

2008 Summer Olympic Games

Excerpts

We Can Help China Embrace the Future

Excerpted from Tony Blair • The Wall Street Journal • August 26, 2008

The Beijing Olympic Games were a powerful spectacle, stunning in sight and sound ...the younger Chinese entrepreneurs were smart, sharp, forthright, unafraid to express their views about China and its future. Above all, there was a confidence, an optimism, a lack of the cynical, and a presence of the spirit of get up and go, that reminded me greatly of the US. at its best and any country on its way forward. These people weren't living in fear, but looking forward in hope. And for all the millions still in poverty in China, for all the sweep of issues - political, social and economic still to be addressed, that was the spirit of China during this festival of spoil, and that is the spirit that will define its future.

The Chinese leadership is understandably preoccupied with internal development ... The policy of One China is not a piece of indulgent nationalism. It is an existential issue if China is to hold together in a peaceful and stable manner as it modernizes. This is why Tibet is not simply a religious issue for China but a profoundly political one.

This means that the West needs a strong partnership with China, one that goes deep, not just economically but politically and culturally. The truth is that nothing in the 21st century will work well without China's full engagement. China is now a major global player. So whether the issue is climate change, Africa, world trade or the myriad of security questions, we need China to be constructive; we need it to be using its power in partnership with us.

China's Next Quest: Ethical Leadership

Excerpted from Orville Schell • September 03, 2008 • STLtoday.com

Orville Schell is the Director of the Asia Society's Center on US-China Relations.

Almost everyone in the world who watched the 2008 Olympics in Beijing was impressed by China's preparations, the acumen of the Chinese in running such a complex and challenging event and the rich harvest of medals.... especially gold medals that Chinese athletes won.

Although China's achievement is worthy of genuine esteem, its efforts to gain a full measure of international respect and real "great power" status will not succeed until it matches its new economic and military power with a certain essential moral force. That, in turn, requires a society and leadership that seeks to be exemplary in all ways that make human beings more human – including respect for truthfulness, openness, tolerance and people's right to disagree with their government.

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One Olympics — Two Systems

Excerpted from Thomas L. Friedman, a foreign affairs columnist for The New York Times.

BEIJING... The Olympics may just be a sporting event, ...But what strikes me is how much they [US and China] could each learn from the other. ...Call it: One Olympics — two systems. How so? You can't look at the U.S. Olympic team and not see the strength that comes

from diversity, and you can't look at the Chinese team and not see the strength that comes from intense focus and power. ...China could learn something from our [US] Olympic team as well: the power that comes from a strong society, woven together of many strands from the bottom up.... That said, there are some things we could learn from China, namely the ability to focus on big, long-term, nation- building goals and see them through...

So, yes, America and China should enjoy their medals ...but we should each also reflect on how the other team got so many.

Athletes Sacrificed Dearly

One was separated from her toddler, one was banned from eating dinner, one missed a parent's funeral. While Americans spoke of fun, the Chinese were on a 'sacred mission.'

Excerpted from Barbara Demick • Los Angeles Times 'August26,2008

BEIJING: If anybody feels a pang of jealousy over China's haul of Olympic gold medals, they need only pause to consider what the athletes went through to get them "To achieve Olympic glory for the motherland is the sacred mission....," The contrast couldn't be greater than between the Chinese and U.S. athletes. The Chinese sports system was inspired by the Soviet Union. Whereas many U.S. athletes have ambitious parents to nurture their talents, China's future champions are drafted as young children for state-run boarding schools.

The final tally gave China 51 gold medals to the United States' 36, and although the Americans won more medals overall (110 to 100), China is a society run by engineers, based on planning and coordination and central planning," Guo, 27, suffers from health problems related to diving and is said to have such bad eyesight she can barely see the diving board. It is a common hazard for Chinese divers, who are recruited as young as 6. "Divers who start at an early age before the eye is fully developed have

great chance for injuries," said Li Fenglian, doctor for the Chinese national diving team.

August 25, 2008, NYTimes.com

After Glow of Games, What Next for China?

Excerpted from Jim Yardley

BEIJING - The Games were seen as an unparalleled success by most Chinese a record medal count inspired nationwide excitement, and Beijing impressed foreign visitors with its hospitality and efficiency. And while the government's uncompromising suppression of dissent drew criticism, China also demonstrated to a global audience that it is a rising economic and political power. whether a deepening self-confidence will lead China to further its engagement with the world and pursue deeper political reform, or

China Deserves Thanks for Job Well Done

Excerpted from Robert Kravitz * Indianapolis Star * August 25, 2008

BEIJING: It began with so much controversy, It was supposed to be an abject disaster. Instead, it was an operational gem, a flawless, efficient, overwhelming, friendly celebration of everything China has become and hopes to become in the future Now, are there problems here? Absolutely. There are human-rights issues, foreign policy issues and environmental issues But, then, we have problems in our own backyard.

The bottom line is, Beijing delivered on the Olympics it promised As for the games, there was the usual mix of good, bad and ugly Mostly, though, these Olympics ended up being about China and the Chinese people. None of the great fears came to fruition



Whatever we think about the government and the way things are done over here, there can only be applause for the organizers and volunteers who put on the impeccable games, one that has set the standard for all future Olympics.

A Victory for China

Spectacularly Successful Games My
Empower Communist Leaders

Excerpted from Edward Cody, Washington
Post Foreign Service • August 25, 2008

BEIJING, Aug 24: The 2008 Summer Olympics closed Sunday night in a display of tightly scripted merriment and lavish fireworks, a final burst of pomp ending 17 days of sports and celebration that Chinese authorities organized with flawless precision and an unbending security' clampdown. ... The nation also showed itself able to field a team of impressive athletes, who walked away with 51 gold medals, more than the contingent from any other country.

... The emphasis on China's national achievements was intense, responding to guidance from the Central Propaganda Department as well as spontaneous pride "We won 51 gold medals," exulted Cheng Xue, a 25-year-old Beijing woman who attended the

Closing Ceremonies. "It is a total breakthrough. We did a perfect job on security and provided good services to all the athletes." Fei Shuyu, 28, an office employee in the capital, also judged the Olympics a great success but said she feared that excessive bragging about the gold medal count could lead foreigners to worry about China's rise as an economic power. "China should not get a swollen head," she said "The hosting of these games has boosted the Chinese people's self-esteem, enhanced national cohesion and reinforced the country's faith in pursuing peaceful development," said a commentary on

the official New China News Agency....

Tibet activists, mainly from the United States and Europe, managed to elude the visa restrictions and mount eight small protests. But even they were quickly rounded up. Here in China, such demonstrations were drowned by the flood of good news about Chinese victories in Olympic events.

Sleek Olympic Venues, Major Material Progress . . .

Excerpted from Patricia Ross McCubbin •
STLtoday.com • 08/05/2008

Patricia Ross McCubbin is an associate professor at the Southern Illinois University School of Law. In 2007, she was a Fulbright scholar in environmental law at the Wuban University School of Law in Wuban, China.

.... Although the expensive new National Stadium and Aquatic Center suggest a modern, developed and wealthy nation, those images obscure China's continuing status as a developing country, with many of its citizens living in abject poverty ... the living standard of millions of China's citizens has improved greatly in the last 30 years A large percentage of the population has yet to experience the benefits of China's

economic boom China's challenge is to find the way to environmentally sustainable development.

Arab News on Beijing Olympics • 10 August 2008

China's Dazzling Olympic Display

CHINA opened the Beijing Olympics with a stunning spectacle leaving even the oldest Olympic hands breathless. It is surely unlikely that any other host country will ever be able to devote such investment and resources to an opening ceremony.Time and again, [western] commentators reported that with its unsurpassed inaugural ceremony, China was signaling to the world that "it had arrived."....

.... China "arrived" long before Western Europe had emerged from the chaos that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire. More to the point, when the emperors still ruled in Rome, Chinese culture was arguably well in advance of anything the Romans produced and was to remain so for almost another two millennia....

China's Rise Goes Beyond Gold Medals

Excerpted from Nicholas D. Kristof * Last updated August 21, 2008 5:40 p.m.

Nicholas D. Kristof is a syndicated columnist for The New York Times.

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BEIJING: China is on track to displace the United States as the winner of the most Olympic gold medals this year. ... but China will leave a similar outsize footprint in the arts, in business, in science, in education. The world we are familiar with, dominated by the US. And Europe, is a historical anomaly. ... Now it will be our turn to scramble to compete with a rising Asia.

.... President Bush was roundly criticized for attending the Beijing Olympics, but, in retrospect, I think he was right to attend. The most

important bilateral relationship in the world in the coming years will be the one between China and the United States,.... We also must recognize that informal pressures are becoming increasingly important. The most important figure in China-U.S. relations today isn't the ambassador for either country, but Yao Ming, the basketball player.... The biggest force for democratization isn't the Group of 7 governments but the millions of Chinese who study in the West and return....

China's Olympic Golden Haul Breaks Old Duopoly

Excerpted from Nick Mulvenney

BEIJING (Reuters): After four years of playing down expectations, China's medal-winning machine smashed the duopoly of the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia, one or the other of whom had topped the table at every Games since World War Two They won 51 golds and a total of 100 medals The United States, who won most golds at the previous three Games, ended second in the table with 36 golds to match their Athens tally and won the overall medal count with 110 golds, silvers and bronzes Russia recovered from a poor first week to finish third in the table with 23 golds and a total of 72 medals For China and its government, this was never just about the Beijing Olympics but a project for the restoration of national pride as old as the People's Republic itself.....

China's Role as Superpower Bigger Story than Phelps

Superpower - warts and all - emerges as the biggest story of these Games

Excerpted from Jay Mariotti * Chicago Sun-Times * August 25, 2008

BEIJING: I am awed. And I am disgusted. I am awed because China is a hulking

superpower that can construct magnificent, futuristic buildings and toss around megabillions to pull off the most progressive, organized Olympics ever. And I'm disgusted because its Communist government has developed such muscle in the global marketplace 1.3 billion people can have such an effect that it reduces influential executives in sports and business to cowering, submissive, soul-selling fools.

.... It's pretty clear why. The NBA aches to do future business in China. Nike, which represents both players, has a gigantic influence in China. But in the process, aren't these companies along with Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, Adidas and others who advertise on the 18 channels of state-run CCTV, the country's only network bankrolling Communist propaganda? Realizing China has more than four times the population of the US, companies are compromising their values and cashing in. According to the New York Times, 840 million people in China watched the opening ceremony and 330 million watched a women's table tennis match involving the host nation. That's why everyone from Rogge to NBA boss David Stern to red, white and blue CEOs are in lockstep with the Chinese. They want to bask in the marketplace, Communism be damned.

China's Deep Insecurities Cast Shadow Over Grand Spectacle

Excerpted from Kristi Heim • Seattle Times
• August 25, 2008

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BEIJING: China opened on the glory of its past and closed on the promise of its youth. It was the question punctuating a remarkable Olympics: how to take its ancient culture and traditions and meld them into a modern global identity.... The celebration capped 16 days that brought visitors from around the world to China, and the stories and images of China to people

watching in more than 200 countries.... But this party was never allowed on the street.

To counter criticism, officials told us that people in China are all very happy with the way things are. But the argument ignores the basic logic that people won't complain unless they're informed about problems, and they can't complain if they are arrested the moment they speak out "The government should have trust in people," said Wen Bo, an environmental activist with Pacific Environment and an Asia Society fellow. "The Olympics is proof that people do support the country and what the country is pursuing. The government should allow citizens to have a louder voice."

Beijing Glory Offers Lessons for London

Excerpted from David Walsh • The Sunday
Times • August 24, 2008

In the world of Olympic politics, accredited personnel dare not speak against Beijing. There were aspects of the Games he liked.... the iconic stadiums, the courtesy of the people, the organization but something was missing. "I don't think there's an esprit here, no real joie de vivre," he said. "It's like they have the hardware but not the software. I never thought I would say this about an Olympics but there's been blandness about these Games. London will be competing against Sydney 2000 not Beijing — Sydney is the benchmark." The lesson from Beijing is that the hosts were very good in some respects, not so clever in others. ... China's achievement was an impossible act to follow, it was believed. Deighton talked about 2012 being "different" and the beauty being in the difference ...

Lord Coe, chairman of the London organising committee, Deighton and Morris steadfastly refused to offer even the slightest criticism of the Chinese effort, because even if there were weaknesses, China was doing so many other things extremely well. Yet privately

London's leaders were encouraged. They could succeed where Beijing had fallen down: they could get the ticketing right and they should create the party atmosphere Beijing lacked.

Coe, however, has a more ambitious target than a well-run and atmospheric Olympics: the 2012 Games must change the landscape of British sport. "No Games has produced a sustainable shift in participation," said Coe. "Sydney raised the bar in many respects, but people in Australia will tell you that in terms of participation in sport, that hasn't happened. It's important that what we need to do isn't left until the London Olympics are over." Participation in sport will only increase if facilities are improved and funding is provided for more and better coaching. That the landscape needs to change is evident from the composition of the British team in Athens four years ago.

Keating condemns 'elitist' coverage

Excerpted from Stephanie Peatling * August 25, 2008

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The former prime minister Paul Keating has attacked the Western media's coverage of the Beijing Olympics as condescending, elitist and typical of the developed world's general disdain for China.

Most of the coverage was seen through the prism of Tibet, Mr. Keating told the Melbourne Writers' Festival at the weekend, and disregarded the "massive leaps" forward in areas such as poverty alleviation and declining infant mortality.