresistible target for the CCP. Thus, we should expect that the Chinese government will attempt to collect genetic samples of Olympians at the Games, perhaps disguised as testing for illegal drugs or COVID-19.

Third, the CCP arbitrarily detains Americans and other Western visitors to China.<sup>4</sup> It also has placed exit bans on foreign nationals, prohibiting them from leaving the country in order to extort them for economic or political gains. In 2018, for instance, the CCP took an American family hostage and seized two Canadians.<sup>5</sup> In 2020, Beijing threatened to take further hostages unless the U.S. government halted its prosecutions of Chinese spies on American college campuses.<sup>6</sup> The State Department has now issued a Level 3 Travel Advisory for China (“Reconsider Travel”) because of the Chinese government’s use of arbitrary detention and exit bans. Yet thousands of Americans will soon travel to China if the Beijing Games proceed and the U.S. participates.

Members of the U.S. Olympic delegation could be subject to arbitrary detention in China, particularly those who have spoken out against the Communist Party’s genocide of the Uyghurs, repression in Tibet, and takeover of Hong Kong. Former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs David Stilwell apparently shares my concerns, stating that “[s]pectators have good reason to beware Xi Jinping’s Beijing Winter Olympics. ... Houston Rockets GM Daryl Morey would be wise not to attend the Beijing Olympics, along with anyone else who Tweeted ‘Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong.’”<sup>7</sup>

Given these risks to the American delegation, the U.S. government and U.S. Olympic Committee must thoroughly prepare to ensure the safety and security of all Americans traveling to the 2022 Beijing Olympic Games. With these grave concerns in mind, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. How is the U.S. government preparing to support the U.S. delegation at the 2022 Olympic Games? Please describe any security assessments or logistical support being provided by the U.S. government.
2. Is the Chinese government fully cooperating with U.S. government efforts to mitigate security risks and provide logistical support in advance of the U.S. delegation’s arrival? How does their level of cooperation contrast with South Korea’s before the 2018 Games? If the Chinese government isn’t cooperating fully, please describe any Chinese government efforts to delay or obstruct this important advance work by the U.S. government.

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<sup>4</sup> “Westerners Grow Wary of China Travel Over Threat of Detention,” *Bloomberg News*, December 22, 2020.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/global-economics/westerners-grow-wary-of-china-travel-over-threat-of-detention>.

<sup>5</sup> Zhaoyin Feng, “China Defends Holding Fugitive Businessman’s US Children,” *BBC News*, November 26, 2018,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46352336>; also see: Javier Hernandez and Catherine Porter, “China Indicts 2 Canadians on Spying Charges, Escalating Dispute,” *New York Times*, June 19, 2020,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/world/asia/china-canada-kovrig-spavor.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Wong, “China Threatens to Detain Americans If U.S. Prosecutes Chinese Scholars,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/us/politics/china-us-threats-detain.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Cleo Paskal, “Is Beijing Planning a Rob, Replicate, Replace Olympics?,” *Sunday Guardian Live*, May 1, 2021,

<https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/beijing-planning-rob-replicate-replace-olympics>.

3. Is the Chinese government fully cooperating with requests from American media outlets for access to the 2022 Olympic Games? If not, please describe any Chinese government efforts to delay or obstruct U.S. media access.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



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Tom Cotton  
United States Senator