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## U.S. Olympic uniforms: Made in China

What's red, white, and blue—and made in China? asked Alexandra Petri in *Washington Post.com*. That's right: the official parade uniforms of this year's U.S. Olympic team. Nobody should really be surprised, since most of our clothes, American flags, Fourth of July fireworks, and at least half the stuff in our houses also come from Chinese factories. But our do-nothing Congress has "that out of things to do," so congressmen last week unleashed a storm of patriotic rage that our athletes will be wearing foreign-made garb. The Ralph Lauren-designed outfits, which feature boutonné neckties, and blazers in red, white, and blue, have been stocked for their peppy elitism, and suspiciously French-looking berets. "You'd think they'd know better," said House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio). Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said he would sack these uniforms "in a big pile and burn them." (Our lawmakers are right to protest, said the *New York Daily News* in an editorial. After years of sweat and sacrifice, U.S. athletes deserve nothing less than to march into the Olympic stadium "wearing American clothing.")

The Beltway crowd clearly doesn't understand the global economy, said Daniel J. Henahan in *CNN.com*. "Trade is not a competition between 'our producers' and 'their producers.'" It's more



Painfully proper

like a collaboration. The jobs of cutting and sewing clothing long ago moved to China and other low-wage nations. But the U.S. still has the world's biggest fashion industry, with Americans designing, marketing, and selling the clothing. The industry's success creates lots of American jobs, said Larry Popelka in *Businessweek.com*. Nike, which also makes some of our Olympic uniforms overseas, has created more than 15,000 new jobs in the U.S. over the past decade, and Ralph Lauren almost 10,000. This is not sweatshop labor, but high-paying work in marketing, accounting, design, branding, and management. There's nothing "un-American" about that kind of success.

Still, the politicians' populist pandering has prevailed, said Philip Hersh in *Chicago Tribune.com*. The Ralph Lauren company reacted to the furor by announcing that it would make the 2014 Winter Olympic outfits in America. What a victory! Meanwhile, America will continue to import billions in cheap goods from China, while ignoring its human-rights abuses and pollution, and Washington will spend money it doesn't have by borrowing money from, yes, China. If our outraged politicians checked themselves in the mirror, they'd find they're wearing "the emperor's new clothes."