

It important it was for
him to make



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It is no suspect that the United States counts with the highest performing athletes in the world who have dominated the world of sports in countless occasions. Nevertheless, America's sporting success has come due to various political 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's deterioration of moral, mental and physical health becoming apparent during the U.

S. Recruiting Selective Services during the Korean War. With regards to Dr. Hans Kraus and Dr. Sonja Weber they were able to note the difference between American youth falling far behind European physical health tests. The results of the findings spread across media systems, making the United States susceptible to losing the war in Korea, and hence jeopardizing America's exceptionalist attitude. In consequence, President Eisenhower implemented a Council on Youth Fitness which kick started the commercial promotion of physical wellbeing through academic institutions. However, no significant improvement had been reported in the U.

S. compared with Japan, Britain and the Soviet Union. The 1960's era was a time of colossal technological developments such as the personal ownership of televisions in households, not only working as a tool for leisure but also a powerful political device. Although, television was far behind 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 steps were nationally aired in television to redirect national interest towards physical culture. With the intention of inducing a leadership identity, as well as

improving the health and vigor of all Americans. Demonstrated by one of the most iconic quotes Kennedy ever said, " We do not want our children to become a generation of spectators.

" (Kennedy, 1960) shows how important it was for him to make fellow American families commit to their personal physical well being. However, he made a distinct separation from the Soviet Union's authoritarian regime by saying, " We do not live in a regiment society where men are forced to live their lives in the interest of the state", followed by reminding the freedom of which the United States lives by. Nevertheless, he made clear that if that physical culture was not encouraged in some families then they must strengthen their intellectual performance and mental skills of which the US so heavily depended on. On the other hand, the Soviet Union also established programs to encourage physical culture and interest towards sport.

Referred as Ready for Labour and Defence of the USSR, abbreviated as GTO was intended to tackle national drug use epidemics, alcoholism and poor hygiene exposure as infectious diseases were extremely prevalent in early 20th Century USSR. Although, as the name indicates its objective was to strengthen the bodies of Soviet citizens aged ten to sixty, in order to count with a stronger workforce and enhance the individual's health to combat fatigue in a warfare situation. Among other reasons another leading reason was for nation building aims, as states as the Soviet Union is home to over 160 different ethnic groups and indigenous people. Composed by a series of several physical aptitude tests to obtain the GTO silver, gold or badge of honor depending on their performance was an efficient incitement for reaching a higher level of Soviet nationalistic pride. Similarly to Mao Zedong's

China, the Soviet Union emphasized much of their government spending on enhancing their country's physical culture whereas education, characterized as mental culture was left behind. In order to prevent the people to learn from other regimes around the world and understand that theirs is repressive as well as totalitarian hence, start a revolution against its leaders.

Throughout the Cold War, the Olympic games were chiefly seen as a political arena, offering a symbolical alternate channel through which nations had the opportunity to demonstrate their strength and international rivalry. More specifically, with reference to the 1964 Summer Olympics held in Tokyo, Japan coincided with the mass spread of telecommunicating media, such as televisions airing athletic events without needing to send tapes overseas. As the revolutionary installation of the first geostationary communication satellite called Syncom 3 enabled the games be broadcasted internationally. Moreover, tensions between the East and West were heavily amplified by the mass media to gain more viewers, however it was found that Soviet athletes were far more serious than any other Olympic team. Scholars claim that their "machine-like" and emotionless behavior was intended to epitomize their political system. What was argued to be a subtle idea that the Games were a chance to show political superiority over the Soviets maintained extremely prevalent years after the end of the 1964 Games.

So with an outmatched Western bias the media preferred to expose American superiority by emphasizing acts of sportsmanship, but most importantly headlining the medal count. Without regard to the athletes it was essential to frame this footage to the public principally because America needed to see the Soviets be defeated. Tensions rose to such a high level

that the United States' media attempted to destabilize the Soviets by accusing them of inadequate sportsmanship conduct and that their presence in the Olympics would pose a bad example for the future athletes, as the USSR was fixated in winning and nationalism. Additionally, the Olympics was plainly seen as the shadow of the troubling East-Western relations to such level that even when the Soviet Union boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics it only sparked even more journalistic headlines, such as the release of Time magazine "Olympic turmoil, Why the Soviets said Nyet".

Hence enabling Soviet nationalist propaganda gain international attention and being featured in foreign newspapers, portrayed as a negative system due to America's overarching dominance in media. This dominance was evidently played in the West's favor and used this opportunity to frame U. S. athletes as well as American principles, in a pitting context against other nations, but specially antagonizing the Soviet Union.

The Cold War being such an era that was characterized by the highlighted dichotomy of "Us versus them", which conglomerates America's general approach to the Olympics through literature. Thus, encompassing the synergy between the glorification of American athleticism with little regard to smaller countries' sporting capabilities. In retrospect, if we look back to how countries react to their athlete's performance it is certain that in regards to the portrayal of the athletes they were identified as national heroes for a limited period of time as what really matters in the end is the medal count. Only a week before the closing ceremony of the 1964 Japan Summer Olympics, Nikita Khrushchev was ousted from his position as First Secretary

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of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. As a consequence to his poorly executed reforms and little regard to other political parties and governmental institutions.

Succeeded by Leonid Brezhnev among other officials the Soviet Union was on its way to revolutionize their regime and rejuvenate collective leadership, clearly this adjustment worked in favor of the United States and Western ideologies as it defied with Khrushchev's autocracy and opened new trading deals with international markets. Followed by the shift of leaders the eight-year Soviet economic reform starting in 1965 targeted three measures; the reunification of Soviet economy by means of implementing new central ministries, recalculating the price of goods and services, 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 by which the Soviet government administration worked resulted with a rather large range of disparities between the benefited and the hindered, thus triggering their ongoing oligarchy. Moreover, the success of these measures foreshadowed the success of the Soviet Union in sporting performance.

The gradual reform was on its way to escalate the nation's Gross Domestic Product per capita and increment its wealth distribution equality, also referred as GINI coefficient. In order to boost the country's availability to facilities of which athletes can make use of, hence maintain and sponsor government subsidized 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 valuable opportunity to commence an era of fruitful

relations with the United States. With the prior disentanglement of oligarch-type administration of the Soviet Union, it created a long-term development that enabled forthcoming leaders like Mikhail Gorbachev implement his dual program such as “ perestroika” and” glasnost”, referring to restructuring with openness, regarding international relations and internal affairs.

Resulting in the dismissal of several communist governments from power across Eastern Europe and bringing an eventual closure to the Cold War in 1991. Gorbachev’s internal reorganization aligned with U. S. President Ronald Reagan’s interests of which included the demilitarization of nuclear weapons, that led to eventual successful negotiations between the East and West. Nevertheless, the inherent communist traces were inevitable in Gorbachev’s policy-making course, yet found a common ground with Reagan regarding the buildup of U.

S. forces. Along the participation from both sides for five summits resulting with the agreement of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, involving a large-scale decline of domestic weapon stockpiles. Nevertheless, Gorbachev’s shift towards a capitalist regime took a toll on the nation’s economy that culminated at a tremendous financial collapse, and dissolving fifteen individual republics. Followed by his resignation in 1991.

Subsequently to Japan’s nuclear destruction it was crucial to show the world its renewed economic potential and socio-economic rebirth. Demonstrated by their outstanding sporting performance totaling with 16 gold medals, and ranking third in the overall medal count, following the Soviet Union with 30 gold medals and the United States with 36. Moreover, both in men and

women categories, American athletes dominated Athletics of which composed a staggering 40% of the total U. S. medal count. More specifically 100-meter gold medalist and Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Bob Hayes was greatly cherished, not only setting a world record but also setting an emblematic figure for the African American community in the United States, during a fundamental era for the development African-American civil rights.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union also counted with a strong team specifically High jump winner Velriy Brumel and Hammer throw winner Romuald Klim, amongst the Press sisters. So at this point we can see the West versus the East in its purest form, demonstrating the ongoing rivalry between both nations without setting a clear champion as athletes from both sides had an extremely high performance rate. Although, the issue in which the United State stood out was in the availability and the number of Olympic athletes it counted with.

Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union did not subsidize as many sports institutions throughout the country as the U. S did. that led to the limited number of athletes, hence being a possible factor for its sporting inferiority with respect of that of the United States'. In spite of the stratospheric levels of nationalistic rivalry and being at the height of the Cold War the Japan games are still considered to be the most apolitical games ever celebrated. Even more so these symbolic games set an example to a transformative sense of nationalism, by its subtle politics that helped conservative leaders reinvent key aspects of nationalism. In addition, as previously mentioned, the Olympics displayed an impeccable arena for national reconciliation 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 place during a decade of political turmoil and mass external pressures regarding the peak of the War in Vietnam. Commonly referred to as one of the most unethical proxy wars in U. S. history, the Vietnam War was primarily fought between the East and West, amongst other lesser allies such as North Korea and the Soviet Union. Thus, foreshadowing the conflicting ideologies on the battleground as well as the arena. This controversial conflict did not ease the United States ability to negotiate with the Soviet Union as both nations were fighting the most resource-consuming war either had ever fought.

Nevertheless, the United States took a larger toll than the Soviet Union, as it had to transport an immense amount of troops to the other side of the Pacific Ocean whereas the Soviets possessed a demographical advantage. Which resulted to be one of the most controversial wars of the 20th Century, as neither nation concluded with a winner, but only fueling the Cold War. Since the Olympic games in Japan, U. S.- Soviet relations have changed its route towards a peaceful and multilateral affiliation amongst other countries located in Western Europe and Asia. Resulting with the creation of powerful allies that combat along each other for the same causes today. Exemplified by the fight for counterterrorism in Middle Eastern regions or the fight against totalitarian states like North Korea per say.

Nevertheless, this unification of superpowers was carried out with the help of many Summits regarding international affairs throughout the 1990's.

Illustrated by class material, Rebecca Hammon portrays an accurate epitome symbolizing the United States relation with Russia as she played for their

national team in the 2008 Olympic games in Beijing and 2012 Olympic games in London. Her controversial participation in the opposing team demonstrated how the celebration of sports is not intended to impose nationalistic dominance over another country, but simply to play for the sake to play the sport in its self. Nonetheless, as previously 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 which both the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in the closest act of physical war. On a further note, some countries today struggle to gain the right to host Olympic games such as the case with China and its geopolitical ideologies that still implement communist traits inherited from the Soviet Union. Acknowledging that clashing ideologies contribute a larger sense of emotion to sports we must understand that sportsmanship as shown in the Japan Olympics games are as important as the political prospects that are at stake as the celebration of sports are not targeted to cause further conflict than the existing but to create constructive relations.

Perfectly exemplified by another piece of class material in which we covered the power of Ping-Pong to unify two countries that defy each other's ideology such as the United States and China, commonly referred as 'Ping-pong diplomacy'. Marking the thaw of Sino-American relations, followed by the visit of president Nixon and finding common grounds with People's Republic of China and become America's number one trading partner today. In retrospect, with respect to the analytics covered the journalistic depiction of both Soviet and American athletes did play a leading role in the build of political tension through various mediums such as press and groundbreaking

technology such as the television, showing their eagerness to appear as the superior nation.

In addition, both the East and the West demonstrated a great level of performance in athletics, epitomizing their militaristic power framing the skepticism between capitalism and communist power. So before opening the last section of my discussion I would like to highlight the United States ability to negotiate with the Soviet Union after the Olympic games still seemed unattainable and without much benefit for both sides. Although, if we were to look back at the actions taken during the Cold War from a reexamination point of view, the Olympic Games did in fact do a good job to redirect international attention from the Vietnam War, on to sporting events due to the skyrocketing demand of televisions between 1963 and 1964 and the growing encouragement of athletics in education institutions in the United States as well as the Soviet Union. Hence, if we were to put the Cold War and the Olympic Games in a melting pot I would say that it would be unjust to deny the reflection of political tension in sports however it unified countries along enhancing socio-economic developments through opening markets to other countries. So, according to my personal belief that may be disputed by historians that may have a more sophisticated grasp on the field, I would say that even the 1964 Summer Olympics hosted in Tokyo supposed a wide range of nationalistic conflict and did not ease relationships between the Soviet Union and the United States in the short run, as with the presence of the War in Vietnam, Space Race, Berlin Wall, Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Korean 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.