

KENTUCKY

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, a powerful tornado stretched across 200 miles, never leaving the land, and perhaps the longest streak of tornado destruction we have ever seen in the United States of America. And my heart goes out to all those families who have been so impacted, all those who are lost, all those who are without a home, all those whose lives have been turned upside down.

We, the Senate, must act to be supportive of our fellow Americans who have faced such incredible destruction.

CHINA

Madam President, I come today to the floor to address another tragedy—a tragedy unfolding in China, where the Olympic Games are scheduled to begin on February 4.

I come to the floor to applaud President Biden for speaking out and announcing a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 February Beijing Olympic Games. This is absolutely the right thing to do, and as Beijing's response has shown, it sends a clear signal to the world that the world will not silently stand by as human rights are so dramatically abused.

For 2 weeks in February, the world will join together in the bask of the spectacle of the Winter Games. We will experience the highs and lows, as athletes from around the globe experience themselves the thrills of victory and the agony of defeat.

Athletes heading to the Games dream of thrilling the world and winning medals, but they also dream of contributing to the Olympic spirit, a spirit often spoken of in terms of working to build a better world through sports, which is why it is so offensive that these Games are set to take place in the shadow of some of the world's most egregious assaults on human rights and human dignity.

It is mind-boggling to me that the International Olympic Committee chose just this past March to characterize their strategic roadmap of the 5 years using such lofty goals as the Games will “contribute to more inclusive society and to peace,” and yet allowing the Games to go on in a nation where genocide is taking place at this very moment. It is mind-boggling because it is not some small abuse that is taking place but one of the worst the world has ever seen.

The Chinese Government has been committing, and is continuing to commit, genocide against a religious minority, and they are stripping away the political rights of Hong Kong's citizens, and they are suppressing the free-rights speeches of Chinese activists and advocates and journalists and bullying China's critics at home and abroad.

We cannot allow China to use the shine of the Olympic medals to blind the world to these facts. We have seen this before, and philosophers say that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

So let's return to 1936, the Olympic Stadium, the Olympic flag flying

proudly not just in the stadium but throughout the city of Berlin for the summer Games right next to Nazi swastikas. It still shocks me to think of the world watching and cheering on as the Olympic torch was lit in a stadium filled with men and women giving the Nazi salute as Adolf Hitler watched on.

The Nazi regime had already started carrying out their racist, genocidal policies. They had already persecuted Jewish, German, and LGBTQ men and women, and labor activists and other minorities. They had already rounded up and jailed political opponents other nondesirables, including some 800 Roma in and around Berlin, who, just weeks before the start of the Games, were locked away in a camp outside the city.

But the world chose to look away from that unfolding horror. For 2 weeks during the Games, the Nazis took down their anti-Semitic signs, the propaganda ministry made newspapers ease up on hateful rhetoric, and the world praised the German government, legitimizing their regime with such fawning declarations as when the New York Times observed that the Games put Germany back in the fold of nations.

The world allowed itself to be beguiled by the Nazi facade. Behind that facade stood a violent, racist regime. Behind that facade was a government that controlled what the people living within its power could do and what they could say. Behind that facade was a regime that had no belief in anyone's basic human rights and that within 3 years was seeking to conquer the world while simultaneously murdering 6 million Jewish individuals and millions of other non-Jewish men, women, and children.

What if, instead of being taken in by the spectacle of the Games, and what if, instead of allowing the Nazis to use those Games for propaganda, the leaders of the world had stood up and pushed back? How much death and destruction might have been prevented? We will never know.

But what we do know is that we have the opportunity right now to learn from that past mistake and to do better.

Elie Wiesel once said: “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

We cannot fail to protest the Chinese Government's actions that stain the mission and purpose of the Olympics Games, because there is absolutely no question about the kinds of crimes and atrocities that are being committed by the Chinese Government at this very moment—atrocities like the enslavement and genocide against the Uighur Muslim minority being carried out in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. That genocide has been documented, it has been recognized, and it has been publicly announced by two different Presidential administrations.

That genocide completely reflects the United Nations' official definition of “a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group in whole or in part.”

At the direction of President Xi of China, at least a million Uighurs are being detained and enslaved in camps in Xinjiang. They are forced to toil and work for the Chinese Government, producing cotton and other goods while undergoing reeducation programs where they are forced to renounce their faith and pledge loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party.

This is a process described in one official Chinese document as “washing brains, cleansing hearts, strengthening righteousness and eliminating evil.” It certainly is one of the most dramatic forms of evil taking place at this moment. That is what the Chinese Government is doing to the Uighur people.

The crimes against these individuals include torture, sleep deprivation, sexual abuse, rape, forced sterilizations, and abortions. One woman who fled the country after being released from a camp, who resides here now in the United States, recounted stories to reporters and human rights investigators of women being taken from their cells every night, brought to another room to be tortured and raped by one or more masked men. She, and another woman who was forced to help facilitate these assaults, have spoken about police officers paying good money to have their pick of the imprisoned women and girls. Those who are returned to their cells are threatened with even more pain and more torture if they say anything.

And these crimes and this repression aren't contained just to the camps. Millions in Xinjiang are subjected to Orwellian surveillance and discrimination, restricted from traveling or going to school, from freely speaking or freely worshipping. Meanwhile, the Chinese Government is systematically ripping children from their parents' arms, forcing them to live in state-run facilities where they are being indoctrinated to renounce their faith, ethnicity, and culture; to view their parents as China's enemies; and to praise the Communist Party.

All of that has been going on for years, at least since 2017, and all of it will still be going on as the International Olympic Committee and athletes from around the world gather in Beijing on February 4 for the opening ceremonies. And if the world is silent, if there are no protests or consequences, all that will serve simply to embolden the Chinese Government and their genocidal efforts.

Beijing's egregious actions don't stop with crimes against the Uighur people. We see those crimes in Hong Kong, where the Chinese Government is stripping the rights of Hongkongers, one day after another.

Back in 1998, China promised to adhere to the “one country, two systems” model. They signed a contract with

Great Britain to do so. They guaranteed freedom and rights to the citizens of Hong Kong. But we have watched in 2019 and 2020 as the Chinese Government has systematically dismantled the political rights of those in Hong Kong, working to silence any form of dissent, to silence any voice of opinion that might disagree with that of the Chinese Government. Demonstrators are beaten with batons and tear-gassed and pepper-sprayed and shot for asserting basic human rights—rights they were guaranteed when Hong Kong was reclaimed by China.

It fills me with dismay and rage at what the citizens of Hong Kong have lost under this oppression. This time last year, the Hong Kong people were still protesting and fighting for their freedom. Hundreds of thousands gathered, watching as messages of support for their cause came in from around the world and played out on giant screens. There was a feeling of hope.

But that hope lies shattered in the streets of Hong Kong today. Today, China has used the heavy hand of the national security law to ensure that only patriots loyal to Beijing can hold positions of power. They have crushed the hope. They have destroyed the freedom. They have destroyed the political rights of the 7.5 million citizens of Hong Kong.

Rarely in the history of the world have so many people been together celebrating their elections, celebrating their free speeches, and seen it crushed in such short order.

It is in this context that China is hosting the February Winter Olympic Games of 2022. And we, the free world, standing up for the rights of every individual to exercise the fundamental freedoms and the equal and inalienable right of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights that we are all born with, must speak out against these actions.

None of what China is doing is a major surprise because it has unfolded in such a systematic way now for so many years. China engaged in a campaign of controlling its citizens and silencing dissent, including silencing dissent within its borders. Human rights organizations have long and well documented the abuses.

This picture is of Chang Weiping, a Chinese lawyer who the government says was detained for allegedly inciting subversion of state power because he participated in a protest. After he was released on bail, Chang released a video statement describing the physical and psychological torture that he experienced while being detained. So authorities arrested him again and charged him with subverting state power. He is now one of those heroes who have stood up for the freedom of all the people of Hong Kong, and he is being held by the Chinese Government for standing up and speaking out for what is right.

It is not only lawyers and advocates who are detained when they speak out against the Government in China; it is also a three-time Chinese Olympic ten-

nis star who disappeared from the public eye after accusing a party official of sexual assault.

“Where is Tennis Star Peng Shuai?” The International Olympic Committee says that she is safe and well after two video calls with the Olympian. Critics say these calls and emails supposedly from her and videos of her dining in a restaurant are “obviously staged” by the Chinese Government to counter criticism. Where is she really? Is she OK? Nobody but the Chinese Government can say for sure.

The International Olympic Committee, as an organization whose mission, according to its own president, Thomas Bach, “to put sport at the service of humanity goes hand-in-hand with human rights”—those are the very words of the president of the IOC. An organization that puts sport at the service of humanity and goes hand in hand with human rights should be, like the Women’s Tennis Association, refusing to hold events in China until human rights are honored. I give great, great compliments to the WTA for standing up for this abuse of one of their own and more broadly the abuse we see throughout China.

I am thrilled with the administration’s announcement of a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics. I am thrilled that Great Britain and Canada and Australia and Lithuania have joined in this effort. But I say to you right now: Where is the rest of the world? Where is France? Where is Germany? Where is Spain? Where are all the governments of the world that believe in the rights of free speech and free assembly? The chorus must be broader. The free world must join together and stand up for the vision of what it means to be in the free world and how horrific abuses would involve genocide or the obliteration of democratic rights.

The International Olympic Committee says: Well, the Games are all about athletes, so we don’t get involved in politics. It is all about the athletes.

Well, I tell you today that staging the Games in the shadow of genocide and the stripping of political rights from those in Hong Kong is putting the athletes in the position of helping build the facade that disguises those assaults on human dignity and human rights. That is a horrific thing to do to the athletes of the world. It is an unacceptable thing to do to the athletes of the world. You cannot force the athletes of the world to be complicit in covering up these crimes. It is wrong, and the Olympic Committee needs to stand up and call out these crimes and know that they are not in keeping with the Olympic spirit. They are not in keeping with human rights, although the president of the IOC has said that is their mission.

It is quite clear the Olympic Committee could have done far more to avert this situation because when the Games were awarded, they received

promises on human rights—promises that were not honored. They could have moved the Games years ago. They could have clarified that would happen, but they did nothing. They did nothing except help cover up the genocide in China by leaving the Games as they are and failing to note or criticize or observe the horror that has been unfolding.

Business as usual is unacceptable in the face of genocide. Business as usual is immoral in the face of genocide. Business as usual in any dimension in a country committing crimes against humanity is just wrong.

I say to the IOC today: Stand up. Call out this crime and say never again will you ever stage Olympic Games in a country committing gross violations of human rights.

That statement would be in keeping with the Olympic spirit. It would be in keeping with the Olympic spirit to say that they will defend the freedom of every single athlete at the Olympic Games to stand up and speak their mind in defense of the oppressed people of Tibet, in defense of the enslaved people of Xinjiang Province, in defense of the citizens of Hong Kong who have lost their political rights. Lay out clearly before the world that the Olympic Games will not be a place where freedom of speech is crushed as it is being crushed across China.

Colleagues, I think this viewpoint I am expressing today of the world standing up to the horrors of Chinese atrocities is shared by every Member of this Chamber and every Member of the House of Representatives down the hall. Not a one of us would rise to defend these horrific acts, which is why every one of us should stand together today to condemn Chinese genocide and Chinese destruction of political liberties and make sure that these Games are not ones where the world leaders are silenced; that these Games are not ones where the sponsors look the other way; that these Games are not ones where the athletes are not free to express how tragic they consider it to be that these terrible things are happening and need to end. Let us not repeat the mistakes of 1936 and look the other way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, the words I just heard from the Senator from Oregon are very refreshing, and I thank him for making those statements.

Thank you very much.

EAGLES ACT

Madam President, today, I come to the floor to once again talk about the tragic shooting that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, now a long time back—February 14, 2018—and the Justice Department’s response to it.

Part of my oversight work is to see that the laws are faithfully executed. Before I get to that, I want to express, as we all have done, I am sure, many