



Are We Going to Peking?

GEES

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The behavior of the Chinese Government in Tibet has reasonably produced a scandal in Europe. An even bigger scandal would have been if no reaction took place at all, because it would have proved our failure to acknowledge the definitive moral neglect of the Old Continent, incapable of reacting to unacceptable situations. Can we participate in Olympic Games, which among other things, will honor and glorify China, and recognize it as one of the great global powers to characterize the 21st century?

It is clear that if we go without protest, we will be recognizing the right of an all-powerful Communist government to do whatever it deems opportune in its territory. We will be going back in time, returning to the old principle of non-intervention regarding the internal affairs of sovereign states. What is done in their territory is their own business. However, this same European society in recent years did in fact approve a severe ratification of this same principle and began applying a

new one altogether, of humanitarian intervention. When Milosevic, president of Yugoslavia, began a process of ethnic cleansing on the Kosovo-Albanian population, the European society said, "Enough already!" and forced their leaders, who tried to look the other way, to intervene. After Kosovo, can we really look the other way?

The reality, however, is more complex. The Chinese Government has spent decades, actively denying its citizens their rights and exercising an atrocious repression. Currently, we can see how they prohibit normal access to the internet and free choice of what people can read or write. Many are jailed for failure to comply with these restrictions. There are many more freedom-deprived Chinese people than the Tibetans, but we worry most for the latter. Millions of Muslims are living in Western China in the region of Xinjiang. For years, we have had news of abuse and violence, but to date, nobody has shown the slightest bit of in-

terest for the well-being of these people.

We worry about Tibet because it is *fashion*, because it has big and important friends in the movie business and because the most prominent director, a man who lives in India and exercises control, has supported the liberation of Cataluña. He understands better than anyone that the Castilians are the Chinese of the Old Continent. We, of course, laugh at this. We still have moral means, but it would be better if we were capable to exercise them with some common sentiment, free of the ridiculous means that have made the freedom of spirit so enviable.

If we are actually worried about an event as praiseworthy as the sport of high competition being developed in worthy and acceptable environments, then we must focus our attention on the root of the problem: the International Olympic Committee. As any other organization characterized by this kind of multilateral cooperation, their task is to incorporate all states, in an attempt to bring order to the world. Obviously, the majority of governments are repulsive, and their abuse has become the norm. Another separate issue here relates to the great powers. China and Russia are not only undemocratic, but also are two of the five full members of the Security Council. If this Committee agrees to anything, we shouldn't be surprised if they violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These same governments also form part of the General Assembly of the United Nations and not only systematically violate the Declaration, but also take great satisfaction in dictating what is right or wrong. They can condemn a democracy such as Israel and

protect atrocious regimes with tranquillity, lacking any amount of principles.

China was what it is and did as it does when it was selected as the host for the Olympics. Nothing has changed, but why did no one protest at the time? In the selection process for hosts, countries are not filtered for Democracy for the simple reason that the Committee's members are all Democracies. It seems only normal to them that Dictatorships would not compete with Democracies.

The Russian invasion of Afghanistan resulted in boycotts against the Moscow Olympic Games and by ricochet those of Los Angeles. Now, we plan to do the same in Peking. Perhaps we should try to overcome the moral spasms, for the attractive eyes of Richard Gere, and establish criteria of greater reach. We can dissolve the Olympic Committee, a very recommendable option, and summon a new one in which there is only room for democracies, which will convert the world of sports into an authentic elitist activity. Alternatively, we should realize that the currently existing system limits us to making diplomatic gestures in line with the position of Sarkozy. If we opt to boycott Peking, a precedent will be created which will leave us obligated to take the same action in the future. The Olympic Committee does not have the capacity to carry out this option. It is good that we are intensifying our resolve to uphold our morals, but it would be even better if we also were capable of acting consistently.

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