

Enough Already About Security for Sochi

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We are receiving an almost daily bombardment of security warnings about the Sochi Olympics from the U.S. State Department, various U.S. military agencies and members of Congress. Many of them are appealing for a larger U.S. role to help protect the Games and those attending.

Security, of course, must be the highest priority at such a high-profile event. But it should not be taken to the level of repetitive "scare mongering," particularly when it comes from parties with prominent commercial ties to the military-industrial complex.

This same cast of characters protest too much, and they do it every time someone else tries to host a party. We saw it at Athens 2004, where primarily U.S. and Israeli defense industry interests stirred up such post 9/11 paranoia to drive attendees away and blow the budget by several billion in last minute security equipment expenditure.

It was less at Beijing 2008 because the Chinese had it well under control and gave short shrift to anyone suggesting otherwise.

During the London Games in 2012, U.S. alarm over security and organizational matters prior to the Games tried British patience. When presidential candidate Mitt Romney raised his "grave concerns" about the Games during a visit, even quality English broadsheets branded him "Mitt the Twit" on their front pages.

These security concerns always come from interested parties connected with the "war machine" who seem to think that only U.S. security apparatus and hardware can save the world from evildoers. They forget the fact that the last terrorist attack on an Olympic site in the past 40 years was at Atlanta 1996.

But in this week's and next week's newspapers, when you read even more about security concerns in Sochi, check the background of those speaking and recall former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's prophetic warning about the military-industrial complex.

We have heard enough about security concerns for the Games. Thank you, everyone gets it. Now as the Olympics are only days away, let the Russian hosts stage their party and don't rain on their parade.

Scott Antel is an attorney living in Russia for 20 years and has attended eight Olympic Games.

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