

Chinese Official Accused of Sexual Assault Played Key Role in Setting Up Beijing 2022 Olympics

Zhang Gaoli, accused of assault in a post on tennis star Peng Shuai's social-media account, headed a steering committee to land the Games

By Keith Zhai, Rachel Bachman and Joshua Robinson
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A video call between the head of the International Olympic Committee and Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai is casting renewed spotlight on the former senior official accused of sexual assault in a post on the athlete's social media account—who played an important role in arranging the upcoming Winter Olympics.

Zhang Gaoli, a former vice premier and retired member of the Communist Party's ruling Politburo Standing Committee, kept a relatively low profile for an official of his rank. But during his time in office, he was regarded as a powerful and skilled technocrat, and was tasked with handling some of Beijing's highest priorities, among which was managing China's bid for the 2022 Games.

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He deliberately cultivated a low profile, according to Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an American investment banker who recalled meeting Mr. Zhang in a 2009 book, "How China's Leaders Think."

"Results count more than words," Mr. Kuhn quoted Mr. Zhang as saying.