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Introduction

“Comrades! We express our deep thanks to all our friends around the world and to the IOC [International Olympic Committee] for helping to make Beijing successful in its Olympic bid.” These were the words of China’s President, Jiang Zemin, in his address to thousands of people in Tiananmen Square, moments after Beijing was selected as the host of the 2008 Olympics. Beijing won the bid easily on the second ballot of the IOC vote. It took 56 votes to Toronto’s 22, Paris’s 18, and Istanbul’s nine.

Some Toronto supporters were blunt in their disappointment. One anonymous Toronto official simply said, “We got hosed.” Former gold and silver medalist Larry Cain was more articulate, but no less forceful. He said, “The Games are about humanity, and we are giving it to a regime that treats a lot of their people in an inhumane fashion.” However, John Bitove, president of Toronto’s bid committee, was more magnanimous. After the announcement, he stated, “They had just so much more on the table than us because they are the world’s biggest country and have never hosted an Olympic Games . . . they ran a phenomenal campaign.”

These three comments suggest the gamut of issues, politicking, and emotions surrounding the competition that determined who would host the most prestigious, politically significant, and potentially lucrative two-week international athletic event that will occur in the summer of 2008. China faced stiff opposition internationally over its bid. Critics and opponents pointed in particular to its abysmal human-rights record and to its poor environmental standards. Beijing is the site of one of the most infamous political demonstrations and crackdowns on free expression in modern memory, Tiananmen Square, and is notorious for being one of the most polluted cities in the world. Those

opposed to the IOC granting the Games to China argued that either of these two factors should disqualify the Chinese bid. In China’s favour, however, was its status as a nation with the largest population and its emergence as the most sought-after economic market, especially by the U.S. China believes that its selection reflects its status as a major world power. Chinese officials themselves note that the Games may be instrumental in moderating its human rights excesses. To its critics, the Chinese Olympic bid committee in essence said, “Come and see the changes for yourselves.”

The second-place finish was hard for Toronto’s supporters to swallow—especially as it was the second time in recent years it has lost—even though many observers and IOC members believed that Toronto had the best presentation during the final selection days in Moscow. On a more positive note, Toronto’s unsuccessful bid movement inspired creative building plans for the city and sparked rare co-operation between the three levels of government. The city may throw its hat in the ring for the 2012 Olympic bid.

The last few Summer Olympic Games have generally been financial and athletic successes, but some see the process of intense international one-upmanship as antithetical to the Olympic goals. Others see the costs of the bid or the Games themselves as wrong in terms of social priorities. More skeptical or realistic observers suggest that the granting of the Games by the IOC—one of the most powerful non-elected bodies of private citizens in the world—has a lot more to do with global politics and economics than with sport. As David Shribman of *The Boston Globe* commented, “There’s no difficulty selling things in Canada. There certainly is difficulty piercing that [enormous] market in China, and I think this is a great opening for companies that want to do that.”

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➤ *A Forgone Conclusion?*

When Beijing was announced as the successful bid city for the 2008 Summer Games by International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch, cheering and fireworks erupted in China's capital city. Simultaneously, live television images showed disappointment on the faces of those in Toronto and Paris. More detached observers rationalized that for all practical purposes, Beijing had been assured this win since 1993, when it lost the 2000 Olympics to Sydney. Indeed, even as enthusiasm built in Toronto in the months leading up to the July 13, 2001, announcement, many media sources were predicting this outcome. However, while in hindsight it may seem that Beijing was "a lock," it was not necessarily inevitable. There were still many factors that might have turned the odds against China's capital city.

Assumptions and Presumptions

1. Working in small groups, make a point-form list of key facts you know about China, its government, its society, its record on human rights, and the city of Beijing. For each item you list, suggest how you think Canada and Toronto compare.
2. Then, discuss what qualities and standards you believe a city should possess to meet the criteria required to become an Olympic host city. List your items in order of priority, from most important to least important.

Realities

Now, as you watch this *News in Review* report, record the issues and facts that clearly became important during the Olympic bid process. Compare these items to those you generated prior to viewing. How are they similar? How do they differ? What factual information did you add to your background knowledge of Beijing and China? What criteria that you identified do you think were deemed important by the IOC? Which were not?

Analysis

Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman was heavily criticized for comments he made at a news conference as he prepared to depart for Kenya to promote the Olympic bid. He said to reporters, "What the hell do I want to go to a place like Mombassa for? Snakes just scare the hell out of me. I'm sort of scared about going there, but the wife is really nervous. I just see myself in a pot of boiling water with all these natives dancing around me." After an immediate and negative public reaction, nationally and internationally, Lastman then apologized for what he called "off-the-cuff humour." He apologized repeatedly for days afterward. At the final bid presentation in Moscow, IOC members repeatedly probed the Toronto bid team about Lastman's comments. Interestingly enough, not one question was put to China about its human rights record.

Most observers do not believe his statement affected the outcome of the vote. Examine the statement and suggest why the words of a major political figure in Canada caused considerable international embarrassment for Canada. Consider carefully and explain why many people found his statement racist.

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The Successful Bidder

The selection process for the host city of the Olympics is not unlike an auction in which bidders make offers based on the resources they have but also on the financial and non-financial value they place on the prize. But being the successful bidder to be the host Olympic city has many disadvantages as well as advantages. The Games are very costly, require an enormous organizational infrastructure to be built, and can enhance the city's image or leave it with post-Olympic costs for many years.

Beijing pulled out all stops in its efforts to win the Olympics. When the IOC technical team visited the city in the winter of 2001, 800 000 workers had spray-painted the grass green, planted blooming flowers, and cleaned the streets. In a similar fashion, all of the bid cities spruced up their public spaces. While Toronto and Paris were considered to have solid bids, Beijing had what were considered several unique strengths, including:

- An opinion poll showed that 94.9 per cent of the Chinese public favoured Beijing's hosting the Games. By comparison, Toronto and Paris had roughly two-thirds of their populations supporting their bids.
- Conscious of its pollution problem and how this affected its image—as well as being potentially a problem for athletes and spectators—Beijing promised an environmentally friendly Games. It promises to recycle a third of all garbage, use more wind-generated power, and switch many homes and factories from coal to natural gas. It plans to use water-conserving toilets in the athletes' village, use solar powered street lamps, and geothermally heated showers.
- Beijing promised to mobilize 600 000 volunteers for the Games. Sydney used 47 000.
- In terms of sport itself, China is a significant international player. It placed third in the medals at the Sydney Olympics.
- China announced plans for state expenditures of \$20-billion U.S. for environmental programs and construction of facilities and an infrastructure to support the Games. Government literature boasts that this is “one of the greatest building projects undertaken since construction of the Great Wall.”
- Corporate America and big business in general wanted Beijing. One executive from a major sponsor said, “It's a no-brainer: China is a much bigger, faster-growing market than France or Canada.” General Motors, for example, donated \$12-million to help finance Beijing's bid process.
- Taxi drivers and subway workers have started taking a course called “Learning English to Help Beijing's Bid.”
- Even Guo Xiuru, a shopkeeper who stands to be evicted without compensation to make way for Games facilities, was supportive. “You can't judge a thing by how it affects just you. If Beijing gets the Olympics, the whole country will be proud.
- The enormous population in Asia in general warranted the Games being in China. Some see the choice of Beijing also as making amends for past corruption in the IOC.

Follow-up Discussion

If you were an IOC member how might these factors influence your decision? How might you see them as long-term advantages or disadvantages? Whose interests would you have in mind when considering these factors?

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Playing Host to the World

Despite the considerable costs of mounting a large-scale event such as the Olympics, there is no shortage of cities wanting to host such events. Calgary hosted the 1988 Winter Olympics, and Montreal, the 1976 Summer Games. Montreal will also host the 2005 world swimming championships. Edmonton was the site in the summer of 2001 for the World Track and Field Championship, and Vancouver hopes to capture the 2010 Winter Olympics. Although Toronto lost the 2008 Olympics to Beijing, it will host the Roman Catholic Church's World Youth Day in July 2002, an event expected to draw up to a million visitors to see the Pope. It has also clinched the staging of Wrestlemania XVIII next year, a much sought-after event. Many major cities around the world play host to hundreds of sporting or cultural events every year. From the point of view of the fans, such events may seem deceptively simple—if everything goes well.

Logistical and Conceptual Thinking

- 1. In small groups, identify events, large or small, staged in your community each year. List reasons why these events were held. On a second list, identify the benefits and costs (financial and otherwise) of holding such events in your community. Do the benefits outweigh the costs? Share your findings with other groups.
- 2. Supporters of events like the Olympics believe that holding them contributes to the prestige, social cohesiveness, and economic prosperity of the host city. They believe it gives the citizens of the city, province, and nation a sense of being part of something significant, something “world class.” It serves notice that a city has international appeal and deserves to be noticed. These events can build upon one another, drawing other festivals and sporting events into the area. This in turn draws industry, conferences, and tourists to the city, increasing the city's prosperity. Many sports in the area can also be given a significant boost. For locals, it is also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see first-hand world-class athletes in their sport.

However, some groups, like the organization Bread Not Circuses, opposed the Toronto bid and were very pleased that Toronto did not win the Games. Suggest reasons why anti-poverty social activist groups would not support a city's winning the Olympics.

- 3. Another positive aspect of large-scale events such as the Olympics is that they can be a catalyst for enhancing or revitalizing a city's architecture and services. The Olympics only last two weeks, but the city can inherit stadiums, pools, and training facilities that can be used for decades. Many of these sports centres might otherwise not be constructed, given shrinking public-sector budgets. The Olympics also often leave behind an improved transportation infrastructure used to accommodate the visitors, and housing from the athletes' village. It can also motivate a city to revitalize sections of the city that might otherwise languish. In

Toronto's case, the Olympics served as an impetus to fast-track a waterfront building project worth billions of dollars. A joint commitment of \$1.5-billion was made at a photo opportunity in Toronto's harbour by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Ontario Premier Mike Harris, and Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman. The glamour and very real economic impact of the Olympics were partly responsible for smoothing over what otherwise are acrimonious relations between the three levels of government.

Discussion

1. Why do events such as the Olympics motivate citizens and politicians to improve and beautify their communities? What is the nature of the community motivation that a major international event creates?
- 2. *Civic pride* is often given as one answer. What is pride? Is it a feeling, an attitude, a state of mind? Is it socially conditioned? What is civic pride? If you consult a thesaurus, you will find as many as 20 synonyms for *pride*, ranging from "arrogance" and "vanity" to "self-esteem" and "self-respect." What is the role of pride in a nation's participating in the Olympics and especially hosting the Olympics? In your opinion, when is pride a positive and constructive response? Can it also be a negative attribute?
3. What are the overall advantages to the world's community of staging large international events such as the Olympics?

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The Politics of The Games

The term *politics* is one of those words used widely, and often loosely. If you look carefully at the definition you will find that, among other meanings, politics can suggest “methods or manoeuvres for gaining or keeping power, often suggesting scheming or dishonesty” and “the complex of relationships between people, especially as they involve authority or power.” With this in mind, think about how politics can be involved in the host city selection process.

Weeks before the IOC vote, Chinese officials appeared nervous about being just a runner-up, as happened when Beijing lost the 2000 Olympics to Sydney by only two votes. China complained that it lost that bid because of hostile Western biases. China’s ambassador to the U.S., Yang Jiechi, stated in June 2001, “If we lose, we lose. If we win, we will be very happy. But if people politicize [the vote], I think it will be most unfair.”

Of course, politics exists at all stages of the bid process. Most observers admit readily that Beijing would not have had a chance at the Olympics if international politics had not played a role. The IOC claims that the Olympics are a truly international affair, so the host sites are selected not only for their facilities and amenities, but also for their geographic location. Although there is no formal policy regarding where the Olympics will be held, certain “rules” are understood by IOC members and applicants. For instance, it is unlikely that a continent would host two successive Olympics. This precedent put Paris in peril, since the 2004 Summer Games will be in Athens.

Similarly, Vancouver’s hopes of securing the 2010 Winter Games would have been ruined by a successful Toronto bid. Many in that city therefore were very happy that Toronto did not win the 2008 Games.

As well, there is the assumption among many that close runners-up in the current selection process are the most likely to win the next bid. Salt Lake City won the 2002 Winter Games after losing in 1998 to Nagano. Athens won after losing to Atlanta in 1996. Barcelona also lost once before receiving the 1992 Games. Beijing lost the 2000 Olympics, which it and many IOC members considered rightfully Beijing’s. Beijing also hired Olympic officials from Sydney to help them secure the current bid. The Toronto bid, which was described by many observers, as “near perfect” finished a distant second to a city that had considerable challenges to overcome in order to get the facilities ready for 2008.

The internal politics of the IOC has also had considerable effects on the bid process. Critics suggest that cities with superior bids have lost out numerous times over the past two decades because of corruption and favouritism within the IOC. In the past, some IOC members received substantial gifts from potential cities, which, according to critics, in effect “purchased” key votes. The 1992 Games went to president Juan Antonio Samaranch’s home city of Barcelona, despite what was seen by many as a superior bid by Falun, Sweden. And for the Sydney Olympics, Sydney’s bid chief offered \$70 000 (U.S.) in sports funding to two IOC members’ countries. Sydney subsequently won by two votes. Even though steps have now been taken to halt the corruption, elements of backroom dealing still permeate the bid process.

It was well known and widely reported that Samaranch's preference was for Beijing to receive the Olympics. Kim-Un Yong, an IOC member from South Korea, told CBC Radio in May that "Toronto has the best bid technically. . . . On the other hand, IOC members made political considerations and I don't know how this will play, for or against."

Most important this time around, however, were the politics of history, economics, and national pride. China is perceived by outsiders and its own people as a once-great empire that went into decline during the European colonial period, and is ready to re-emerge as a world power. With a population of over one billion people, it is a sleeping giant that can no longer be ignored. It represents an enormous and growing marketplace that countries like the U.S. want to exploit. China emphasized this, on and off the record, throughout their bid process. Hinting that China was now in a position to make global economic demands, Ambassador Yang said, "The United States has hosted three times and is trying to get the 2012 Olympics. China has suffered a lot in modern times and is now making great progress. And now it wants to host the Olympics, and I think people understand those feelings." Media reports suggested that had Chinese officials in effect warned the U.S. not to attempt to block the Beijing bid, an economic and political backlash to the U.S.'s opposition would be a consequence. U.S. President George W. Bush's administration subsequently took a neutral stance, disappointing some human rights groups and U.S. politicians. However, having just emerged from a crisis over an incident involving a Chinese jet fighter and a U.S. surveillance plane (see "U.S.-China: The Risks of Spying," *News in Review*, May 2001), Bush did not want to create another. Likewise, U.S. businesses do not want to be shut out of such a large market. Increased trade with China could also encourage the democratic movement there and thus have a positive effect on global political stability—not to mention enhancing the U.S.'s global dominance.

The Chinese Communist Party also hopes to benefit. China has changed significantly from the years when Mao Zedong ruled with an iron fist yet maintained the loyalty of millions of Chinese citizens. Today's Communist Party seems to be tolerated by the people (as opposed to being accepted without question), and there are sporadic calls for more changes. The government has been nervous about its citizens ever since the 1989 demonstration in Tiananmen Square, which ended with a massacre. In 1999, when the Chinese celebrated its 50th year since the Communist Revolution, the government declared downtown Beijing off-limits to anyone without an invitation. It feared that the crowd would turn against the leaders. The government was therefore pleased by the genuine outpouring of joy and support when the announcement was made that Beijing had been chosen. Author Wang Xiaodong pointed out after the bid was announced, "Chinese people might dislike their government, but when they consider China's place in the world, their interests are the same."

Follow-up Discussion

Why are the Olympics a political as well as a sporting event?

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Carrot or Stick?

Of all the issues surrounding Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympics, China's record on human rights is the most contentious. Among other things, China has been severely criticized for the following:

- According to Amnesty International, China executes more prisoners per year than the rest of the world combined. In the three months prior to July, China executed over 1700, many in sports stadiums full of spectators.
- In 1989, China crushed a pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, killing more than 500 people and imprisoning tens of thousands. Amnesty International contends that hundreds from that event remain in labour camps. China dropped its plans to stage Olympic volleyball in the square, after protests were made.
- China occupies Tibet, which it invaded in 1950. Many Tibetans, including its religious leader the Dalai Lama now live in exile.
- Over the past two years, the government has moved to suppress the religious/philosophical movement Falun Dong, imprisoning thousands. Some Falun Dong followers protested by committing suicide in Tiananmen Square.
- Thirty Chinese-Americans have been imprisoned without trial over the past year despite protests from the U.S. government.
- The domestic and foreign media are still tightly controlled. Foreign correspondents have been beaten by police for photographing arrests.

Motivation

While bristling at much of the international criticism of its human rights record, the Chinese government itself acknowledges that there is room for improvement. Wang Wei, the secretary-general of the bid committee noted: "The human rights conditions in China have been improving in the last 15 years. We are confident that, with the Games coming to China, not only are they going to promote the economy, but also enhance all the social sectors, including education, medical care, and human rights."

Much debate has occurred over how to help the Chinese people, in particular by putting pressure on their government to allow greater democratization. Some critics believe that China should be ostracized as South Africa was during its period of apartheid, when the black and coloured majority was systemically discriminated against. They feel that the economic and social boycotts helped overturn that system. U.S. Democratic congressman Tom Lantos, for example, supports this approach. He failed in his bid to have a resolution passed in the House of Representatives opposing China's bid. Lantos stated his position at a press conference in June: "China's abominable human rights record violates the spirit of the Games and should disqualify Beijing from consideration. The Chinese people deserve the Games. China's repressive regime, however, does not." Lantos compared this bid to the 1936 Berlin

Olympics, where the Nazi government used the Games for propaganda purposes. He said, “History shows that Olympic hosts gain immeasurably in international esteem. Hitler basked in the international limelight the Games afforded him.”

In a similar vein, several other international voices spoke out against the Beijing bid, including the European parliament, former political prisoners, and human rights groups. The Dalai Lama’s Tibetan government-in-exile added its criticism of the Beijing victory. In a press release it stated, “We deeply regret that Beijing is awarded the 2008 Olympic Games. This will put the stamp of international approval on Beijing’s human rights and will encourage China to escalate its repression.”

There were those who were hopeful, however, that hosting the Olympics might nudge China toward more moderate behaviour both internally and in foreign affairs, avoiding especially the kind of boycott witnessed at the Moscow Olympics in 1980. Some observers suggest that in an attempt to present a better world image it will likely refrain from violent crackdowns on dissent, and not flex its military muscles on Taiwan or neighbouring nations. One early example of moderation was the trial of Li Shaomin, a U.S. academic who was found guilty by a Beijing court, in a one-day trial, of spying for Taiwan. In a sentence handed down the day after the IOC decision, Shaomin was ordered expelled from the country rather than being given a lengthy prison sentence.

While China has maintained tight control over its people and institutions, the nation has introduced significant economic reforms. Its other major goal is to gain admittance to the World Trade Organization, which is expected to encourage even greater reforms. China will not wish to jeopardize being accepted into the WTO; it wants to be viewed and accepted as a modern nation. In this regard, the Olympics will create significant links between China and the West for at least the next seven years.

Supporters of the Beijing bid, including recently retired IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch, point to the 1988 Seoul Olympics as proof that the Olympics can bring changes. With all the world watching, the authoritarian South Korean president, Chun Doo-hwan, gave way before widespread protests, freed political prisoners, and introduced reforms including free elections. Samaranch stated: “The Olympic Games were the turning point for the country.”

Discussion

1. In your opinion, will granting the Olympic Games to China improve its human rights situation?
2. Was the IOC decision primarily an economic decision? If yes, is this a justifiable reason for granting China the Games?

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➤ *A Checkered Olympic Past*

In just over a century of existence, the modern Olympic Games have faced controversy and disruption numerous times. During the two world wars, they were cancelled outright. On many other occasions, the Olympics were held despite controversies, but individual nations found themselves in the difficult position of having to choose whether or not to attend.

1936 Berlin: The Nazis were in power, race laws were enacted, and the systemic discrimination against Jews, Communists, trade unions, and many others occurred. The Games were held and used as a showpiece for the Third Reich.

1940 Tokyo: Because Japan invaded China in 1937 the Games were cancelled.

1968 Mexico City: This was the first developing nation to be a host city. Ten days before the Games, the army killed over 260 student protesters.

1972 Munich: Security arrangements become a higher priority as a result of the murder of nine Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists at these Games.

1976 Montreal: When New Zealand, which had broken the sporting ban against apartheid South Africa, was permitted to participate, 26 African nations boycotted the Montreal Games.

1980 Moscow: When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, 61 countries, including Canada and the U.S., boycotted the Moscow Games.

1984 Los Angeles: In retaliation for the 1980 boycott, most Soviet Bloc countries did not attend the Los Angeles Games.

1988 Seoul: Seventeen months before the city was selected in 1981, 200 pro-democracy demonstrators were massacred in Kwangju. Just months before the Games began, the government bowed to pressure for reforms, and free elections were held. The Games were deemed a success, and many observers claimed that democracy took root in South Korea as a result.

1996 Atlanta: The Games were marred by a bomb that killed a woman and led to the death of a Turkish cameraman.

Activity

One of the defining concepts of the ancient Olympics was that hostilities would be suspended during the festival, allowing all athletes to participate. In modern times, there are those who feel that nations engaged in violent or oppressive actions should not be rewarded with acceptance at international events like the Olympics. Others believe that political and military issues should be separate from sport and that boycotts only exacerbate the problems. In small groups, formulate a position on the issue of Olympic boycotts. Are they an acceptable and at times necessary means of effecting political change? Or do they only hurt the athletes?

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Hidden Costs

To help convince a local population of the benefits of staging the Olympics, the benefits are loudly publicized, but the costs are downplayed. For example, The Toronto Bid committee projected a \$79-million surplus from revenues generated from selling the television rights during the Games (a host broadcaster must buy the broadcast rights from the IOC for very substantial sums), tourists, and sponsorships. However, the Sydney Olympics ended up costing Australians \$1.5-billion CDN even though a surplus of \$35-million CDN was projected. The problem is that all revenues are included in the estimates, but cost overruns, interest charges on loans, and inflation are largely ignored.

According to a January 2001 report in *The Toronto Star*, the television broadcasting rights money that the IOC will receive has been frozen at \$1.25-billion CDN and won't increase with inflation. This package deal with broadcasters around the world for the period 1998 to 2008 was negotiated by Dick Pound, and it represents 40 per cent of the total revenues. This means that while costs escalate, revenues do not necessarily keep up. As well, while a host city receives \$1-billion from the IOC to defray the costs, this money is not transferred until shortly before the year the Games are staged. The host city or country must therefore arrange most of the money up front. This usually occurs in the form of loans, but it means that considerable interest will accrue in the seven years running up to the Olympics.

Other expenditures are also not apparent in the short run, but can have long-term effects. For example, as part of its efforts to win the Olympics, Toronto announced that it would build a World Youth Centre near the waterfront that would be affiliated with the United Nations. Even as it was announced in July 2001, there was speculation that it would cost \$250-million more than budgeted. This projected overrun and the millions of dollars in operating costs during and for the years after the Olympics were not included in the bid proposals. There are many such projects that would need to be operated and maintained long after the Olympics have left a city.

Discussion

Is it important that cost overruns are not generally included in budget projections for the Olympics? In other words, do the Olympics need to be profitable or at least break even? Do you believe that the citizens of a potential host city should accept that they may have to pay for the privilege of staging such a prestigious event?

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► *The First Race*

Winning an Olympic bid is one thing; actually staging the Games is another. Every host city must scramble to meet the deadline. Poor scheduling, labour slowdowns, or shortages of materials can hamper construction. Other issues are more problematic in some locations than others. For example, construction in Athens for the 2004 Olympics must be undertaken in such a way that ancient Greek relics are not destroyed. But, in terms of being ready, some host cities are less ready than others because an existing infrastructure that can complement the needs of the Games may not exist. Beijing is starting from scratch more than most previous host cities in order to meet the 2008 deadline. Consider the following challenges that China must meet for 2008. What are the implications and ramifications of these problems?

1. **Pollution:** Beijing is one of the most polluted cities in the world; respiratory ailments are common. Beijing has vowed that its air quality will be equal to that of the other bid cities by 2008. This will require a large-scale shift from coal to gas, moving many factories downwind of the city, and even shutting down Beijing's industries during the Games.
2. **Transportation:** Beijing's transportation network is already straining. By 2008 it will need to have constructed five new subway lines, 228 kilometres of new roads, and a magnetic-levitation train to the Great Wall.
3. **Sports facilities:** Beijing has only 40 per cent of the required venues already in place. By comparison, Toronto had 75 percent of the facilities already in place. Many of the sporting sites in Beijing are farmers' fields or industrial sites. Twenty of 37 Olympic venues must be built from scratch.
4. **Accommodations:** Since it is a tightly controlled society, China has had few tourists compared with other major countries. Beijing needs to double its present hotel accommodations to 130 000 rooms to accommodate the expected visitors.
5. **Migrants:** Beijing has over three million rural migrants that will have to be temporarily relocated during the Games. In the past this could be done by the government in an arbitrary and totalitarian fashion. With the world watching, however, the government will need to find a solution that is humane and logistically viable.
6. **Toilets:** Roughly one million of Beijing's residents must collect their household human waste and transport it to communal privies. China's toilets in general are not what Western tourists are used to. Beijing has already undertaken its "Toilet Revolution," a plan to build for Olympic visitors 64 public toilet facilities at a cost of up to \$60 000 U.S. each.

Discussion

The city of Athens is dangerously close to not meeting its 2004 construction deadlines. Some critics have suggested restaging the Games in Sydney as a back-up. Regarding concerns that Beijing will be similarly pressured, China claims that its massive economy and large population will enable it to overcome its own challenges in time. Should the Games be restricted to cities with proven financial resources and infrastructures? On the other hand, should the disadvantaged economic status of a city or a country be a reason for granting it the Games?

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Discussion, Research, and Essay Questions

- 1. The 1976 Olympic Games were held in Montreal. While the athletic events themselves were considered a great success, the staging of the Games was mired in scandal. Montreal and the province of Quebec are still paying for the cost overruns and poorly constructed projects. This was in the days before enormous revenue from television rights was a factor. Research the Montreal Olympics and assess the merits of that city having held the Games. Were they a disaster as some critics described them, or should their success be evaluated using different criteria?
- 2. Of all the human rights issues concerning China, Westerners seem most concerned about the executions that are held in sports stadiums in front of crowds. Research China's tough approach to political and criminal activities. Write a report analyzing Chinese policies. Try to determine why Chinese punishments are so extreme by Western standards, and whether or not they are judiciously applied.
- 3. While the Chinese government tightly controls every group's activities, the Falun Dong have drawn considerable attention for the treatment their members have received. Falun Dong is a spiritual/religious group that blossomed in China into a movement with millions of followers. Research this social phenomenon and write a report outlining why the Chinese government feels these people are a threat to national security.
- 4. Although not nearly as severe as the pollution in many large Asian cities, Toronto has problems of its own. In the summer of 2001 in particular, there were many days of smog alerts in Toronto and Southern Ontario. Warnings were issued when it was considered unsafe to exercise outdoors or even to be outside, especially for those with respiratory ailments. Research the air quality of Southern Ontario or other regions of Canada, using Environment Canada's air quality Web site at www.ec.gc.ca. Why are climatic and environmental conditions factors that athletes must take into consideration when training and competing?
- 5. A parallel vote took place at the IOC meeting in Moscow. IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch retired, and the members voted for a replacement. While there were several serious contenders, Canada's Dick Pound was considered one of the frontrunners. However, Pound finished third with 22 votes, behind Kim Un-Yong of Korea, who had 23, and Jacques Rogge of Belgium, who had 59 votes. The margin of the win was embarrassing to Pound, who, when asked by a reporter if Samaranch helped influence the outcome, replied: "There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever." Some observers maintained that Pound was being punished for his part in the investigation of IOC kickbacks and bribes surrounding the Salt Lake City bid for the 2002 Winter Games. Dick Pound has indicated that his future with the IOC is uncertain. Research the IOC, its mandate, and its activities. Does the IOC possess too much power? Begin with the April 1999 *News in Review* story "Olympic Corruption: Cleaning Up the IOC."