

# [It important it was for him to make](https://assignbuster.com/it-important-it-was-for-him-to-make/)

Itis no suspect that the United States counts with the highest performingathletes in the world who have dominated the world of sports in countlessoccasions. Nevertheless, America’s sporting success has come due to variouspolitical reforms and socio-economic transformations proposed by past leaders. As covered by our class reading, “ The Soft American” written by former U. S. President John F. Kennedy highlighted the initial symptoms of America’sdeterioration of moral, mental and physical health becoming apparent during theU.

S.  Recruiting Selective Servicesduring the Korean War. With regards to Dr. Hans Kraus and Dr. Sonja Weber theywere able to note the difference between American youth falling far behindEuropean physical health tests. The results of the findings spread across mediasystems, making the United States susceptible to losing the war in Korea, andhence jeopardizing America’s exceptionalist attitude. In consequence, PresidentEisenhower implemented a Council on Youth Fitness which kick started thecommercial promotion of physical wellbeing through academic institutions. However, no significant improvement had been reported in the U.

S. compared withJapan, Britain and the Soviet Union. The1960’s era was a time of colossal technological developments such as thepersonal ownership of televisions in households, not only working as a tool forleisure but also a powerful political device. Although, television was farbehind the popularity of print journalism, in terms of the range of audiences. Hence, with the support of the President Kennedy a series of four-fitness program stepswere nationally aired in television to redirect national interest towardsphysical culture. With the intention of inducing a leadership identity, as wellas improving the health and vigor of all Americans. Demonstrated by one of themost iconic quotes Kennedy ever said, “ We do not want our children to become ageneration of spectators.

” (Kennedy, 1960) shows how important it was for him to make fellow American familiescommit to their personal physical well being. However, he made a distinctseparation from the Soviet Union’s authoritarian regime by saying, “ We do notlive in a regiment society where men are forced to live their lives in theinterest of the state”, followed by reminding the freedom of which the UnitedStates lives by. Nevertheless, he made clear that if that physical culture wasnot encouraged in some families then they must strengthen their intellectualperformance and mental skills of which the US so heavily depended on. Onthe other hand, the Soviet Union also established programs to encouragephysical culture and interest towards sport.

Referred as Ready for Labour and Defence of the USSR, abbreviated as GTO wasintended to tackle national drug use epidemics, alcoholism and poor hygiene exposureas infectious diseases were extremely prevalent in early 20thCentury USSR. Although, as the name indicates its objective was to strengthenthe bodies of Soviet citizens aged ten to sixty, in order to count with astronger workforce and enhance the individual’s health to combat fatigue ina warfare situation.  Among other reasons another leading reason wasfor nation building aims, as states as the Soviet Union is home to over 160different ethnic groups and indigenous people. Composed by a series of severalphysical aptitude tests to obtain the GTO silver, gold or badge of honordepending on their performance was an efficient incitement for reaching ahigher level of Soviet nationalistic pride. Similarly to Mao Zedong’s China, the Soviet Union emphasized much of their government spending on enhancingtheir country’s physical culture whereas education, characterized as mental culture was left behind. In orderto prevent the people to learn from other regimes around the world andunderstand that theirs is repressive as well as totalitarian hence, start arevolution against its leaders.

Throughoutthe Cold War, the Olympic games were chiefly seen as a political arena, offering a symbolicalternate channel through which nations had the opportunity to demonstratetheir strength and international rivalry. More specifically, with reference tothe 1964 Summer Olympics held in Tokyo, Japan coincided with the mass spread oftelecommunicating media, such as televisions airing athletic events withoutneeding to send tapes overseas. As the revolutionary installation of the firstgeostationary communication satellite called Syncom 3 enabled the games bebroadcasted internationally. Moreover, tensions between the East and West wereheavily amplified by the mass media to gain more viewers, however it was foundthat Soviet athletes were far more serious than any other Olympic team. Scholarsclaim that their “ machine-like” and emotionless behavior was intended toepitomize their political system. What was argued to be asubtle idea that the Games were a chance to show political superiority over theSoviets maintained extremely prevalent years after the end of the 1964 Games.

So with an outmatched Western bias the media preferred to expose Americansuperiority by emphasizing acts of sportsmanship, but most importantlyheadlining the medal count. Without regard to the athletes it was essential toframe this footage to the public principally because America needed to see theSoviets be defeated. Tensions rose to such a high level that the United States’media attempted to destabilize the Soviets by accusing them of inadequatesportsmanship conduct and that their presence in the Olympics would pose a badexample for the future athletes, as the USSR was fixated in winning andnationalism. Additionally, theOlympics was plainly seen as the shadow of the troubling East-Western relationsto such level that even when the Soviet Union boycotted the 1984 Los AngelesSummer Olympics it only sparked even more journalistic headlines, such as therelease of Time magazine “ Olympicturmoil, Why the Soviets said Nyet”.

Hence enabling Soviet nationalistpropaganda gain international attention and being featured in foreignnewspapers, portrayed as a negative system due to America’s overarchingdominance in media. This dominance was evidently played in the West’s favor andused this opportunity to frame U. S. athletes as well as American principles, ina pitting context against other nations, but specially antagonizing the SovietUnion.

The Cold War being suchan era that was characterized by the highlighted dichotomy of “ Us verses them”, which conglomerates America’s general approach to the Olympics throughliterature. Thus, encompassing the synergy between the glorification ofAmerican athleticism with little regard to smaller countries’ sportingcapabilities. In retrospect, if we look back to how countries react to their athlete’sperformance it is certain that in regards to the portrayal of the athletes theywere identified as national heroes for a limited period of time as what reallymatters in the end is the medal count. Only a week before theclosing ceremony of the 1964 Japan Summer Olympics, Nikita Khrushchev wasousted from his position as First Secretary of the Communist Party of theSoviet Union. As a consequence to his poorly executed reforms and little regardto other political parties and governmental institutions.

Succeeded by LeonidBrezhnev among other officials the Soviet Union was on its way to revolutionizetheir regime and rejuvenate collective leadership, clearly this adjustment workedin favor of the United States and Western ideologies as it defied withKhrushchev’s autocracy and opened new trading deals with international markets. Followed by the shift of leaders the eight-year Soviet economic reform startingin 1965 targeted three measures; the reunification of Soviet economy by meansof implementing new central ministries, recalculating the price of goods andservices, and lastly a decentralizing renovation of the enterprise incentive system. Through the medium of using and spreading capitalist socio-economic schematics, hence ameliorating foreign relations. Nevertheless, the blurred fashion bywhich the Soviet government administration worked resulted with a rather largerange of disparities between the benefited and the hindered, thus triggeringtheir ongoing oligarchy. Moreover, the successof these measures foreshadowed the success of the Soviet Union in sportingperformance.

The gradual reform was on its way to escalate the nation’s GrossDomestic Product per capita and increment its wealth distribution equality, also referred as GINI coefficient. In order to boost the country’s availabilityto facilities of which athletes can make use of, hence maintain and sponsor governmentsubsidized sport institutions as Dynamo Sport Clubs per say. On a further note, it has been considered that the era for Soviet economic reformation supposed a valuableopportunity to commence an era of fruitful relations with the United States. With the prior disentanglement of oligarch-type administration of the SovietUnion, it created a long-term development that enabled forthcoming leaders likeMikhail Gorbachev implement his dual program such as “ perestroika” and” glasnost”, referring to restructuring with openness, regarding internationalrelations and internal affairs.

Resulting in the dismissalof several communist governments from power across Eastern Europe and bringingan eventual closure to the Cold War in 1991. Gorbachev’s internalreorganization aligned with U. S. President Ronald Reagan’s interests of whichincluded the demilitarization of nuclear weapons, that led to eventual successfulnegotiations between the East and West. Nevertheless, the inherent communisttraces were inevitable in Gorbachev’s policy-making course, yet found a commonground with Reagan regarding the buildup of U.

S. forces. Along theparticipation from both sides for five summits resulting with the agreement ofthe Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, involving a large-scale declineof domestic weapon stockpiles. Nevertheless, Gorbachev’s shift towards acapitalist regime took a toll on the nation’s economy that culminated atremendous financial collapse, and dissolving fifteen individual republics. Followedby his resignation in 1991.

Subsequently to Japan’snuclear destruction it was crucial to show the world its renewed economic potentialand socio-economic rebirth. Demonstrated by their outstanding sportingperformance totaling with 16 gold medals, and ranking third in the overallmedal count, following the Soviet Union with 30 gold medals and the UnitedStates with 36. Moreover, both in men and women categories, American athletesdominated Athletics of which composed a staggering 40% of the total U. S. medalcount. More specifically 100-meter gold medalist and Dallas Cowboys widereceiver Bob Hayes was greatly cherished, not only setting a world record butalso setting an emblematic figure for the African American community in theUnited States, during a fundamental era for the development African-Americancivil rights.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union also counted with a strongteam specifically High jump winner Velriy Brumel and Hammer throw winnerRomuald Klim, amongst the Press sisters. So at this point we can see the Westversus the East in its purest form, demonstrating the ongoing rivalry betweenboth nations without setting a clear champion as athletes from both sides hadan extremely high performance rate. Although, the issue in which the UnitedState stood out was in the availability and the number of Olympic athletes itcounted with.

Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union did not subsidize asmany sports institutions throughout the country as the U. S did. that led to thelimited number of athletes, hence being a possible factor for its sporting inferioritywith respect of that of the United States’. In spite of thestratospheric levels of nationalistic rivalry and being at the height of theCold War the Japan games are still considered to be the most apolitical gamesever celebrated. Even more so these symbolic games set an example to atransformative sense of nationalism, by its subtle politics that helpedconservative leaders reinvent key aspects of nationalism. In addition, aspreviously mentioned, the Olympics displayed an impeccable arena for nationalreconciliation between the U. S. and Japan, as for the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, even if no voices were raised to combat Japan’s Olympics it took placeduring a decade of political turmoil and mass external pressures regarding the peakof the War in Vietnam. Commonly referred asone of the most unethical proxy wars in U. S. history, the Vietnam War wasprimarily fought between the East and West, amongst other lesser allies such asNorth Korea that of the Soviet Union. Thus, foreshadowing the conflictingideologies on the battleground as well as the arena. This controversialconflict did not ease the United States ability to negotiate with the SovietUnion as both nations were fighting the most resource-consuming war either hadever fought.

Nevertheless, the United States took a larger toll than the SovietUnion, as it had to transport an immense amount of troops to the other side ofthe Pacific Ocean whereas the Soviets possessed a demographical advantage. Which resulted to be one of the most controversial wars of the 20thCentury, as neither nation concluded with a winner, but only fueling the ColdWar. Since the Olympic gamesin Japan, U. S.- Soviet relations have changed its route towards a peaceful andmultilateral affiliation amongst other countries located in Western Europe andAsia. Resulting with the creation of powerful allies that combat along eachother for the same causes today. Exemplified by the fight for counterterrorismin Middle Eastern regions or the fight against totalitarian states like NorthKorea per say.

Nevertheless, thisunification of superpowers was carried out with the help of many Summitsregarding international affairs throughout the 1990’s. Illustrated by classmaterial, Rebecca Hammon portrays an accurate epitome symbolizing the UnitedStates relation with Russia as she played for their national team in the 2008Olympic games in Beijing and 2012 Olympic games in London. Her controversialparticipation in the opposing team demonstrated how the celebration of sportsis not intended to impose nationalistic dominance over another country, butsimply to play for the sake to play the sport in its self. Nonetheless, aspreviously mentioned it is inevitable for sports to get in the way of politics, especially in the era of the Cold War. As sports was the only method in whichboth the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in the closest act ofphysical war. On a further note, somecountries today struggle to gain the right to host Olympic games such as thecase with China and its geopolitical ideologies that still implement communisttraits inherited from the Soviet Union. Acknowledging that clashing ideologiescontribute a larger sense of emotion to sports we must understand thatsportsmanship as shown in the Japan Olympics games are as important as thepolitical prospects that are at stake as the celebration of sports are nottargeted to cause further conflict than the existing but to create constructiverelations.

Perfectly exemplified by another piece of class material in which wecovered the power of Ping-Pong to unify two countries that defy each othersideology such as the United States and China, commonly referred as ‘ Ping-pongdiplomacy’. Marking the thaw of Sino-American relations, followed by the visitof president Nixon and finding common grounds with People’s Republic of Chinaand become America’s number one trading partner today. In retrospect, withrespect to the analytics covered the journalistic depiction of both Soviet andAmerican athletes did play a leading role in the build of political tensionthrough various mediums such as press and groundbreaking technology such as thetelevision, showing their eagerness to appear as the superior nation.

Inaddition, both the East and the West demonstrated a great level of performancein athletics, epitomizing their militaristic power framing the skepticismbetween capitalism and communist power. So before opening the last section ofmy discussion I would like to highlight the United States ability to negotiatewith the Soviet Union after the Olympic games still seemed unattainable andwithout much benefit for both sides. Although, if we were to look back at the actionstaken during the Cold War from a reexamination point of view, the Olympic Gamesdid in fact do a good job to redirect international attention from the VietnamWar, on to sporting events due to the skyrocketing demand of televisionsbetween 1963 and 1964 and the growing encouragement of athletics in educationinstitutions in the United States as well as the Soviet Union. Hence, if we were toput the Cold War and the Olympic Games in a melting pot I would say that itwould be unjust to deny the reflection of political tension in sports howeverit unified countries along enhancing socio-economic developments throughopening markets to other countries. So, according to my personal belief thatmay be disputed by historians that may have a more sophisticated grasp on thefield, I would say that even the 1964 Summer Olympics hosted in Tokyo supposed awide range of nationalistic conflict and did not ease relationships between theSoviet Union and the United States in the short run, as with the presence ofthe War in Vietnam, Space Race, Berlin Wall, Cuban Missile Crisis, and theKorean War among other historical footprints foreshadowed conflicting outlooksof political regimes which only complicated the ability to reach a commonground.

Nonetheless, if we adopt a wider perspective I would certainly concurthat it did help the East and the West alleviate its’ relations on the long run.