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Nike and China Chase Blogger

According to the story spun by the anonymous blogger, Nike, the sponsor of Chinese hurdler Liu Xiang, was behind the athlete's unexpected withdrawal from Olympic competition. According to the *Artstechnica* story:



At the time, Liu claimed that he was having problems with his ankle and therefore couldn't compete. The decision upset many of Liu's fans in China who were counting on him to make the country proud, but it also piqued the curiosity of some who believed that Liu was doing just fine before the heats. Reports then surfaced about Liu kicking an iron door "very hard" immediately before declaring himself injured and pulling out of the race.

Nike then used the occasion of Liu's withdrawal to capitalize on his dedication to the sport with a new ad campaign. The subsequent ads that appeared in Chinese newspapers proclaimed: "Love competition. Love risking your pride. Love winning it back. Love giving it everything you've got. Love the glory. Love the pain. Love sport even when it breaks your heart."

But according to the "conspiracy theory," Nike pressured Liu to withdraw. Again, according to *Arstechnica*:

An individual claiming to be involved with Nike then posted on a Yahoo! message board that the company had actually asked Liu to pull out of the race since he wouldn't win anyway and so that Nike could continue to capitalize on his image.

This would have sounded far-fetched, but for Nike's response. Instead of ignoring the rumor, Nike called in the Chinese Internet Gestapo. "We have immediately asked relevant government departments to investigate those that started the rumour," Nike announced.

Needless to say, this is a direct example of corporate America's yearning for fascism — the totalitarian symbiosis of big business and big government. This is "Nike ... enlisting the services of a repressive regime to crush its enemies," [commented](#) the London *Guardian's* Marina Hyde, who wryly concluded: "Nike should now be associated with the Chinese government. Let's none of us be happy until the anonymous internet poster has been hunted down and surrounded, before being carted off to wherever it is China takes its outspoken miscreants. As for Nike, we've seen how they co-opted the Liu Xiang situation, so God forbid they'd waste any arrest footage. It must be littered with empty aphorisms, and turned into an advert. 'Wondering whether to storm the house? Just do it.'"

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