

OPINION

OTHER VIEWS

Games will be a boon to trade with China

By MING WANG, M.D., Ph.D.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics will impact the world in many positive ways. To mention just a couple, I believe both Sino-U.S. trade and China's growing new industry of private health care could experience great improvement through this monumental event.

Trade: As founding president of our state's first Chinese chamber of commerce, the Tennessee Chinese Chamber of Commerce (TCCC), I and my colleagues on the TCCC board been working to promote Tennessee-China trade.

The world attention being paid to China due to the games will have a positive impact in enhancing communication and understanding between these two countries. This most likely will result in positive growth of trade and commerce between the U.S. and China.

Tennessee has been ranked No. 1 in the U.S. in the growth rate of export to China (from \$200 million a year to \$2 billion a year from 2001 to 2006, a 1,000 percent increase). This is wonderful! The more we export to China, the more positive foreign trade that we will have here in Tennessee. Hence, there will be more money available to us here in Tennessee to do what we need, such as improvement of education, infrastructure and standard of living.

Private health care: As a co-owner and international president of Shanghai Aier Eye Hospital, I have been involved in building the largest private eye hospital group in China, the Aier Eye Hospital Group. We currently hold 10 percent of China's Lasik eye-surgery market. Private health care is a rapidly growing new industry in China, and its growth is dependent on the willingness to collaborate between medical entrepreneurs of China and countries like the U.S., as well as the degree of openness by China to allow foreign investment into its health-care system.

Beijing wants stability

The priority of the Beijing government is to keep stability in the society, since it faces discontentment due to the increasing polarization of the haves and the have-nots, as well as corruption and environmental pollution. Hence, one of China's top priorities is to improve its health care so it can meet the needs of its increasingly financially well-off citizens.

Last year, China began to allow foreign investment into its health-care system to speed up its modernization. As a result of world attention to the Beijing Games, there will be more interest from countries like the U.S. in the modernization of China, including its health-care system.

Current attention on China due to the Olympics will also encourage the Chinese government to continue opening its doors to more international collaboration, joint ventures, capital infusion and influx of higher-level labor — such as management know-how — to improve China's health-care system. In this process, the new and rapidly growing private health-care sector of China, which in the past 10 years has grown from nearly zero to an impressive 10.8 percent of China's market, will be leading the charge.

Ming Wang, M.D., Ph.D., is founding president, Tennessee Chinese Chamber of Commerce; founder and chairman, Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration; co-owner and international president, Shanghai Aier Eye Hospital; clinical associate professor of ophthalmology, University of Tennessee; attending surgeon, Saint Thomas Hospital; and director, Wang Vision, www.wangvisioninstitute.com.

TODAY'S TOPIC:

Stakes run high for Beijing Games



The official bronze, gold and silver medals of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

OUR VIEW

After months of controversy, may sportsmanship prevail

Let the games begin. That's the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, which will officially get under way in Beijing today with a spectacular opening ceremony in National Stadium.

Athletes from various parts of the world, including the United States, will compete over the next 2½ weeks for gold, silver and bronze medals in such events as gymnastics, volleyball, swimming, basketball, soccer, track and field, badminton, field hockey, judo, tennis, boxing and baseball.

The fact, though, that the XXIX Olympiad is being held in China, a communist country where pro-democracy demonstrations are often and quickly suppressed, has already resulted in controversy.

Just Thursday, in a speech in Thailand, one stop on a farewell tour of Asia en route to the Olympic Games, President Bush admonished Chinese leaders over the way their nation stifles dissent. Beijing quickly responded that it was an internal matter and warned the U.S. to stop meddling in its business.

On Wednesday, the Chinese government banned American Joey Cheek, a gold-medal former speedskater, from attending the games because of his advocacy of assistance to victims of the violence in Darfur. China is an ally of the Sudanese government. U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the ban "reprehensible."

When the Olympics first originated, it was meant to be a time to lay aside political and religious differences. With that somewhat in mind, Edith McGuire, a Tennessee State University graduate who won a gold medal in the 200-meter run at the 1964 games in Tokyo, has gone to China this month, not only to see some of the Olympic events, but to sightsee.

"When China was first awarded the 2008

Olympic Games several years ago, they promised to do certain things, but they seem to be going back on some of them now," said McGuire, traveling with her husband and others with *Track & Field News*. "I've never been to China before. ... I want to see the Great Wall and all the things there that has made China what it is, both the good and the bad."

While McGuire is on her first trip to China, her legendary women's track coach at TSU, Ed Temple, knows that what McGuire finds there will be much different from the time he went in 1975 to coach the first group of American women track and field stars to compete against the Chinese there.

"Most people back then rode bicycles," Temple told *The Tennessean* this week. "Now, look at all the automobiles they have over there."

Temple also said this year's Olympic Games in China will give that country a chance to show the world that it is a super power when it comes to athletics.

"If a Chinese athlete wins a gold medal in this Olympiad, he or she will be set for life," Temple predicted. "They've come a long way since I was there in 1975. Then, it was toward the end of the (Cultural) Revolution there, but still, I don't see China being a totally open society anytime soon."

As the Olympic Games get going, all Tennesseans should remember that this state has an interest in China other than what's taking place in Olympic competition. In recent years, the state has made huge inroads when it comes to trade with China and continues to do so even today.

The Olympic Games are important, but so is freedom and trade. And that's something none of us should forget during the next 2½ weeks.

OTHER VIEWS

Beijing lifts profile with sports, politics

By RALPH BOSTON

What will be the impact of the Beijing Games is an interesting question — one that I believe cannot be viewed from just one side.

Remember that China only began to emerge as a world figure because of the "ping-pong diplomacy" embarked on by the Nixon administration. Until then, we knew only of the population. And even that fact was a guess. One thought says that the Chinese really don't have a firm knowledge of the population. So, to do the topic justice, if it can be done, you need to try and see it from at least two points: sports and politics.

We need only to remember how the Soviet Union burst onto the athletic stage when it became part of the Olympic movement. China is even better prepared, as it has a larger population from which to select its athletes. And much of the world's wealth is concentrated in the country, growing daily by leaps and bounds (leaps and bounds — great statement from an old long jumper).

That wealth is allowing China to host the 2008 Olympic Games!

Surprise: The reigning Olympic 110-meter hurdles champion and world record holder is from China. Heretofore, this event has been dominated by the United States. The Chinese are already formidable competitors in some aquatic events and, with its vast wealth and population, China has all it needs to lead the world in the remainder of Olympic sports.

Look for China to make an exceptionally strong athletic statement and continue to grow its enormous athletic potential.

Behind the Great Wall

The growth in the athletic arena leads directly to the political arena.

Remember again how the Soviets beat on their chests and claimed superiority simply by winning a few events. I seem to recall that, before we knew what hit us, the Soviets were at our doorstep. I have no clue that the Chinese are interested in Cuba or some other Western Hemisphere nation, but stranger things have happened.

The world will see more of whatever is behind the Great Wall and will surely be impressed. Investors will look for and find opportunities for investments, tourism will increase, and the Chinese economy will continue to grow. The country will continue to sail along on top of the world, growing its economy by leaps and bounds, yet remaining quite guarded in its attempts to remain in control.

The result seems to be business as usual, yet allowing the world to see its other face.

As the old saying goes, "The more things change, the more they remain the same." Interesting, I think. And it all began with a game of table tennis!

Ralph Boston, a 1962 Tennessee State University graduate, won a gold medal in the long jump at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, a silver in the long jump at the 1964 games in Tokyo and a bronze in the long jump in the 1968 games in Mexico City.

UPCOMING TOPICS

We'd like to publish your views, 200 words or fewer. Send to letters@tennessean.com.

HOUSING: Can large, affordable-housing neighborhoods succeed, such as Habitat for Humanity's proposed Park Preserve?

FAIR: What do you think of proposals for the future of the Tennessee State Fairgrounds?

ENERGY: What do you think of current proposals for a comprehensive U.S. energy policy?

TAX: Should Tennessee end its sales-tax "holidays"?

WALK: How can Nashville become more pedestrian- and bike-friendly?

VA: Is there a solution to long waits for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans' care?

HEAT: What steps should be taken for public safety during a heat wave?

RIVERS: What can be done to preserve the Duck and other state rivers from the effects of growth?

READER VIEWS | WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT OF THE BEIJING GAMES?

We are sending approximately 600 competitors to the games plus an unknown number of coaches, trainers, managers and U.S. Olympic Committee officials. This number will probably be dwarfed by the media attending.

Almost all will have one thing in common: that is, how they earn a living.

Three cheers for the archers, weightlifters and all the others in between the A- to Z-named events who participate for their love of their game with no desire, or hope, of earning a living from it.

Bill Russell said when quizzed on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* about the NBA that "It is a child's game grown men play for money."

In the case of the Olympics, it is a venue where corporations make money.

**Lester Marcum
Madison 37115**

The Olympics in China should be a real eye-opener, providing that one is

aware of what has already occurred.

The Chinese government has already removed the homeless and dissidents, banned millions of cars from the road, shut down many businesses, taught thousands to speak English, and even has plans to prevent rain from falling!

I am sure many will view these Olympic Games as being evident that the Chinese are better at running their country, controlling traffic and pollution, and with no protesters in sight, better at providing the needs of their citizens.

It will not be as it appears.
**Ed Forbes
Hendersonville 37075**

While the Olympics should be a peaceful competition between countries around the world where we all take pride in our athletes and their accomplishments, will that be the case of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing?

Beijing is a country of billions of people, pollution is some of the worst in the world, and many people will boycott them as they don't want to sup-

port any boost to the Chinese economy. Are they safe to attend? Is the food safe to eat? Is the air safe to breathe? Is the threat of terrorism too high?

How will the Chinese government protect the tourists? Can the athletes compete in hot, humid, smoggy, dirty air? We won't know these answers until the Olympics begin. While I won't boycott the Olympics, I certainly wouldn't attend with free tickets, free airfare and free accommodations. Everyone should want the Olympics to be a success regardless of where they compete. We should all pray for the safety and peace of those who choose to attend and for those who compete in the Games.

I guess, as in most cases, we should hope for the best and expect the worst, whatever that may be.
**Susie Van Etten
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There will be a variety of impacts of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The impact in the USA will be different from the impact in other parts of the world.

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