

After the Gold Rush: The Beijing Olympics and China's Evolving International Roles

by Jacques deLisle

Jacques deLisle is the director of the Asia Program at FPRI, the Stephen A. Cozen Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania, and author of “One World, Different Dreams: The Contest to Define the Beijing Olympics” in Monroe E. Price and Daniel Dayan (eds.), *Owning the Olympics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

Four months after the Beijing Olympics, on the vast plaza beside the Games' main venues, workers fought gusty winds and freezing temperatures to erect, incongruously, scores of artificial Christmas trees while a handful of hawkers futilely pushed discounted memorabilia. The national stadium—known as the bird's nest—had grown dingy with the gray dust that settles onto everything in the Chinese capital. Still, hundreds of tourists from China's countryside and less cosmopolitan cities trekked to this rather bleak spot to snap photos of one another in front of the world-famous arena and symbol of national pride and recent glory.

To reach the site, many of the visitors traveled on the gleaming new, but lightly used, Number 8 metro line. During their ride, on television screens in each subway car, they watched another signal political moment (one that saturated media throughout the country): China's President and Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Hu Jintao delivered a peroration on the thirtieth anniversary of the Reform Era that had begun with Deng Xiaoping's consolidation of power in December 1978. The medium was mostly old school: the camera trained fixedly on the top leader with improbably black hair, standing alone against a background of intensely red curtains, delivering a lengthy address replete with references to the correctness of the Party's line and the greatness of China's accomplishments over many years.

Yet, much of the speech's content—like its subway-riding audience—was distinctly contemporary. Much of Hu's talk focused on China's astounding economic growth and transformation, amid sustained political stability, during the last few decades and the need to continue on that path.¹ On the equally

¹ “Speech by Hu Jintao at Meeting to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party,” December 18, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-12/18/content_10524481.htm.

new and much more heavily traveled Number 10 subway line, the riders who watched Hu—and their far more numerous peers who commuted to work in cars (often with hired drivers)—reflected the changes wrought during a generation of policies of “reform and opening to the outside world.”

These vignettes reflect some of the paradoxes of China’s engagement with the international order during, and after, the Beijing Games. The host regime achieved its principal political aims, displaying China as a prosperous, internationalized and powerful country, and one generally supportive of a largely Western-created international order. The Olympics also revealed another, less appealing and reassuring face of the PRC, one that can be stridently nationalistic, repressive, and questionable in its commitments to global norms and processes.

Both aspects have deep roots and are likely to remain salient features of China’s foreign relations, even as the image-defining impact of the Beijing Olympics fades. The Games, and their run-up and aftermath, provide a particularly clear window into China’s still-ambivalent engagement with the international system and the connections between what appear—at least to many in the West—as contradictory features of contemporary China and its foreign policy.

Analogies and Politics: The Beijing Olympics are Like . . .

The Olympics are political events and the Beijing Games especially so, notwithstanding claims to the contrary by the International Olympic Committee and the 2008 Games’ hosts.² The partially self-fulfilling expectation that China’s first Olympics would be particularly political was evident in a global cottage industry of historical analogies. Some, overreachingly, compared them to Berlin in 1936, giving a global stage to—and helping to strengthen—a brutal authoritarian regime that embraced an ideology antithetical to liberal and democratic values.³ Others hoped, extravagantly, for a reprise of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, expansively interpreted as prompting South Korea’s democratization, or perhaps the 1980 Moscow Games, perceived as helping open the door to Gorbachev’s liberalizing reforms and, in turn, the transition from communism in the former Soviet Union.⁴

² “Don’t Politicize Olympics, Official Says,” *China Daily*, May 30, 2007.

³ A.M. Rosenthal, “Here We Go Again,” *New York Times*, April 9, 1993; Brook Larmer, “Olympic Dreams,” *Newsweek*, February 26, 2001 (editor of *Kaifang* magazine); Lena H. Sun, “China Has Biggest Stake in Olympic Games” *Washington Post*, September 21, 1993 (human rights groups’ assessments).

⁴ Bruce Wilson, “Chinese Games,” *Sunday Telegraph* (Sydney), July 15, 2001 (IOC members’ comments); Melinda Liu, “Beijing Starts to Feel the ‘Olympic Effect,’” *Newsweek*, December 25, 2006, p. 54 (“China watchers” views); James R. Lilley, “The Golden Handcuffs,” *Newsweek*, July 16, 2001, p. 30; Chen Kuide, “Two Historical Turning Points: The Seoul and Beijing Olympics,” *China Rights Forum*, no. 3 2007, pp. 36–40; Bruce Wilson, “Now China Must Show It’s Worthy,” *Sunday Herald Sun* (Melbourne), July 15, 2001 (impact of Moscow Games).

Less dramatic possible parallels included Moscow in 1980 (seen in less transformative terms), Los Angeles in 1984 or Helsinki in 1952. The first was the only previous Olympics held in a communist state. The other two were colored by ideologically motivated boycotts that some critics of the Chinese regime hoped to replicate for 2008. All three were held under the shadow of the Cold War that some see as a possible trajectory for relations between the sole remaining superpower and a rapidly rising China.⁵ There also was the fear that Munich in 1972 might prove to be a relevant precedent at the second post-9/11 Olympics—a worry made more credible by the Beijing Games' unusually high global profile and reinforced by Chinese authorities' eagerness to invoke terrorist threats (especially from restive Muslims in Xinjiang) to justify tight security at the Olympics and repressive policies more broadly.⁶

The most common, and plausible, analogies abroad for China's first Olympic Games looked to a more modest reading of the Seoul Olympics and to the Rome Games of 1960, the Tokyo Games of 1964 and, perhaps, the Munich Games of 1972. The Beijing Games were to be—in an oft-used phrase—China's "coming out party," marking its arrival on the world stage, principally as the fruit of thirty years of rapid, market-oriented and internationally engaged development. The Games also were to mark China's redemption, most immediately from the embarrassment of being denied the ardently sought 2000 Games, more significantly from the opprobrium that accompanied the brutal crackdown on the Tiananmen Democracy Movement in 1989, and more broadly from the "century [or century and a half] of humiliation" that began with Western quasi-colonial encroachment and the crumbling of a Sinocentric world order beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷

For the Chinese regime, analogies for the Beijing Games were equally political, but often differed in focus. Some that were prevalent among foreign commentators had traction at home, as well. Although rarely articulated in official or quasi-official sources, the vision of the first China-hosted Olympics as a moment of national arrival akin to Seoul or Tokyo loomed large in Chinese orthodox and mainstream views. So too, but farther beneath the surface, did the notion of the Beijing Games as marking international political reacceptance loosely reminiscent of Tokyo, Rome or Munich. This

⁵ Sean Lengell, "Bush Urged to Boycott Olympics," *Washington Times*, August 23, 2007; "Leveraging the Olympics: Celebrity Pressure Against China," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 2007, p. A20; Jane Perlez, "U.S. Won't Block China's Bid for Olympics," *New York Times*, July 11, 2001; "Chinese Diplomat Rejects Olympic-Related Human Rights Allegation by U.S. Senator," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 13, 1993.

⁶ Edward Wong and Keith Bradsher, "As China Girds for Olympics, New Violence," *New York Times*, August 4, 2008; "Olympics Organizer Slams Secessionist Attacks in Xinjiang, Saying it Won't Impact Games," *Xinhua News Agency*, August 10, 2008.

⁷ deLisle, "One World, Different Dreams: The Contest to Define the Beijing Olympics"; Ren Zhongping, "Beijing, Another Starting Point of a New Journey: On the Occasion of the Closing of the 29th Summer Olympic Games," *People's Daily*, August 26, 2008.

resonance was strong, not least because the leaders of the effort to land the 2008 Olympiad were keenly aware that the failed attempt to secure the 2000 Olympics had faced difficulties because of the shadow of the Tiananmen Incident, which had occurred only four years before the IOC chose the site for the 2000 Games.⁸ As one official of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) put it, echoing both the “arrival” and “rehabilitation” themes, winning the right to host meant “winning the respect, trust and favor of the international community.”⁹

Some of the highest profile glosses on the Beijing Games from PRC leaders drew connections to non-Olympics-related accomplishments. Then-President and Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, in his 2002 New Year’s message, ranked winning the right to host the 2008 Olympics alongside China’s entry into the World Trade Organization as the preceding year’s milestones in China’s engagement with the outside world.¹⁰ Among the Beijing Olympics’ most visible and enduring symbols was a giant countdown clock at Tiananmen Square (with satellite versions elsewhere) which unsubtly evoked the similar devices that had marked two other highly celebrated nationalist accomplishments, the return of Hong Kong and Macao from colonial rule. In his December 2008 address on thirty years of reform, Hu listed the “successfully staged” Olympics alongside coping with the international financial crisis, a massive earthquake in Sichuan, weather disasters in southern China, and China’s first manned spaceflight as the year’s “great victories.”¹¹

One World, One Dream? Hosting the Games and Joining the Club

For the Chinese leadership and for many among the masses of ordinary Chinese (whose support the nation’s rulers increasingly must court), the Beijing Olympics reflected and sought to advance China’s claims to being a major power that is economically prosperous, internationally accepted and not threatening to the existing order. Such agendas run through recent PRC efforts to articulate general foreign policy principles, including the successive formulations asserting China’s “peaceful rise,” its “peaceful development” and

⁸ Patrick E. Tyler, “There is No Joy in Beijing as Sydney Gets Olympics,” *New York Times*, September 24, 1993; Elisabeth Rosenthal, “For a Prize that’s Olympian, China Jumps the Gun,” *New York Times*, September 6, 2000 (Beijing Deputy Mayor Liu Jingmin).

⁹ Rowan Callick, “Communist Party Hoping to Kick Off its 15 Millenniums of Fame,” *Australian*, August 8, 2008 (BOCOG Secretary General Wang Wei).

¹⁰ “Jiang Zemin: Make Joint Efforts to Promote World Peace and Development—Congratulatory Message Delivered at the Beginning of the Year 2002,” *Xinhua News Agency*, December 31, 2001.

¹¹ “Speech by Hu Jintao at Meeting to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee”.

Beijing's quest for a "harmonious world."¹² The same basic themes are evident in the three-decade-old agenda of "reform" at home and "opening to the outside world," at least if those core policies of building a rich country are supplemented with their inseparable political twin over the last hundred years, of building a strong country.

The Beijing Games were closely linked to China's economic development as consequence, showcase and contribution. With the Beijing 2008 bid still pending, Jiang Zemin praised the nation's and its capital's "healthy growth" and "steady development" for providing "powerful material guarantee[s] for hosting the Games." A year before the Games, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee opined that successful reform policies had brought "rapid economic and social development" which had given China the "capability and conditions" to host the Games and display China's "splendid accomplishments." A month before the Games began, the official *People's Daily* opined that hosting the Olympics was "tightly connected" with China's "rapid development and modernization."¹³

The material foundations for hosting an Olympics that would spotlight dazzling economic accomplishments were firmly in place. Like South Korea before the 1988 Games, China had reached lower-middle income status.¹⁴ (The first Asian-hosted Games had parallels as well: although Japan decades earlier had become a developed country, the 1964 Tokyo Games underscored recovery from postwar economic devastation.) For China, this reflected a generation of near-double-digit annual growth. For the Games' host city, these national trends were amplified by the severe and increasing skewing of development to major coastal urban areas, and the regime's formidable ability to mobilize and target resources for favored goals, especially construction projects.¹⁵

Especially in the years following the unsuccessful bid for the 2000 Games, China's new wealth had transformed Beijing. Most of the city's soaring office towers, international hotels and luxury shopping malls are less than twenty years old. The most impressive are of more recent vintage. The notorious traffic jams of foreign-branded, joint-venture-produced vehicles are a phenomenon mostly of the last decade. Like many arriviste metropolises,

¹² Zheng Bijian "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great Power Status," *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2005; State Council Information Office, PRC, *China's Peaceful Development Road* (White Paper), December 22, 2005; Hu Jintao, "Political Report to the 17th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party" Sec. XI, October 15, 2007; Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise,'" *China Quarterly* 190, 2007, pp. 291–310.

¹³ "Beijing Fully Capable of Hosting High-Level Olympic Games," *Renmin Ribao*, October 5, 2000; Chen Jiaying, "Jia Qinglin Meets with Representatives to Youth Exchange Activity," *Xinhua News Agency*, August 20, 2007; "Beijing Embraces the World," *People's Daily*, July 8, 2008.

¹⁴ This categorization is based on World Bank data and classifications. <http://go.worldbank.org/K2CKM78CC0>.

¹⁵ See generally Wan Guanghua (ed.), *Growth and Inequality in Modern China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

China's capital has sprouted would-be iconic architecture. New facilities for the Games—most notably the bird's nest, and the “water cube” (for swimming events)—were designed to impress, at a cost of over \$3 billion and on a scale that recalls the sensibilities of the emperors who built Beijing's vast imperial palace. Many of Beijing's older architectural treasures underwent extensive restoration before the Games. Olympics-timed and partly Olympics-driven infrastructure projects, including subways, roads, a rail link to the airport and its new world's-largest terminal, and environmental improvements were part of a \$41 billion pre-Games construction blitz.¹⁶ One of the Beijing Games' three official themes—a “hi tech” Olympics—and the lavish opening ceremonies' deployment of the world's largest LED screen further stressed China's modernity.

The connection between development and the Olympics was expected to run the other direction as well. Official sources touted the Games' contribution to “the nationwide struggle” to achieve the Reform-Era goal of a “well-off society,” declared that the Games had “far-reaching impact on China's modernization,” and claimed the Olympics added as much as one percent annually to Beijing's growth rate over several years preceding the Games. Much of the building and rebuilding had economic rationales quite apart from the Games and would endure well beyond 2008. Concerted efforts to upgrade the higher end of service sectors (including healthcare, tourism and media) promised lingering effects, as well.¹⁷ The rapid expansion of Beijing's economy and population means the host city faces a lesser risk of the common Olympic hangovers of white-elephant projects. A pre-Games retrenchment—ordered by Premier Wen Jiabao in mid-2007 amid concerns about excessive and inefficient spending and doubts about the future utility of the Games' venues—promised to reduce such dangers further.¹⁸ A nearly-\$600 billion stimulus package, adopted to address threats to growth that followed the 2008 global financial

¹⁶“Beijing Invests Heavily for Spectacular Olympic Games,” *Financial Times Information*, April 10, 2007; Alan Abrahamson, “Built-In Commitment: Beijing has Become a Huge Construction Site,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 14, 2005; “Beijing to Spend Millions to Fix Cultural Relics Before Olympics,” *Japan Economic Newswire*, April 1, 2005.

¹⁷“Chinese Economy to Benefit from Olympiad: Economist,” *Xinhua Economic News Service*, July 17, 2001 (Chinese economist Fan Gang); “Olympics to Add Oomph to Beijing Economy” *China Daily*, January 17, 2006; Xu Jingyue, “Ceremony Celebrating the One-Year Countdown to the Beijing Olympics Held in Grand Fashion,” *Xinhua News Agency*, August 8, 2007 (National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo); “Glory Belongs to the Great Olympics,” *People's Daily*, August 15, 2008; “Economy Won't be Hurt After Olympics,” *China Daily*, August 18, 2008 (economists Yang Kaizhong and Wang Yiming of leading government research institutes); Jane Cai, “Post-Games Economy Still Sound,” *South China Morning Post* August 18, 2008.

¹⁸“Beijing Development and Reform Commission Official: Post-Games Utilization is a Real Question,” May 15, 2007 <http://www.xxz.gov.cn/news/45915.html>; Bonny Ling and Trevor Lee, “Where is the Frugal Olympics?” *China Rights Forum*, no. 3, 2007, pp. 54–61; Christopher Hawthorne, “China Scales Back Ambitious Design Plans,” *International Herald Tribune*, September 21, 2004, p. 10.

crisis, promised resources that could dampen remaining complaints that vast spending on Olympics projects meant neglect of greater needs.¹⁹

The 2008 Olympics were also an occasion for asserting and advancing the PRC's standing as a power that supports international norms and regimes and is accepted by the great powers and lesser states that value those values and institutions. This was central to the Games' helping win China the "respect, trust and favor of the international community" and marking "another milestone in China's rising international status."²⁰

Partly, this was a matter of the Games' redemptive function, securing China's recovery from the disrepute that followed the violent suppression of the 1989 Democracy Movement. The visual richness of the Olympics, and the worldwide attention they drew, provided singularly powerful means to supersede nearly two-decade-old images of a lone man standing in the path of tanks or an army vehicle toppling the Goddess of Democracy. To be sure, the Tiananmen Incident and other PRC human rights problems paled in comparison to the atrocities committed by the Axis governments in World War II and the ensuing opprobrium from which the Tokyo, Rome and Munich Games cemented a return to international society. Still, China's reclaiming full reacceptance was complicated—and the Games' rehabilitative potential made more important—because the regime responsible for the behavior remained in power.

Beyond recovery from Tiananmen, Beijing's hosting the Olympics offered several means for the regime to enhance China's status as an accepted, norm-accepting, and therefore unthreatening member of the international system. Echoing and amplifying themes that China's rise would be peaceful and that China sought a harmonious world, the Beijing Games' main motto—repeated endlessly and even placed atop a giant billboard at the most heavily toured spot on the Great Wall—proclaimed "One World, One Dream." Official statements stressed that the Games would make Beijing and China more internationally open. The Games' organizing committee adopted as an official theme a "people's" or "humanistic" Olympics that promised to have transformative and internationalizing effects on China's citizenry. The Games' opening ceremonies dwelt on the Chinese character *he* (harmony), the internationalist story of China's one great maritime explorer, Zheng He and the Silk Road that linked China to the West in ancient times.²¹

The physical backdrop for the Games was strikingly and self-consciously cosmopolitan. Paul Andreu's National Theater with its flattened,

¹⁹ "China's Top Economic Planners Explain Stimulus Measures," *Xinhua News Agency*, December 9, 2008.

²⁰ Callick, "Communist Party Hoping," "A Historical Event for the Chinese Nation, *Xinhua News Agency*, July 13, 2001.

²¹ "Olympics Will Mean a More Open China—Chen Xitong," *Xinhua General Overseas News Service*, August 14, 1993; Moon Gwang-lip, "China Shows Olympic Confidence," *Korea Times*, April 4, 2006 (quoting head of Chinese delegation to Association of National Olympic Committees meeting); Ren "Beijing, Another Starting Point".

reflective dome, Rem Koolhaas's "twisted arch" headquarters for China Central Television, Herzog and deMeuron's bird's nest stadium, Australia's PTW Architects' water cube are signature buildings by renowned foreign architects and bear no discernible Chinese characteristics (notwithstanding the Chinese cuisine-evoking nickname for the Games' main venue). Local architects who collaborated on the bird's nest described it as "such a good, modern design that it would be accepted and liked by Chinese culture" because of those virtues, not because of its Chineseness and as "a very bold design for a nation that wants to prove itself part of the international family, to show we share the same values."²² The new landmarks nestled fairly comfortably amid endless expanses of advertisements for goods and services of global companies and increasingly internationally famous Chinese firms.

In connection with the Games, China also engaged international norms on issues that were especially entwined with the Olympics and problematic in China's external relations. Human rights figured most prominently. The connection between human rights and the Games has roots in Olympic ideals of sport free from politics, expanded through resonance of human rights issues with the tragedy at Munich in 1972, the host regime's ideology at Berlin in 1936 and the Afghanistan invasion-linked boycott of Moscow in 1980, and became stronger still with Olympics-focused efforts of human rights NGOs and inclusion of human rights-related provisions (such as preservation of human dignity, harmonious development of man, and prohibition of discrimination) in the Olympic Charter and Code of Ethics.²³

China's problematic human rights record had done much to scuttle its bid for the 2000 Games and underpinned some of the most potent arguments against awarding the PRC the 2008 Olympics. Chinese officials, and Olympics authorities too, assured critics and skeptics that the Beijing Games would promote human rights in China generally, and bring specific changes in key areas. They pointed to gains in the years preceding the Games, and pledged post-Games progress and continuity.²⁴ Such promises and projections

²² John Pomfret, "On the Bubble: Opera Divides Beijing," *Washington Post*, July 8, 2000; "Xenophobia Has No Place in Building the New China," *South China Morning Post*, January 17, 2007; "Architect's Story of Grand 'Bird's Nest,'" *China Daily*, September 22, 2006 (interviewing Li Xinggang); Jonathan Watts, "One Year to Go," *Guardian*, August 9, 2007 (interviewing Ai Weiwei).

²³ "Fundamental Principles of Olympism", in *Olympic Charter and IOC Code of Ethics* (2004).

²⁴ Bruce Wilson, "Chinese Games," *Sunday Telegraph* (Australia), July 15, 2001 (quoting Secretary General of Chinese Olympic Committee); Mure Dickie, "Landmarks Rise as Civil Rights Prospects Fall," *Financial Times*, August 6, 2007 (BOCOG's Wang Wei's assertion that Olympics will enhance human rights); Tian Qi, "Liu Jianchao: Degree of China's Opening to World Media Will be Greater and Greater," *Zhongguo Xinwen She*, August 21, 2007; Jere Longman, "Beijing Wins Bid for 2008 Olympic Games," *New York Times*, July 14, 2001 (Sports Minister Yuan Weimin); "Hu Jintao Vows to Deepen Economic, Political Reform After Olympics," *Xinhua News Agency*, August 1, 2008; Kristine Kwok, "Foreign Reporters Pack their Bags and May Be Leaving a Changed China Behind," *South China Morning Post*, August 25, 2008.

built on Beijing's long evolution away from official rejection of universal human rights, gradually growing engagement with international human rights regimes (in the wake of post-Tiananmen criticism, threatened trade sanctions, and ongoing scrutiny by foreign governments and NGOs) and increasing tolerance of nascent domestic human rights discourse.²⁵

International human rights groups and like-minded Chinese worked to reinforce the regime's commitments to, and foreign expectations of, Olympics-spurred acceptance of international standards. One outside watchdog group pressed for "minimum human rights standards" that China should be required to meet as host for the Games.²⁶ A year before the Games, more than forty prominent Chinese intellectuals and activists issued an open letter to Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao and National People's Congress head Wu Bangguo, calling for adding "and Universal Human Rights" to the Beijing 2008 principal official slogan "One World, One Dream."²⁷ On the eve of the Games, international human rights groups called for additional moves to redress Games-related transgressions and to show the regime's bona fide commitment to improvement.²⁸ Proponents of media freedom sought to leverage the well-entrenched Olympics norm of pervasive and unfettered media access and the PRC's specific commitments to provide a freer-than-normal media environment for the Beijing Olympics, pressing to extend the regime's new tolerance to Chinese journalists and beyond the Games.²⁹

Other groups sought to take the linkage between the Olympics and human rights and the PRC regime's Olympics-linked human rights commitments into areas farther beyond what Chinese authorities contemplated. Thus, advocates for a free—or, at least, more autonomous—Tibet invoked "rights of peoples" and international civil and political rights. They unfurled banners for "One World, One Dream, Free Tibet," called for a separate "Tibetan Olympics" or an IOC-authorized Tibetan Olympic Team, attempted protests during the Games, and denounced PRC repression of Tibetan political and

²⁵ See generally Ann Kent, *China, the United Nations and Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Ming Wan, *Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); State Council Information Office, PRC, "The Progress of Human Rights in China," (December 1995).

²⁶ Olympics Watch, ISHR/IGRM, and Laogai Research Foundation, "Minimum Standards for Beijing 2008," <http://www.olympicwatch.org/news.php?id=74>; Mark Magnier, "Trying to Get Beijing to Go for Gold on Rights," *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 2004.

²⁷ For the text of the letter, see http://crd-net.org/Article/Class5/200708/20070807151034_5304.html; Edward Cody, "Before Olympics, a Call for Change: Chinese Dissidents Join Foreign Appeals for Beijing to Honor Rights Commitments," *Washington Post*, August 8, 2007.

²⁸ See, for example, Bruce Einhorn and Lawrence Delevingne, Will the Olympics Boost China Human Rights? *Business Week*, August 25, 2008 (Human Rights Watch).

²⁹ "Olympics to Introduce New Media Relationship," *China Daily*, December 22, 2006; Richard McGregor, "China Eases Rules on Media for Olympics," *Financial Times*, December 2, 2006; China Asked to Extend Rights to its Own Media; Foreigners Granted More Press Freedom," *International Herald Tribune*, October 20, 2008.

religious liberties before and amid unrest in March 2008 that appeared timed to seize the Olympic spotlight as much as to mark the forty-ninth anniversary of the People's Liberation Army's establishment of firm PRC control over Tibet.³⁰ The banned Falun Gong sect adopted kindred tactics, planning a "Global Human Rights Torch Relay" alternative to the official Olympic torch journey and publishing an Olympics-timed "Guide to China's Labor Camps."³¹ Other international activists used Beijing's hosting of the Games and the Olympics-human rights connection to focus attention on human rights violations in Darfur. They dubbed the 2008 Games the "Genocide Olympics," argued that China's policy toward Sudan made Beijing an unfit host, and called for alternative torch routes through sites of twentieth and twenty-first century genocides.

Although Beijing did not budge on Falun Gong or sovereignty over Tibet, some assessments plausibly credit Olympics-created leverage—including the attention activists received from foreign governments—for China's marginally increased willingness to engage international norms, including greater cooperation in multinational efforts on Darfur, acquiescence in a Security Council Resolution endorsing peacekeeping forces in Sudan, and a seemingly promising if ultimately abortive reopening of dialogue with representatives of the Dalai Lama.³²

International environmental norms were in the mix, as well. The connection between the Olympics and environmental issues has foundations in the links between sport and public health and the impact of pollution on the Olympics' outdoor events, and received more formal status when the environment was added as an official Olympic theme in the 1990s. China's poor environmental record, and mounting international criticism of it, had become a significant irritant in China's external relations, especially with neighboring states that lived increasingly under a cloud of toxins spewed by Chinese

³⁰ "Tibetans Plan their own 2008 Olympics ahead of Beijing," *Hindustan Times*, May 16, 2007; "Tibet Asks to Send its Own Team to Beijing," *New Zealand Herald*, August 8, 2007; "Tibet's Banner of Revolt at Everest," *Statesman* (India), April 29, 2007; "China Deports Eight Tibet Activists who Protested on Great Wall," *Kyodo News Agency*, August 9, 2007; Andrew Jacobs, "China Gives 6 American Protesters 10-Day Detentions," *New York Times*, August 23, 2008.

³¹ See <http://cipfg.org/en/> and <http://www.humanrightstorch.org/>; Edward Cody, "One Year Out from Olympics, a Test for Beijing," *Washington Post*, August 7, 2007.

³² Ronan Farrow and Mia Farrow, "The Genocide Olympics," *Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 2007; Olympic Dream for Darfur, <http://savedarfur.org/content/torchrun>; Guy Dinmore, "Darfur Adds to US Doubts over Beijing's Foreign Policy," *Financial Times*, June 14, 2007; Helene Cooper, "China Acts on Sudan After Hollywood Push," *New York Times*, April 14, 2007; Jim Yardley, "An Unwelcome Team at the Beijing Olympics," *International Herald Tribune*, August 14, 2007; Jim Yardley, "China Resumes Negotiations with Envoys of Dalai Lama," *New York Times*, July 2, 2008; The Responsible Person of the Central United Front Work Department Answers Xinhua Reporter's Questions on the Recent Contact with Dalai Lama's Personal Representatives, *Xinhua News Agency*, July 6, 2008.

industries. Such concerns reinforced Games-related pressures on Chinese authorities to engage global concerns and standards. Olympics officials early and often raised the environment as a serious concern for the Beijing Games.³³ As the Games approached, the IOC threatened to postpone or cancel endurance events if pollution remained severe, a pollution-driven algae outbreak imperiled the sailing competition, and a leading marathoner withdrew, citing respiratory health concerns.³⁴

Facing environmental impediments to successful Games, PRC authorities moved to recast China as a responsible and respectable participant on international environmental issues, spending billions of dollars and staking significant reputational capital. They made a “Green Olympics” one of the Games’ official concepts. They adopted and publicized regulations incorporating international “green” standards and pursued cooperation on Games-specific environmental measures with the United Nations Environmental Program and environmental protection authorities abroad. They made and emphasized pledges to minimize energy use and adopt green technology for Games-related building projects, transportation and activities during the Games. They launched campaigns to plant millions of trees, curtailed or closed polluting factories (some permanently) in the Beijing area, converted capital-area power plants from coal to cleaner fuels, and restricted driving during the Games.³⁵

Here too, foreign and domestic activists sought, with some success, to capitalize on IOC demands, Chinese commitments and Beijing’s worries about high-profile embarrassment. Foreign NGOs questioned why Games-related clean-ups did not extend beyond the Olympics period or outside the capital region.³⁶ PRC environmental advocates—according to their own and observers’

³³ Ariana Eunjung Cha, “Olympic Trials for Polluted Beijing,” *Washington Post*, March 30, 2007; Paul Newman, “Smog Over Beijing Can’t Dim Olympic Spirit,” *Independent*, August 5, 2008; “UNEP and the International Olympic Committee,” http://www.unep.org/sport_env/Olympic_Games/index.asp; “Beijing Olympic Committee Wins High Praise from IOC,” *China Daily*, April 20, 2007; “Mission and Role of the IOC,” in *Olympic Charter and IOC Code of Ethics* (2004); World Health Organization, “Environmental Health Country Profile—China” (June 9, 2005); “Joint Statement on the Further Strengthening of Bilateral Cooperation on Environmental Conservation” (Japan and China, April 11, 2007).

³⁴ Roger Blitz and Mure Dickie, “IOC Warns Beijing on Air Quality Threat to Olympics,” *Financial Times*, August 9, 2007; “Qingdao Promises to Keep Green Algae Out of Sailing Venue,” *Xinhua News Agency*, August 2, 2008; Ashling O’Connor, “Smog Fears Halt Haile’s Golden Run,” *Australian*, March 12, 2008.

³⁵ “Chinese Capital Builds Energy-Saving Projects for Olympics Games,” *Xinhua News Agency*, July 4, 2006; “Green Olympics Underway,” *Xinhua Business Daily Update*, July 11, 2006; “China, UN Agree on Environmental Protection at 2008 Olympics,” *China Daily*, November 18, 2005; “Environment Pledge of 2008 Olympic Committee on Track,” *China Daily*, October 4, 2004; “IOC Supports Beijing’s Clean-Air Measures: Jacques Rogge,” *Xinhua General News Service*, August 24, 2007; Mitchell Landsberg, “Clearing the Air for the Olympics,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 2007.

³⁶ Mark Magnier, “Games Run-Up Exposes the Dark Side of China,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 2007 (Greenpeace China staffer).

reports—were unprecedentedly successful in getting authorities to take their concerns seriously. Strikingly, Chinese environmentalists faced criticism for being too timid and cooperative—charges not often made against their counterparts who press human rights agendas.³⁷

Intellectual property norms present a similar pattern of Olympics-related PRC claims of, or movement toward, conformity with international standards. Intellectual property rights (IPR) protection is a major, if rarely touted, Olympics concern, given the role that sponsorship rights, merchandise licenses and broadcast permissions play in paying for costly Olympics operations. Troubled IPR protection has been a growing, and increasingly complex, source of friction in PRC relations with the United States and other advanced industrial nations. In this area, too, PRC authorities sought to assuage Olympics-related worries and avoid new conflicts. They pledged increased enforcement, adopted Olympics-specific regulations, declared that those rules met “usual international practices,” launched contests to increase popular knowledge of relevant laws, devoted disproportionate anti-piracy efforts to Olympics merchandise, and suppressed knock-offs of licensed paraphernalia (although not Olympic logo-ware more generally).³⁸

Here again, outside stakeholders seized upon the confluence of Olympics connections, PRC commitments and China’s interest in avoiding Olympics-amplified criticism. For example, the Motion Picture Association of America’s aired familiar criticisms of Chinese IPR protection from an Olympics-invoking platform. The U.S. government took formal steps in the World Trade Organization to address Chinese IPR infringement and negotiated enhanced bilateral cooperation against piracy in moves that some saw as exploiting Olympics-provided leverage with Beijing.³⁹

³⁷ “Beijing Olympic Contingency Plan Could Ban 90 Percent of Cars,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, July 28, 2008; Alice Yan, “Environmental Watchdogs Hungry for Action,” *South China Morning Post*, March 28, 2005; Larmer, “Olympic Dreams,” Fan Baihua, “Looking Beyond the 2008 Olympics,” *China Rights Forum*, no. 3, 2007, pp. 93-97.

³⁸ “Forum Stresses IPR Protection for Games,” *China Daily*, April 3, 2004; Beijing Municipality Provisions for the Protection of Olympics-Related Intellectual Property Rights (2004); PRC State Council Regulations on the Protection of Olympic Symbols (2002); China to Hold Online Contest on Olympics-Related Laws,” *Xinhua Economic News Service*, August 13, 2007 Grant Clark and Wing-Gar Cheng, “China Aims at Olympic Knockoffs,” *International Herald Tribune*, April 27, 2007; “China to Issue New Plan to Protect Olympic Logo,” *Xinhua News Agency*, April 17, 2007; Don Lee, “Fake Olympic Goods Go Underground Now that China is Cracking Down on Counterfeiting,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 2008; “Olympics Opening Ceremony Broadcast by 1,600 Unauthorized Websites,” *Xinhua News Agency*, August 16, 2008.

³⁹ Dan Glickman, “No More Pirate Games,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 2006 (MPAA president’s commentary); Jim Puzanghera and Evelyn Iritani, “U.S. to Step Up Piracy Battle,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 2007; “China, U.S. to Step Up Joint Anti-Piracy Effort,” *Associated Press*, June 15, 2007; Denise Tsang, “US Takes Beijing to WTO Again over Piracy Row,” *South China Morning Post*, August 15, 2007; World Trade Organization, “China – Measures Affecting the Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights” (WT/DS362/1) (2007).

New Beijing, New Olympics? Winning the Games and Challenging the Rules

Despite great efforts and significant successes, the Beijing Olympics failed to assuage—and in some ways reinforced—concerns about China’s not being the normal, unthreatening and international norm-accepting member of the international community that the regime and its supporters sought to portray.

This benign image clashed with some of the means used to pursue it. To win the opportunity to host the Olympics and to host trouble-free Games, Chinese authorities used methods that undermined the international norms they purported to accept and that resonated with doubts about their commitments to transparency and playing by global rules.

Where reality fell inconveniently short of the desired impression of a world-class capital of a developed, modern, fully “arrived” (and not ruinously polluted) nation, Chinese authorities built Potemkin villages. For IOC visits during Beijing’s bids for the 2000 and 2008 Games, such devices included slapping paint on buildings or erecting screening walls along the visitors’ routes, and greening the city with fresh plantings or green-tinted brown winter grass. Techniques were developed and tested to seed clouds to reduce the chance of rain during the Olympics’ image-defining opening and closing days and to wash pollution from the skies. For the IOC missions and more so for the Games themselves, Beijing authorities cleared the air by ordering factories to close temporarily, restricting the burning of coal (which many city residents used for heat during the IOC’s wintertime visits and which still fueled many power plants near the capital on the eve of the Games), ordering millions of vehicles off the streets, halting work at hundreds of construction sites, and keeping beggars, migrant workers and the unsightly poor out of areas where site-selection delegations would go and, more dauntingly, the vast swaths of central Beijing where foreign guests—chaperoned by half a million well-groomed, cheery volunteers—would congregate during the Games.⁴⁰

In more trivial but image-affecting moves, the opening ceremonies supplemented live fireworks with computer-generated ones for the vast audience of global television viewers (a fact some broadcast media helpfully failed to mention). The search for the perfect musical centerpiece led to a more conventionally pretty young girl lip-synching to the audio of a peer with a better voice. Han Chinese masqueraded, undisclosed, as costumed members of the

⁴⁰ “Don’t Rain on Our Parade,” *China Daily*, April 26, 2007; “China Practices Artificial Rain Reduction for Sunny Olympics,” *Xinhua News Agency*, August 9, 2007; Jim Byers, “In Beijing, They’re Painting the Grass Green,” *Toronto Star*, February 14, 2001; “Olympics Inspectors Leave Beijing After Getting ‘Royal Tour,’” *Japan Economic Newswire*, February 24, 2001; Anthony Kuhn, “Beijing Puts on its Best Game Face,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 2001; Richard Spencer, “China to Shut Heavy Industry and Give Olympians Fresh Air,” *Daily Telegraph*, December 29, 2006; Charles McGrath, “Beijing Puts on Happy Face for Games,” *New York Times*, August 11, 2008.

China's fifty-six minority groups. In athletic competition, high expectations prompted tactics that cast China in the light of a latter-day East Germany. The triumphant Chinese women's gymnastics team drew widespread charges of using underage athletes. Chinese reactions to such allegations were long on indignation and short on credible proof of age, and seemed to show contempt for international rules (amid international sporting officials' stunningly bureaucratic deference to Chinese explanations).⁴¹

In their quest to land the Games and host a successful (meaning orderly as well as dazzling) Olympics, Chinese authorities went further, using old-style authoritarian methods and sometimes showing little regard for rights that the Beijing Olympics were supposed to advance and that the Games' hosts claimed to accept. The army of construction workers who came to Beijing to build the Games' grand venues, and who faced a forced return to the Chinese hinterland as their work ended and the Games neared, gave an Olympic face to the chronic poverty, insecurity and discrimination plaguing internal migrants.⁴² The point was not lost on the capital's avant-garde arts community. At the well-known 798 gallery complex (housed in former munitions factories), a prominent display mixed the pervasive, often sincere expressions of national pride in China's hosting the Games with melancholic and critical contrasts between the construction laborers' lot and the sparkling edifices they built and shiny new Mercedes that ferried their bosses. The broader group of rural-to-urban migrants and other less affluent unregistered residents also risked expulsion from the capital or, at least, restrictions on their mobility (and, thus, ability to work).⁴³ Farmers in adjacent provinces faced economic disaster when their water was diverted to assure adequate supplies to Beijing during the Games.⁴⁴

Legal Beijing residents also suffered dramatic Games-driven, and Games-spotlighted, increases in long-running problems of forced evictions.

⁴¹ "Fireworks' Computer Generated," *Daily Yomiuri*, August 13, 2008; Jim Yardley, "In Grand Olympic Show, Some Sleight of Voice," *New York Times*, August 13, 2008; Richard Spencer, "Ethnic Children Exposed as Fakes in Opening Ceremony," *Daily Telegraph*, August 15, 2008; Juliet Macur, "China Cites Paper Work Error in Age of Gymnast," *New York Times*, August 25, 2008; Juliet Macur, "IOC Asks for Inquiry of Chinese Gymnasts," *New York Times*, August 22, 2008; Rob Hughes, "China's Integrity at Stake in the Age Issue," *Straits Times* (Singapore), August 23, 2008.

⁴² David Eimer, "China Races to Olympic Glory while 20 Million of its Children are Denied School," *Sunday Telegraph*, March 4, 2007; "China's Rapid Growth Creating Migrant Underclass, Says Amnesty," *Guardian Unlimited*, March 1, 2007; Shi Jingtao, "Buildings Silent as Workers Exit," *South China Morning Post*, July 21, 2008; Carin Zissis, "China's Internal Migrants," <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12943/>.

⁴³ "Slums' Sting Chinese Cities, Hamper Building of Harmonious Society," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 8, 2005; Shi Jingtao, "Beijing Denies it will have Games Purge," *South China Morning Post*, September 16, 2006; Carry Huang, "Capital Targets Unregistered Non-Residents," *South China Morning Post*, January 1, 2008. Treatment of these groups figured prominently in the Chinese intellectuals' and dissidents' August 2007 "open letter."

⁴⁴ Michael Sheridan, "Farmers in Baoding Face Ruin from a Man-Made Drought," *Sunday Times* (London), August 24, 2008.

The painted character *chai*—marking houses for destruction and another staple of contemporary artists' critical works—proliferated on residential buildings as Beijing's Olympic makeover proceeded. By one foreign NGO's estimate, authorities ousted nearly 10 percent of the city's population to make way for Games-related projects, over the opposition of many affected residents and ill-fated protests led by bold but doomed activists.⁴⁵ Those who sought, during the Olympics, to protest the seizure of their houses or inadequate compensation faced harassment, detention and threatened imprisonment, in some cases even where they sought a permit to demonstrate in one of the remote zones designated by Beijing authorities.⁴⁶

Olympics-related work also brought high-profile labor rights violations and greater attention to the broader problem. Working conditions for construction workers on the Games' world-class projects fell far short of international labor standards, as critics at home and abroad noted. Foreign NGOs and media reported underage workers, forced overtime and "gross violations" of labor standards for adult workers at Chinese factories making Beijing Olympics logo-wear, driving PRC authorities to investigate and sanction a few manufacturers.⁴⁷

Political dissent—long a focus of foreign critiques of China's human rights record and an understood referent abroad for promises that the Olympics would lead to human rights improvements—faced increased Olympics-related restrictions. With the 2008 site decision nearing, Chinese authorities detained known dissidents, kept them from IOC visitors and the press, and imprisoned at least one democracy activist who signed a letter urging the IOC to press China on human rights. The more-immediate run-up to the Olympics—and the politically sensitive Chinese Communist Party Congress the preceding fall—brought tighter restrictions and increased harassment of political dissidents (including the arrest of prominent AIDS rights activist and subsequent Sakharov Prize winner Hu Jia) and regime-criticizing NGOs, and

⁴⁵ Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, "Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights," www.cohre.org; Human Rights Watch, "China: Release Housing Rights Activist," <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/09/28/china9400.htm>; Peter Goff, "IOC Urged to Take a Stand on Evictions," *South China Morning Post*, December 4, 2005; "No Forced Eviction for Olympic Games—Foreign Ministry Spokesman," *Xinhua News Agency*, June 5, 2007; "China Denies Displacing 1.5 million Beijing Residents," *Xinhua Financial Network News*, August 16, 2007; Rowan Callick, "China Puts a Sunny Spin on Clouds of Criticism," *Australian*, August 17, 2007.

⁴⁶ Andrew Jacobs, "No Voice is Too Small for a China Still Nervous about Dissent," *New York Times*, August 30, 2008; Josephine Ma, "Protest-Zone Test Case Blocked in Beijing," *South China Morning Post*, August 2, 2008.

⁴⁷ Kathleen E. McLaughlin, "Ahead of Olympics, China Faces Charges of Child Labor," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 13, 2007; "Guangdong Stationery Producer Did Use Child Labor," *Xinhua News Agency*, June 14, 2007; PlayFair 2008, *No Medal for Olympics on Labor Rights* (2007), http://www.playfair2008.org/docs/playfair_2008-report.pdf; "Nike Reports Troubles at its Chinese Factories," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 2008.

sharp criticism from foreign observers.⁴⁸ Among those who sought to stage protests during the Games, all applications for regime-promised permits were rejected, some applicants detained, and would-be unpermitted protesters promptly quashed and taken into custody.⁴⁹

These and other moves, undertaken long before the Games, further strengthened links between Beijing's hosting the Games and broader issues of China's record on international civil and political rights. For example, when twice-jailed Wei Jingsheng—China's internationally best-known dissident—called for denying China the 2008 Games, his words gained force from his having been released the first time during Beijing's pursuit of the 2000 Games, in an effort to parry human rights-based opposition to China's bid.⁵⁰ So too, the seemingly ordinary practice of the host city's mayor leading the organizing committee linked the Beijing Olympics to China's human rights record. For the 2000 Games bid, Chen Xitong bore the legacy of his lead role in crushing the 1989 Democracy Movement. For the 2008 Games, Liu Qi brought the burden of leading the special task force to suppress Falun Gong—an association underscored when his trip to the Salt Lake City Winter Games allowed followers of the movement to serve him in a suit alleging violations of their human rights.⁵¹

The regime's determination to stifle political dissent that could seize the Olympic stage and mar the host's preferred storyline was particularly visible on the perennial human rights issue of Tibet, especially in the wake of unrest in Tibetan areas—and PRC authorities' forcible response—less than six months before the Games. Chinese leaders and media bristled at the pro-Tibet protests that dogged the torch along its international journey. Security forces quickly suppressed numerous attempted displays of "Free Tibet" messages (mostly by foreign activists), including banners unfurled at the Great Wall a year before the Games, near the Tibet portions of the planned torch route, and from a tower near the Olympic venues on the eve of the Games' opening.⁵²

⁴⁸ Amnesty International, "People's Republic of China: The Olympics Countdown—One Year Left to Fulfill Human Rights Promises," (2007), <http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGASA17024> 2007; Human Rights Watch, "China: No Progress on Rights One Year Before Olympics," August 2, 2007, http://china.hrw.org/press/china_no_progress_on_rights_one_year_before_olympics; Jim Yardley, "Abuses Belie China Pledge on Rights, Critics Say," *New York Times*, August 8, 2007.

⁴⁹ Specific incidents are discussed elsewhere in this article. The official view is reflected in "Beijing Olympics Showcases a Mature China," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 29, 2008.

⁵⁰ Patrick E. Tyler, "Chinese Dissident Emerges, Still Unbowed," *New York Times*, September 21, 1993; Rone Tempest, "Chinese Dissident is Back in Custody After 'New Crimes,'" *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1994.

⁵¹ John Pomfret, "Fight over Banned Sect Moves to U.S." *Washington Post*, March 12, 2002; *Doe v. Liu Qi*, 349 F.Supp.2d 1258 (N.D. Cal. 2004). On such lawsuits, see Jacques deLisle, "Human Rights, Civil Wrongs and International Politics: A 'Sinical' Look at the Use of U.S. Litigation to Address Abuses Abroad," *DePaul Law Review* 52, 2003, pp. 473–561.

⁵² "Tibet's Banner of Revolt at Everest," *Statesman* (India), April 29, 2007; "China Deports Eight Tibet Activists who Protested on Great Wall," *Kyodo News Agency*, August 9, 2007; Jacobs, "China Gives 6 American Protesters 10-Day Detentions"; "Four More Pro-Tibet Protesters Arrested in Beijing," *Kyodo News*, August 21, 2008.

For the Games, Beijing authorities took extensive and controversial steps to enhance their capacity to keep order and prevent expression of unauthorized views. Examples included major expansions of the already formidable public security forces ordinarily on hand in the capital (to a total of more than 100,000), internationally criticized foreign-assisted training programs for Chinese police, more extensive security cameras, major purchases of equipment (including helicopters), and stand-by deployments of heavily armed PLA units.⁵³ Impromptu traffic stops sprang up on central Beijing roads months before the Games. Greatly tightened visa standards kept many would-be spectators and journalists away from the Games, with questionable effect on those foreigners most determined to disrupt the proceedings. Restrictions on transportation tickets replicated such checks at home. A dense security presence (along with an eccentric ticket distribution system that left many unused tickets in the hands of government agencies and large enterprises) made a near ghost town of the Olympic plaza and the seating areas at many events. The beefed-up security also assured the prompt—but still filmed and much-viewed—quashing of attempted protests, including those calling for greater freedom for Tibet and the media.

Media freedom followed the same pattern of Olympics-related developments exacerbating and highlighting PRC divergence from liberal international norms, some of which had been the object of Games-linked commitments. Extensive coverage and complaint from foreign media and international press freedom and human rights groups drew attention to Beijing's shortcomings on Olympics-related pledges of freer reporting (including on issues beyond the Games), unexpected blocking of foreign websites that addressed politically sensitive issues at the Olympic media center, increased restriction and harassment of domestic media before and during the Games (despite a brief and reluctant relaxation for early coverage of the Sichuan earthquake response efforts), heightened control and monitoring of Internet postings and *wangba* (web cafes that provide many Chinese netizens with access points and anonymity), and rapid shutting down of a Reporters Without Borders-sponsored demonstration in Beijing (criticizing the failure to implement the press freedom reforms China had

⁵³ "Chinese Politburo Member Zhou Yongkang on Security of Beijing Olympic Games," *Xinhua News Agency*, August 19, 2006; "China Sets Up Special Police Unit to Tighten Olympics Security," *Xinhua News Agency*, December 20, 2005; Wong and Bradsher, "As China Girds for Olympics" (estimating expenditures at \$6.5 billion); "Beijing Forms Helicopter Police Team for 2008 Olympics," *Xinhua News Agency*, March 11, 2007; Kristine Kwok, "Secretive Arm of the Law," *South China Morning Post*, August 4, 2007; "FBI Willing to Help China with Olympic Security," *Xinhua News Agency*, June 13, 2007; "China Ready to Work with Other Countries on Olympic Security," *Xinhua News Agency*, June 14, 2007.

pledged when seeking the Games) and detention of Chinese journalists who covered it.⁵⁴

These varied issues led international human rights groups and Chinese activists to use the singular platform the Games provided to raise Olympics-specific and general criticisms.⁵⁵ Thus, with the Games approaching, Amnesty International warned “[u]nless Chinese authorities take urgent measures to stop human rights abuses . . . , they risk tarnishing . . . the legacy of the Beijing Olympics.” Human Rights Watch similarly criticized severe backsliding on human rights generally and Olympics pledges specifically in the months preceding the Games. An “open letter” from dozens of prominent Chinese intellectuals and dissidents similarly cautioned that the regime’s violation of Olympics-related human rights promises and human rights abuses more generally “violate the Olympic spirit” and worsen a “crisis of rule” in China.⁵⁶ On the eve of the Games, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch issued new reports condemning Chinese authorities for acts that vindicated their earlier fears and charging that increased rights “abuses reflect the Chinese government’s wholesale failure to honor its Olympics-related human rights promises” and the IOC’s failure to “ensur[e] that China fulfills its commitments.”⁵⁷ Liu Xiaobo, one of China’s most prominent dissidents, added that the disappointment of foreigners’ hopes for Olympics-spurred changes confirmed that profound political reforms still were needed to achieve such progress on human rights.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Alice Yan, “US Foundation Quits Olympic Media Project,” *South China Morning Post*, May 14, 2005 (Nieman Foundation’s withdrawal from training PRC press officials); “China’s Media Crackdown Gathers Pace in Run-Up to Olympics,” *Reporters Sans Frontieres Press Release*, August 7, 2006; “China Backtracking on Media Freedoms,” *Human Rights Watch Press Release*, May 31, 2007; “China Watchdog Report Disputes Government Media Freedom ‘Promise’” *BBC Monitoring International*, August 7, 2007 (press release by Committee to Protect Journalists); Kate Allen, “The Terrible Growth of Internet Repression,” *Independent*, June 6, 2007; Peter Simpson, “Rogge Flies into Storm on Internet U-Turn,” *South China Morning Post*, August 1, 2008; “Group Says China Fell Short of Keeping Olympic Media Freedom Promise,” *Kyodo News*, August 23, 2008 (Foreign Correspondents Club of China assessment).

⁵⁵ On critical foreign assessments of Beijing’s performance generally, see Elizabeth Economy and Adam Segal, “China’s Olympic Nightmare,” *Foreign Affairs* 87(4), 2008, pp. 47–56.

⁵⁶ Amnesty International, “The Olympics Countdown,” Human Rights Watch, “No Progress on Rights”; Jim Yardley, “Abuses Belie China Pledge on Rights, Critics Say,” *New York Times*, August 8, 2007; Eric Cody, “Before Olympics, a Call for Change,” *Washington Post*, August 8, 2007; “‘One World, One Dream’: The Same Human Rights—Our Opinions and Appeal Concerning the Beijing Olympics” August 8, 2008, available at <http://www.qian-ming.net/gb/default.aspx?dir=scp&cid=125>; Vivian Wu, “No Olympic Glory without Human Rights, Beijing Told,” *South China Morning Post*, August 8, 2007.

⁵⁷ Amnesty International, “Chinese Authorities’ Broken Promises Threaten Olympic Legacy,” July 28, 2008, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/chinese-authorities-broken-promises-threaten-olympic-legacy-20080728>; Human Rights Watch, “China: Olympics Harm Key Human Rights,” August 4, 2008. <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/08/04/china-olympics-harm-key-human-rights>.

⁵⁸ Liu Xiaobo—One of China’s Most Outspoken Rights Activists,” Deutsche Presse-Agentur, December 10, 2008.

The Beijing Games were redolent of triumphal host-country nationalism. This phenomenon is hardly alien to the Olympics, but it was strikingly in tension with the benign image that Chinese authorities worked so hard to portray, and it had some particularly troubling content and context. The official Xinhua News Agency set the tone early with its exultation over the IOC's awarding Beijing the Games, dubbing it a "milestone in China's rising international status" and a signal moment in the "great renaissance of the Chinese nation."⁵⁹ The theme echoed in the Chinese version of the Games' widely used English slogan, which replaced the bland "New Beijing, Great Olympics" with the more proprietary and transforming "New Beijing, New Olympics." At the opening ceremonies, celebrations of universal Olympic values and Chinese culture and history—with a striking absence of reference to the often violent, chaotic, radical and xenophobic Mao years—were intermixed with martial nationalism. In a stadium surrounded by army security (including surface to air missiles), some 15,000 performers, one-third reportedly from PLA units, moved in groups of hundreds or thousands with military precision.⁶⁰ This included 2008 synchronized drummers beating replicas of instruments from the much-mythologized ancient dynasties that predated China's first collapse into fragmentation and weakness.

More conventionally, public displays and official media showcased Chinese Olympians from recent Games, including basketball star Yao Ming, Athens gold medal hurdler Liu Xiang, and multi-gold-medalist from the PRC's first Olympics, sports equipment entrepreneur and airborne anchor of the torch relay team at the opening ceremonies Li Ning. Pride in and praise for Chinese victories dominated the news. Such officially orchestrated moves tapped and stoked a real popular nationalism. That nationalism was amply on display in the genuine elation and sense of vindication among tens of thousands of Beijingers who took to the streets to celebrate the IOC decision to award China the Games.⁶¹ It continued through the spontaneous chants of *zhongguo jiyao* (roughly, "Go China!") at competition sites and in public spaces during the Games.

Although these Olympics-focused and Olympics-fueled sentiments supported the vital nationalist pillar of the regime's legitimacy, such nationalism is a double-edged sword, potentially undermining the normal and pro-status quo international image that the leadership pursued through the Games and threatening to push Chinese policy to extremes or in directions

⁵⁹ "A Historical Event for the Chinese Nation," *Xinhua News Agency*, July 13, 2001.

⁶⁰ Bill Salvatore, "Director Doubts Extravaganza Can be Topped," *South China Morning Post*, August 10, 2008; Barbara Demick, "Citing Threats to Games, China is on a War Footing," *Los Angeles Times*, July 22, 2008.

⁶¹ Calum Macleod, "Olympic Games: China Celebrates with Rare Burst of Genuine Celebration," *The Independent*, July 14, 2001; "A Sleepless Night! A Sleepless Night for 1.3 Billion!" *People's Daily*, July 14, 2001.

that top leaders might not wish to go.⁶² Anti-Japanese protests over prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (with its interred war criminals) or textbooks' depictions of Japan's World War II actions in China, and anti-U.S. demonstrations following NATO's bombing of the PRC embassy in Belgrade or a Chinese air force jet's collision with an American reconnaissance plane were troubling harbingers of what might flow from Olympics-related controversies.

The pro-human rights and pro-Tibet protests that shadowed the torch relay abroad led to street rallies in China calling for a boycott of French retailer Carrefour's many Chinese stores and to Chinese nationals in Seoul clashing violently with South Korean demonstrators.⁶³ Perennial nationalist frictions with Taiwan appeared poised to acquire an Olympic edge as then-candidate for the Republic of China presidency Ma Ying-jeou threatened to boycott the Games in the wake of the crackdown in Tibet and, later, as Taiwan chafed at Beijing's use of the more PRC-sovereignty-resonant term *zhongguo taipei* (China Taipei) rather than *zhonghua taipei* (Chinese Taipei) in media references to Taiwan's Olympic delegation.⁶⁴ There were reasons to worry about Olympics-driven conflict with the United States as well, given the Americans' likely rivalry with China at the top of the medal count and in key sports, Washington's perceived role in denying Beijing the 2000 Games, persistent calls in Congress and from U.S.-based activists to boycott the 2008 Games, a long-pending decision on arms sales to Taiwan, and an eleventh-hour debate about whether then President George W. Bush would attend the opening ceremonies as planned or join a dwindling cadre of Western heads of government in denying the much-criticized host regime that much-desired sign of respect.⁶⁵ On most of these issues and on the question of Liu Xiang's injury-forced withdrawal from the Games, worried Chinese authorities moved to tamp down popular ire.

The authorities' Olympics agenda also was not immune from home-grown nationalist backlash. Some lamented abandonment of Chinese aesthetics and criticized foreign-designed projects for clashing with their environment or

⁶² On the complexity and potential volatility of contemporary Chinese nationalism, see Peter H. Gries, *China's New Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶³ "Demonstrations Break Out at Carrefour in China," *Xinhua News Agency*, May 1, 2008; "Protests Mar Olympic Torch Relay," *Korea Herald*, April 28, 2008; "S. Korea Vows to Punish Chinese Demonstrators," *Yonhap*, May 1, 2008.

⁶⁴ Lilian Wu, "Taiwan KMT Candidate 'Not Ruling Out' Olympic Boycott over Tibet," *Central News Agency*, March 18, 2008; "Taiwan's Ma Ying-jeou Criticized for Statement on Olympics," *Xinhua News Agency*, March 20, 2008; Deborah Kuo, "Reference to 'Chinese Taipei' an Important Development: President," *Central News Agency*, August 1, 2008.

⁶⁵ Sean Lengell, "Bush Urged to Boycott Olympics: Rohrabacher Cites Beijing on Human Rights," *Washington Times*, August 23, 2007; "Leveraging the Olympics: Celebrity Pressure Against China," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 2007; Bill Smith, "China, IOC Stand Firm Against Boycott," *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, August 2, 2007; Steven Lee Myers, "Bush Prods China on Rights on Eve of Games but Opposes Criticism at Olympics," *New York Times*, August 7, 2008.

squandering vast sums in pursuit of superficial cosmopolitanism (most wryly in a Beijing sculptor's depiction of the bird's nest as a flat tire sinking into the ooze and the water cube as a melting ice bloc sliding off a precipice). Such critiques reportedly helped bring retrenchment of projects and reconsideration of styles.⁶⁶ In the run-up to the Games, Chinese dissidents increasingly framed arguments for human rights and political reform as patriotic issues of improving and strengthening the country, in effect casting the regime's failures to implement human rights promises as a betrayal of nationalism.⁶⁷ Chinese netizens' vitriolic attacks on foreign critics of China's actions in Tibet and violations of Olympics rules and promises exceeded the authorities' comfort levels and threatened to—and sometimes did—turn into denunciations of the Chinese regime for being too soft in its responses.⁶⁸

Happily for the regime, worst case scenarios did not unfold. China's athletes finished atop the gold medal count. Ordinary citizens reveled in their success and generally heeded imperatives to present an appealing face to the world. Taiwan's team showed up, and Beijing quietly acquiesced in Taipei's preferred nomenclature. The Japanese team scored great good will by marching with miniature Chinese flags at the opening ceremonies. Bush joined French President Sarkozy and other world leaders sitting near a proud Hu Jintao. The potentially disconcerting martial tone of parts of famed film director Zhang Yimou's pageantry drew little comment from international observers. Feared disruptions or mediagenic moments from Tibetan or Xinjiang Muslim "separatists" or "terrorists" did not occur, unsurprisingly given the thick blanket of security forces.

The biggest Games-related eruptions of Chinese nationalism were indignation at international criticism of Chinese behavior. One example was Chinese outrage, at home and abroad, at the condemnation of Beijing's handling of pre-Olympics unrest in Tibet and the ensuing threatened boycotts, torch-targeting protests and expressions of sympathy for the much-reviled (in China) Dalai Lama-led government-in-exile. Another instance was the resentful perception, both official and popular, that foreign accusations of Chinese dissembling over female gymnasts' age or opening ceremony lip-synching overreached and showed disdain for China or reflected a desire to keep China down.⁶⁹ These

⁶⁶ "Chen Xitong: Beijing Should be Like Beijing," *Xinhua Overseas News Service*, August 25, 1993; Christopher Hawthorne, "China Scales Back Ambitious Design Plans," *New York Times*, September 21, 2004; "Is Synthetic Fusion in Harmony with Traditional Chinese Culture?" *China Daily*, October 1, 2004.

⁶⁷ Yang Lianli, "The Facets of Chinese Nationalism," *Washington Post*, May 5, 2008.

⁶⁸ Mark Magnier, "Dialing Back Chinese Anger," *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 2008.

⁶⁹ "Chinese Nationalism," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 28, 2008 (Chinese public reaction to lip-synching incident); Peter Ford, "Chinese Vent Anti-Western Fury Online," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 17, 2008 (Chinese bloggers on Tibet issue and torch protests); Andreas Landwehr, "China Mounts Campaign Against Olympic Torch Protests," *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, April 8, 2008 (official responses); Shaila Dewan, "Chinese Students in U.S. Fight View of their Home," *New York Times*, April 29, 2008.

incidents—along with the broader mixed signals from the host regime—are telling, and in some respects troubling, in what they say about the Beijing Games' implications for China's post-Olympics international behavior.

After the Games: Stake-Holding or Torch-Bearing?

The Beijing Games aimed to, and largely did, depict China as a modern, powerful state and one pledged to support key international regimes (including ones the PRC leadership does not see as priorities or, even, desirable). The first Chinese Olympics presented the PRC as having the ability to be a stakeholder in the international system and the intention to be a responsible one.⁷⁰ Yet the lessons from the 2008 Olympiad also underscored persisting and emerging questions about China's capacity and, more so, its will to play that role. Olympics-related behavior reaffirmed concerns about China's commitment to achievement, rather than mere appearance, of greater conformity with international norms that have long been foci of friction between the PRC and the United States and other liberal and democratic states.

China remains far from prepared or inclined to take an Olympic torch to major features of a world order that it has worked so long and so hard to join, but the Beijing Games reflected, and perhaps accelerated, less status quo-accepting trends in China's engagement with the international system. Actions and statements surrounding the Games suggest that such tendencies likely reflect not only some of the revisionism to be expected from a rapidly rising power but also the large, and periodically surging, role of domestic concerns in shaping China's foreign policies. These patterns, highlighted by the Beijing Games but long predating them, extend into the post-Olympics era, particularly in issue areas that were salient during the Games and that are likely to remain central to China's external relations generally and especially with the United States.

First, on international economic issues, China's two-trillion dollar foreign exchange reserves, comparatively healthy fiscal position, and large and still relatively rapidly growing economy give it means to play a major role in addressing the current global crisis that began in 2008. Early signs showed willingness to do so, amid pressure from abroad and shifting perceptions of self-interest. China emerged a key participant in the G-20 Washington summit on the financial crisis, signaled its intent to buy still more U.S. sovereign debt to help

⁷⁰ Robert Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Sep/22-290478.html [September 21, 2005] (calling for China to be a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system; Beijing Olympics Showcases a Mature China," (quoting prominent Chinese public intellectual Hu Angang that post-Olympics China has really become a part of the world and the biggest stakeholder"); "In 2008, China Impresses World in Unprecedented Way," *Xinhua News Agency*, December 24, 2008; Wu Zhi, "Beijing Fulfills Olympic Commitments," *Xinhua News Agency*, August 24, 2008.

finance Washington's recovery effort, and adopted a nearly \$600 billion stimulus package to boost domestic demand and reduce reliance on exports—a policy that had become increasingly resisted and decreasingly effective.⁷¹

Still, the economic prowess the Olympics showcased may mislead. Although China was better positioned than its peers and neighbors to weather the crisis that began shortly after the Olympics (as had been the case in the Asian Financial Crisis a decade earlier), the Games came when China was riding especially high, just before the meltdown on Wall Street brought China flattening or falling demand for exports (especially to developed countries), a drop of growth rates into the single digits, the first decline in manufacturing output in many years and a spike in factory job losses.⁷²

China's cooperation with a partly U.S.-led international effort to address the crisis has shown limits. PRC officials have become more critical of U.S. economic policy and international economic leadership, especially in assessing the role of Washington's regulatory failures in precipitating the meltdown. Moreover, Chinese leaders have seen the crisis as an opportunity—and a reason—for China and other developing countries to take a bigger role in shaping an international financial regime that takes more account of their needs and preferences.⁷³ China's resistance to Washington's calls to allow the *renminbi* to rise is likely to be less tractable when export growth is falling. In Chinese policy circles, expressions of resentment are common over their still-poor country being expected to help rescue the United States from a mess of its own making. So, too, is the view that China's principal responsibility and sufficient contribution are to maintain its own growth. Limits to China's role also stem from serious and, especially with the global downturn, growing concerns about economic challenges at home, including spiraling inequality, a still-weak social safety net (which leads to over-saving and depressed consumption), and growing employment problems across a spectrum from WTO-threatened farmers to laid off factory workers to recent college graduates.

Second, on environmental issues, China seems at least resigned to greater cooperation on climate change and pollution, given a new, more environment-focused and multilateralist administration in Washington,

⁷¹ Wang Yong, "Domestic Demand and Continued Reform: China's Search for a New Model," *Global Asia* 4(3), 2008, pp. 24–28; "Hu Jintao Addresses the G20 Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy in Washington," <http://www.chinaembassy.org.in/eng/zgbd/t522600.htm>; "State Councilor: China, U.S. Share Increasing Responsibilities," *People's Daily* (online), January 14, 2009.

⁷² World Bank, "China Quarterly Update" (December 2008); Ren Ke, "Global Financial Crisis Spills Over China's Labor Market," *Xinhua News Agency*, November 1, 2008; Don Lee, "China's Bosses are Abandoning ship," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 2008.

⁷³ "Financial Crisis Signals Coming of 'Nonpolar' Era," *China Daily*, October 16, 2008; Anthony Faiola, "The End of American Capitalism?" *Washington Post*, October 10, 2008, p. A1; Elizabeth Economy and Adam Segal, "In China, Stimulus and Questions about Global Financial Governance," *Council on Foreign Relations Expert Brief*, November 13, 2008; "U.S. Blame Game Cannot Change Facts of Financial Crisis," *People's Daily* (online), January 9, 2009.

mounting pressure from neighboring states injured by the side-effects of China's reckless industrialization, growing recognition (including talk of a "Green GDP"⁷⁴) of the economic harm to China, and policy incentives to invest in pollution abatement. Yet, the progress that the Games seemed to signal—much of it temporary by design—will be hard to sustain. The view remains prevalent in China that today's rich nations seek to impose growth-limiting environmental rules on China that they did not themselves obey during their own eras of rapid development.⁷⁵ Domestically, the State Environmental Protection Agency remains a weak actor in China's bureaucratic politics, and local officials are still judged on their jurisdictions' economic performance, unadjusted for environmental impact.

Third, protection for intellectual property rights remains an area of high-profile Chinese commitments and persistent complaints from abroad, much as it did before and during the Olympics. WTO-mandated commitments here are robust and Beijing seems to be growing accustomed to the roles of complainant and defendant in WTO proceedings. Chinese enforcement efforts during the Games may have raised foreign expectations, and therefore pressures, concerning what PRC authorities will do in more ordinary times. Nonetheless, China's IPR enforcement bodies and, often, legal remedies remain comparatively weak. Some types of piracy are difficult to police and vital to local economies—and local officials' careers—in some parts of China.⁷⁶ Although the rising value of Chinese-created intellectual property, China's policies to build a partly foreign-invested research and development sector and the interests of PRC licensees of foreign IPR are shifting the balance, China as a whole is still short of the point at which countries typically cross over from piracy to protection.

Finally, human rights remains an area of significant long-term progress, including the PRC's deepened engagement with the international human rights regime and its key institutions (including UN Human Rights Council membership) and Beijing's increased tolerance for some international human rights-promoting efforts that it once denounced as "intervention." The Olympics may have helped spur such changes by providing leverage with Beijing on Darfur, enhancing the legitimacy of human rights discourse in China and perhaps encouraging domestic activists. Despite these gains, the Olympics also heralded increased tensions over human rights in China's relations with the world, amid widespread criticism of China's failure to fulfill Games-related

⁷⁴ Liu Jianqiang, "China Releases Green GDP Index," <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/4626>.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Jim Yardley, "After 30 Years, Economic Perils in China's Path," *New York Times*, December 19, 2008 (State Environmental Protection Agency Vice Minister Pan Yue).

⁷⁶ See Andrew C. Mertha, *The Politics of Piracy: Intellectual Property in Contemporary China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Peter K. Yu, "From Pirates to Partners: Protecting Intellectual Property in Post-WTO China," *American University Law Review* 55, 2006, pp. 902–1000.

pledges and greater international exposure of Chinese authorities' problematic behavior (some of it undertaken to help stage the Games). Heightened expectations and pressures from abroad collided with the Chinese regime's apparent agenda on such issues as sovereignty abroad and democracy at home. On the former issue, the so-called "Beijing Consensus," or the "China Model" of democracy without development, or the hoary but recently reinvigorated "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" all point to a strong and possibly resurgent resistance to human rights-based "interference" in other states' "internal" affairs. On the latter issue, Hu and Wen have stated pointedly that China will develop its own, non-Western-style democracy and that elections of the type urged by the West are generations away.⁷⁷

This recalcitrance aims at audiences at home as well. It warns human rights and political reform advocates of the limits they face in post-Olympics China. It dovetails with the popular nationalism that the regime relies upon for legitimacy and that swirled around the Olympics in ordinary citizens' frustration with the outside world's sympathy for Tibetan "separatism," the Dalai "clique" and the insult to China in pro-Tibet and pro-human rights protests that tarnished the torch's triumphant journey from Olympus to Beijing. With tens of thousands of substantial mass protest "incidents" occurring annually, this stance also resonates with *pa luan* (the "fear of chaos") that remains a powerful trope, especially among the growing urban affluent class that has fared well under China's market-oriented authoritarianism and that fears a vast, increasingly restive underclass.

It perhaps reflects also the leadership's worries about popular confidence in its rule. One Olympics-themed sign surfaced in the numerology that pervades Chinese politics: the leadership had set the Games to start at 8:08:08 p.m. on August 8, 2008—a profusion of the Chinese lucky number eight. As the fateful date drew near, however, Chinese spoke of disaster-linked eights that suggested a regime possibly losing its grip on the Mandate of Heaven: severe, fatal snows in south China around January 25 (1 + 2 + 5), riots in Tibet on March 14 (3 + 1 + 4) and the Sichuan earthquake on May 12 (5 + 1 + 2). Another incident came with the bribery conviction of Liu Zhihua—Beijing's deputy mayor, overseer of Olympics construction projects, the person, therefore, principally responsible for fulfilling promises of the "cleanest" Games preparations "in history," and an unwelcome Games-related symbol of the official corruption that is widely regarded as a significant threat to the regime's legitimacy.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Evan A. Feigenbaum, "China's Challenge to Pax Americana," *Washington Quarterly* 24(3), 2001, pp. 31–43; Jacques deLisle, "Legalization without Democratization in China under Hu Jintao," in Chen Li (ed.), *China's Changing Political Landscape* (Washington: Brookings, 2008), pp. 185–211; "Speech by Hu Jintao at Meeting to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Third Plenum" (China "will certainly not copy the western political system").

⁷⁸ Jim Yardley, "Beijing Olympics Building Chief May Be Executed for Corruption," *New York Times*, October 20, 2008.

On such major issues in Chinese foreign policy, the Beijing Games underscore that China's international commitments and internal progress during the Reform Era have been substantial, but China's acceptance of international norms and regimes—including especially many of those stressed by the United States—remains incomplete and vulnerable. Partly, this reflects China's international strengths—its growing global importance and its increasing competence and confidence in articulating interests and preferences that sometimes differ from those of the United States. It also shows the effects of domestic considerations that greatly and perhaps increasingly shape—and constrain—China's international commitments and their implementation. And these, in turn, reflect both the “normalization” of Chinese domestic politics (with the decline of ideology, the rise of concern with popular sentiments and so on) and mounting challenges facing Chinese rulers (such as sustaining economic growth, maintaining social stability and implementing political reforms).⁷⁹ As China moves farther beyond its moment of dazzling if slightly tarnished Olympic glory, foreign policies of the U.S. and other Western and regional powers must adapt to the limits and opportunities presented by the changed and changing China that the Beijing Games revealed and, to a limited extent, shaped.



⁷⁹For a leading Chinese scholar's assessment that the Games showed both strengths, weaknesses, and need for further reform, see Jim Yardley, “After Glow of the Games, What Next for China?” *New York Times*, August 25, 2008 (quoting Shen Dingli).