

# CHINA INSIDER

## BEIJING EMBRACES THE TALIBAN WITH EYE ON ECONOMIC INTERESTS

See Page 6

Members  
of the Taliban  
seen in Kabul,  
Afghanistan, on  
Aug. 17, 2021.



## OPINION

# Let's Boycott the Genocide Games in Beijing

BENEDICT ROGERS



Three days ago the Olympic Games in Tokyo ended, with athletes celebrating their medals and nursing their losses. Now, all eyes turn to the next Olympics—the Winter Games next year—and increasingly the question of the legitimacy of the host city: Beijing.

It is extremely rare for two successive host cities for the Games—Summer and Winter—to have their credentials questioned, though for two entirely different reasons. Tokyo's ability to host the Olympics was held in doubt by some not because of any wrongdoing by Japan, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed it was postponed by a year, and earlier this year speculation grew that the Games could be canceled. In the end, Tokyo went ahead, and—despite pandemic complications—proved a success.

In contrast, the questions surrounding Beijing 2022 are far more profound. COVID-19 is a consideration, given that the virus emerged first in China and turned into a pandemic in large part as a consequence of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) cover-up and lies. Instead of suppressing the virus, the regime initially suppressed the truth, threatening, intimidating and disappearing whistleblowers, including doctors and citizen journalists who tried to warn the world. Instead of alerting the World Health Organization (WHO) immediately, the CCP delayed and denied. And instead of allowing a transparent inquiry into the origins of the virus, the regime has refused to co-operate and launched a trade war against those, like Australia, which called for an investigation. So on public health grounds alone, does Beijing deserve to host the Winter Games?

But the moral illegitimacy of Beijing 2022 goes much deeper than public health and logistics. This is a regime that increasingly stands accused of the worst

Assuming, therefore, that the IOC does not respond to pressure to move the 2022 Games, what then? Surely what is needed is as full, coordinated, and comprehensive a boycott as possible.

Activists, including members of the local Hong Kong, Tibetan, and Uyghur communities, hold up banners and placards calling on the Australian government to boycott the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics over China's human rights record, in Melbourne, Australia, on June 23, 2021.

crimes under international law—genocide and crimes against humanity—and flagrant violations of international treaties. Is this a regime that deserves the prestige of hosting the Winter Olympics?

Both the previous and current U.S. administrations, the Canadian, Dutch, Lithuanian, Belgian, Czech, and British parliaments, and a growing number of international legal experts and scholars now conclude that the Uyghurs are facing genocide. An independent tribunal chaired by the man who prosecuted Slobodan Milosevic, British lawyer Sir Geoffrey Nice, is assessing this claim and will publish its judgment toward the end of the year, but in its public hearings, truly harrowing evidence has already been presented. Beijing 2022 is increasingly becoming known as the #GenocideGames.

A previous independent tribunal also chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice concluded beyond doubt that forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in China has occurred, and continues, on a widespread scale. The China Tribunal's judgment in 2019 argued that this amounts to crimes against humanity and that anyone engaging with the Chinese regime must be made aware that they are dealing with a "criminal state."

Xi Jinping's regime has completely destroyed Hong Kong's promised freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and autonomy over the past year, in total and repeated breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a treaty registered at the United Nations. British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab says China is in "a state of ongoing non-compliance"—an understated diplomatic euphemism to mean that Beijing has torn up and trampled on an international treaty.

On top of all this, there is the continuing repression in Tibet, the worst persecution of Christians since the Cultural Revolution, ongoing assaults on Falun Gong practitioners, the crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, citizen journalists, bloggers, and dissidents throughout China, as well as the CCP's increasing aggression toward its critics well beyond its borders. Should a regime whose leader threatens overseas critics with having "their heads bashed bloody against a Great Wall of Steel" if they dare to oppose the CCP be rewarded with the Winter Olympics?

The case against Beijing 2022 is clear. The question is what do we do about it?

Ideally, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) should move the Games, even at the eleventh hour, from Beijing to another city capable of hosting at short notice. There are plenty of candidates with experience and facilities for hosting winter sports—Canada, parts of the United States, various parts of Scandinavia, and Switzerland are just a few. If the IOC had the political will, it could be done.



Unfortunately, the IOC seems to already be too far into Beijing's pocket to budge. It has already tied itself to China's line on Taiwan, for example, insisting on describing Taiwanese athletes as representing "Chinese Taipei" and refusing to play the Taiwanese national anthem or display Taiwan's flag at medal ceremonies.

When Chinese athletes wore Chairman Mao badges in Tokyo, the IOC did warn them that their gesture could be a breach of the Olympic Charter, which bans political statements, but we should not hold our breath for any disciplinary action to be taken.

Assuming, therefore, that the IOC does not respond to pressure to move the 2022 Games, what then? Surely what is needed is as full, coordinated, and comprehensive a boycott as possible.

At an absolute minimum, there must be a diplomatic boycott. No foreign government representatives, diplomats, ministers, royalty, or dignitaries should attend. Of course, there will be those who won't sign up for this, but if as many like-minded countries as possible coordinate this effort, it will make a differ-

ence. Beijing hates being snubbed, and loathes being embarrassed. When the United States boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympics after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, over 60 countries followed suit. Let's try the same approach with Beijing.

But we should do more. We need a consumer boycott. Spectators should not go to Beijing, and should put pressure on corporate sponsors to withdraw. Consumers should boycott those companies that still have their logos on the stands in the Beijing Games.

And, if the Games go ahead, we should use the platform it gives us to generate maximum attention on China's human rights violations. Talk about the Uyghur genocide, Tibet, Hong Kong, religious persecution, torture, forced organ harvesting, disappearances, the surveillance state, and the increasingly totalitarian nature of the CCP at every opportunity on the airwaves. Turn Beijing 2022 from a propaganda victory for the CCP into a publicity coup for the cause of freedom and human dignity.

Exiled Tibetans use the Olympic rings as a prop as they protest against the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, in Dharamsala, India, on Feb. 3, 2021.

As to the athletes, I leave it to them to wrestle with their consciences. I know that competing in the Olympics is every sportsman's dream, and they will have spent years training for it. It's not for me to tell them whether or not to compete. But if they do compete they should do so with their eyes and ears wide open, and should use the opportunity they have—on the ground, if they're brave enough, or immediately upon departure from Beijing—to highlight the brutality and criminality of China's barbaric dictatorship.

One thing we can be sure about is that if brave sports men and women from other dictatorial states take a stand in Beijing the way Belarusian sprinter Krystina Timanovskaya did in Tokyo, against their own regimes, they're unlikely to receive the protection they found in Japan. That in itself could put quite a few off from participating.

Some argue that boycotts don't work. I disagree. History shows they play an important role. And at the very least what is certain is that if Beijing 2022 goes ahead unchallenged, the regime

will be emboldened, behave with even more repression at home and aggression abroad, and ultimately it won't only be the peoples of China whose rights we will have failed to defend, but our own freedoms at stake as well.

So let's work now to turn Beijing 2022 into a nightmare for Xi Jinping and a light in the darkness for those suffering under his regime. Let's boycott the Genocide Games.

*Benedict Rogers is a human rights activist and writer. He is the co-founder and chief executive of Hong Kong Watch, senior analyst for East Asia at the international human rights organization CSW, co-founder and deputy chair of the UK Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, and member of the advisory group of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China, and the Stop Uyghur Genocide Campaign.*

*Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*



WILLIAM WEST/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

## OPINION

# 11-Year Sentence for Canadian Michael Spavor Highlights China's Communist Dictatorship

LLOYD BILLINGSLEY



China has sentenced Canadian businessman Michael Spavor to 11 years in prison on espionage charges, more than two years after the Canadian was

first detained, along with fellow Canadian Michael Kovrig.

The arrest of "the two Michaels," as the Canadians have become known, followed the arrest in Vancouver of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou on charges that her company violated U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"Chinese officials have not disclosed any evidence against Spavor or Kovrig," CNN reported, "or information relating to their trials, which were held behind closed doors in March."

That marks a contrast with the treatment of China's actual spies in the

The Chinese regime shows no sign of backing off on the hostage-taking front.

United States, and the legal systems of the respective nations.

As the FBI verified, Tang Juan, who conducted research at the University of California at Davis, was a member of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Like other Chinese nationals in the United States on exchange programs, she took direction from superiors in the PLA. That constitutes espionage, but the only charge against Tang was falsifying information on her visa application.

Before her case was dismissed last month, the court dropped charges of lying to the FBI, on the grounds that the agents had not properly informed the Chinese national of her rights. She was represented by independent American lawyers, and the trial was held in open court. Once the case was dismissed, Tang quickly returned to China. The PLA and CCP member was

never a hostage and the American government demanded nothing in return for dropping the charges against her.

By contrast, China's proceedings against Spavor and Kovrig were clearly in retaliation for the arrest in 2018 of Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer. Spavor's two-hour trial was held in secret, and the Canadian was charged with stealing state secrets, which in China can mean any information disclosed by an investigation.

Under China's communist dictatorship there is no rule of law—only rule by the CCP. Chinese courts are essentially low-level organs of the CCP. In China, there is no presumption of innocence and no right to a swift public trial, with the verdict subject to appeal.

Immediately after his secret trial, China announced no verdict for Spavor, already imprisoned more than twice as long as Iran held 52 American hostages in 1979. Those familiar with

China's prison conditions say incarceration in a Chinese prison amounts to torture in and of itself.

According to Canada's National Post, Spavor was held in cells roughly three-by-three meters where "there is no furniture and the thin mattress must be rolled up during the day." Prisoners are not allowed outside their cells and there are no exercise yards or dining hall. Meals of boiled rice and vegetables are pushed under the doors in "doggy bowls." In some accounts, prisoners must spend the whole day sitting or squatting on the floor, which causes joint and muscle deterioration.

Spavor told reporters he was in good spirits and wanted to go home. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau denounced the 11-year sentence as "absolutely unacceptable and unjust." The trial, according to Trudeau, "did not satisfy even the minimum stan-



Jim Nickel, the deputy chief of mission for the Canadian Embassy in China, speaks at an event held in connection with the announcement of the sentence for Canadian citizen Michael Spavor at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing on Aug. 11, 2021.

dards required by international law."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement, "The practice of arbitrarily detaining individuals to exercise leverage over foreign governments is completely unacceptable. People should never be used as bargaining chips."

At the time of writing, the White House has issued no statement on Spavor's 11-year sentence.

During the 2020 campaign, Joe Biden said the Chinese were "not bad folks," and "not competition" for the United States. In 2013, Justin Trudeau proclaimed, "There's a level of admiration I actually have for China. Their basic dictatorship is actually allowing them to turn their economy around on a dime."

With those conditions of mind in U.S. and Canadian leaders, leniency for actual Chinese spies such as Tang is likely to increase. On the other hand, the Chinese regime shows no

sign of backing off on the hostage-taking front.

Kovrig, a former Canadian diplomat who worked for the International Crisis Group (ICG), is accused of stealing sensitive information. China's courts have revealed none of the evidence against Kovrig. The verdict and sentence in the case have yet to be announced.

*Lloyd Billingsley is the author of "Yes I Con: United Fakes of America," "Barack 'em Up: A Literary Investigation," "Hollywood Party," and other books. His articles have appeared in many publications, including Frontpage Magazine, City Journal, The Wall Street Journal, and American Greatness. Billingsley serves as a policy fellow with the Independent Institute.*

*Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, political chief of Afghanistan's Taliban, in Tianjin, China on July 28, 2021.

## ANALYSIS

# Beijing Embraces the Taliban With Eye on Economic Interests

RACHEL BROOKS

As the Taliban took over Afghanistan after swiftly capturing all major cities over the past week, it could count on the endorsement of at least one major power: the Chinese regime.

In late July, about a month before the United States' scheduled departure from the country, Beijing, anticipating a power shift in the region, hosted a Taliban delegation in the city of Tianjin. Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with senior Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and eight other Taliban representatives on July 28, signaling Beijing's recognition of the group as a legitimate political force in the country.

## Economic Interests

During the meeting, Wang sought assurances that the Taliban wouldn't harbor Islamic extremists who may launch attacks in China's far west Xinjiang region, according to a Beijing foreign ministry statement. Baradar agreed, saying that the Taliban "never allow any force to use the Afghan territory to engage in acts detrimental to China," according to the statement.

China shares a 47-mile border with Afghanistan and has long been concerned about a possible Islamic insurgency in Xinjiang, a region housing 13 million Turkic Muslims.

Wang also spoke of the Taliban's "important role in the country's peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction process," the foreign ministry said.

Beijing's interest in courting the Taliban stems, in part, from its economic interests in the region, experts told *The Epoch Times*.

Among the regime's overriding priorities is to ensure a development project in the "Baluchi port of Gwadar, which is a key feature of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and absolutely essential to the B&R [Belt and Road] initiative," Srdja Trifkovic, a jihadism expert and foreign relations fellow of the Charlemagne Institute, told *The Epoch Times*.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a massive China-facilitated Pakistan infrastructure project that falls under the umbrella of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI is a global infrastructure investment project aimed to transform China's economy into a superpower.

The Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan has been called a "super link" to the CPEC by Beijing's media because of its geographic location. The CPEC project in Gwadar has come under the control of the CPEC Authority and the Center of Excellence CPEC, organizations aimed to get the project back off the ground after a stalling period. The final project will build a road from China's Xinjiang region to the sea-

coast of Pakistan.

"Trying to have a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan favorably disposed to this [the CPEC] and other projects is both prudent and attainable from China's point of view," Trifkovic said.

Meanwhile, the Chinese regime is also leveraging the situation to increase its influence in the region, at the expense of the United States.

"The void left behind by the U.S. is being filled by China. The Taliban's direct talks with Beijing signals that China is assuming the duties of peace brokering in war-torn Afghanistan," said Azeem Qureshi, a lecturer in Middle East-China relations with the COMSATS and Quaid-i-Azam universities in Islamabad, Pakistan.

But Beijing is reliant on Pakistan, with whom it already has close ties, to achieve that.

"The Chinese don't really understand Afghanistan very much, something that makes them look toward Pakistan," said Muhammad Shoaib, an assistant professor of international relations at the National Defense University in Islamabad.

For both Islamabad and Beijing, peace and stability in Afghanistan is the main goal.

"Chinese companies investing heavily in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran know the huge potential of business in the region, and peace is their ultimate desire as it equals huge profits. China can get an easier route to CARs via Afghanistan and Pakistan's CPEC," Qureshi said, referring to the Central Asian Republics bloc.

Courting the Taliban, however, isn't a fail-safe strategy for either Beijing or Pakistan. Pakistan has struggled in its recent diplomatic efforts with the Taliban, an unpredictable player in regional politics.

## Uyghurs

Another overriding priority for Beijing in the Central Asian region is to use its influence to repatriate Uyghur Muslims, a Turkic-speaking ethnic group, back to Xinjiang.

In the region of Xinjiang, the CCP has detained more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in internment camps, where they're subjected to torture, forced labor, and political indoctrination. Outside of the camps, the region's Muslim inhabitants face pervasive surveillance through a network of checkpoints, AI-enhanced CCTV cameras, and biometric collection. The repression has been designated a genocide by the U.S. government and other Western legislatures.

But the CCP hasn't only focused its repression in Xinjiang. Wherever they may be in Central Asia, Beijing's ultimate goal for the Uyghur diaspora from Xinjiang is to annihilate them; to bring them home, and to snuff them out, according to Ethan Gutmann, China studies research fellow with

the Victims of Communism Foundation.

"These nations [of Central Asia] are under an extreme amount of pressure from China to give up their Uyghurs. This isn't a rational policy," Gutmann said, noting that the pressure to extinguish the Uyghur culture and race has no real bearing on the Belt and Road Initiative.

This maximum pressure campaign on Central Asian nations to deport or return Uyghurs has reached as far as Istanbul, where Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was accused of agreeing to deport Uyghurs in exchange for China-made Sinovac CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus vaccines.

"That was a real deal," Gutmann said. "If not for the pushback of the Uyghur and of Erdogan's opposition, that would have happened."

Abduweli Ayup, an Uyghur-language specialist who was detained by the Chinese regime in 2013, said that many Uyghurs escape to nearby Central Asia because they believe they'll be safe among other Muslims.

While in detention, Ayup met several Uyghurs who had been sent back from countries such as Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

"We had seen that Turkey deported some Uyghurs first to Tajikistan and then to China. Some Uyghurs that I know were deported to Uzbekistan first and then to China. Those countries have been directly and indirectly cooperating with China on deporting Uyghurs," Ayup said, noting that these deportees have been sentenced to die since as early as 1997.

In Ayup's view, this cooperation is shameful under any cultural standard, because in Islamic tradition, betraying other Muslims goes against their beliefs, while the deportation of refugees goes against international law.

"They are committing genocide there," Ayup said, referring to the Chinese regime's campaign in Xinjiang.

Gutmann noted that the Taliban's dialogue with Beijing is mainly about getting backing from a powerful, wealthy ally as the United States leaves the region.

If the Taliban, in an effort to curry favor with Beijing, backs to pressure to send Uyghurs back to China, it'll likely draw the wrath of Western democracies. But Gutmann noted that there isn't a large population of Uyghurs living in Afghanistan or Pakistan, because Uyghurs tend to gravitate to areas with large populations of Turkic peoples and make for Istanbul to start a new life free of the Chinese regime.

*Rachel Brooks is a freelance reporter covering China-related issues. Prior to The Epoch Times, she reported on topics concerning the Trump administration's U.S.-China trade war for various publications.*

## OPINION

# A Time Out to Reassess Chinese Stocks

Beijing's framework for 'Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics' emerges

FAN YU

Beijing policymakers have sought to calm financial markets after a period of heavy-handed and unexpected crackdowns on several sectors. Now is a good opportunity for foreign investors to reassess their investments in Chinese companies.

After a period of market volatility, Beijing authorities have unveiled a broad five-year plan to regulate large swaths of China's economy and industry. The rules should finally give investors a rough idea of how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) plans to control its private companies, a framework for "Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics."

Of course, as with all policies issued by the CCP, it's "caveat emptor" and subject to change without notice.

Let's quickly recap the regulatory actions that have culminated in the recent volatility of Chinese technology stocks.

- November 2020: Payments startup Ant Group's highly anticipated IPO was suddenly canceled.
- November 2020: China's market regulator issued draft guidelines to rein in "monopolistic practices" within its internet sector.
- February 2021: Guidelines to curb "monopolistic practices" finalized; landmark fine issued to Alibaba.
- June 2021: Beijing pledged to increase welfare and salaries of delivery workers in the "gig economy," hitting shares of platforms such as Meituan.
- July 2021: Days after Didi Chuxing's IPO, China deleted the ride-hailing app from its app stores and opened an investigation into its data security practices.
- July 2021: Cybersecurity regulator ordered any internet company with more than 1 million users to undergo cybersecurity and data security review and approval prior to listing its stock abroad.
- July 2021: State Council cracks down on education and tutoring companies, and turns some into nonprofit entities. Shares of a handful of U.S.-listed Chinese tutoring companies tumble.
- July 2021: Ministry of Industry and Information Technology began a special investigation into the internet industry. Results still to be determined.
- August 2021: China's insurance regulator outlined new rules governing online sales and marketing of insurance products.

These regulatory measures have sent both U.S.-listed and Hong Kong-listed Chinese companies plummeting and caused con-

**Chinese companies and entrepreneurs looking to fashion themselves after Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk have been put on notice.**

sternation among foreign investors.

Beijing's top policymakers have seen the recent market turmoil and sought to calm investors trying to make sense of the recent regulatory onslaught.

The State Council issued a document on Aug. 11 to strengthen enforcement of antitrust and unfair competition rules, while encouraging "healthy development" of the new economy that respects people's well-being and data privacy.

In addition, Beijing promised to increase the use of legislation and vowed to not "arbitrarily change or suspend" measures once they have been enacted without going through formal legislative procedures.

In other words, the regime in Beijing is both trying to demystify its recent administrative actions and telling the world to "trust us."

Set aside for now that the CCP's track record in carrying out what it promises to do has been dubious. Let's assume Beijing is serious about these reforms.

This all seems like "nanny-state" at its extreme. Take the for-profit education sector as an example. Beijing cracked down on the \$100 billion industry to "reduce the work burden" imposed on students and to make education "more inclusive," according to a policy statement issued on July 24.

On the surface, it's a recognition that Chinese grade-school students are under too much stress and the after-school programs favor well-to-do families with the means to pay the high tuition for such tutoring.

But in practice, these measures won't reverse the trend of after-school tutoring. University acceptance rates aren't getting any higher. What this means is that more such tutoring will go informal and "off the books." Such tutoring will just move out from the purview of for-profit institutions—the only losses are the capital providers and investors of such companies.

**Let's assume the risks of the VIE structure is worth a 20 percent discount in value. And the CCP's regulatory and political risks, another 20 percent. So the share of a Chinese company should at least be valued at a 40 percent discount than a comparable U.S. company—assuming the economics being equal.**

This has been the modus operandi for CCP leader Xi Jinping, who believes that China must blaze its own trail, and its development must be independent and strong without having to rely on foreign capital and know-how. In many ways, Xi seeks to challenge the West and the West's established form of development (including the laissez-faire regulatory regimes of the West). And this is a completely different methodology under previous regime bosses Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, who favored crony capitalism and making money without ruffling the established world order.

In other words, the Party knows best. And companies must develop, expand, and acquire customers and employees in

a manner that is consistent with the vision of the Party (or Xi himself).

Chinese companies and entrepreneurs looking to fashion themselves after Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk have been put on notice. And investors who wish to invest with them should evaluate their positions accordingly. How will their company abide by the CCP going forward, and is it part of a vulnerable industry that could come under the microscope of Beijing?

In hindsight, this development shouldn't be surprising.

A Chinese stock traded on the New York Stock Exchange acts and behaves just like another stock, right? The answer is no.

U.S. investors' hubris has left them blind to the fact that their investments in these Chinese companies are nothing but stakes in offshore shell companies that signed paper contracts with the true operating entities in China. These operating companies have nothing to do with the shell companies that foreign investors own, outside of these legal contracts.

But for years, it didn't matter. Their share prices appreciated. The dividend checks they received didn't bounce. The companies held quarterly earnings calls and filed some familiar-looking financial statements with the Securities and Exchange Commission. And Beijing didn't crack down on the offshore variable interest entity (VIE) structures that were technically illegal.

But the faith is wavering now, after all these years.

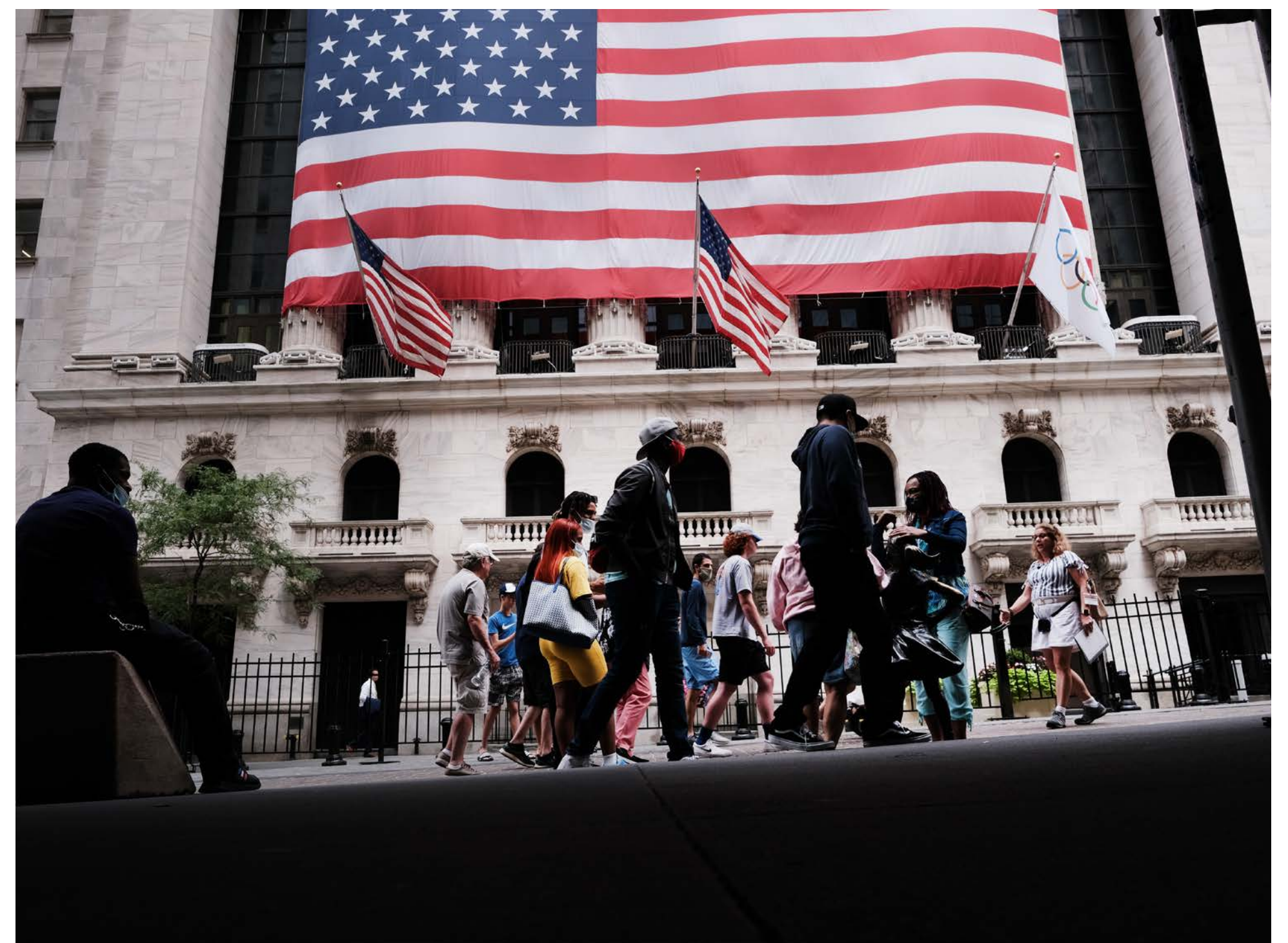
Many investors decided to pull their money out. Some may decide to wait and see. Others sense an opportunity to buy low. We're here to help you make smart decisions, not to pontificate. But either way, investors need to look at Chinese stocks differently than before.

Let's assume the risks of the VIE structure is worth a 20 percent discount in value. And the CCP's regulatory and political risks, another 20 percent. So the share of a Chinese company should at least be valued at a 40 percent discount than a comparable U.S. company—assuming the economics being equal.

It's not scientific nor technically precise, but might be a decent starting point if you want to keep both your stock and your sanity.

*Fan Yu is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China's economy since 2015.*

*Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*



People walk by the New York Stock Exchange in New York on Aug. 10, 2021.



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