



UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE

FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND  
QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS  
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

MASTER'S THESIS

“OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION, ORGANIZATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC EVENTS”

**“Sports Diplomacy and Its Effects on States Relations:  
Four Case Studies.”**

Author:

PANAGIOTIS TRIKALIOTIS

Supervisor: Prof. DIONISIOS GAGKAS

Sparta, August, 2011



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## **Introduction**

Although, initially Pierre Baron de Coubertin, and latter his mental descendant Avery Brundage, had declared that the Olympic Games are free of politics, this has not been the case in practice. Politics are almost an integral piece of mega sports events in general with an interactive relation, where politics affect sports and vice versa. The use of sports in trying to accomplish diplomatic objectives has been a common practice for many nations in the past. Sports diplomacy can have both positive and negative perspectives in the field of international and bilateral relations between states, which makes it so attractive to the international relations scholars. The Cold War sport competitions between USA and USSR, the Ping Pong diplomacy between USA and China and the case of South Africa with its apartheid policy are the most known and interesting situations where sports diplomacy is extensively used.

In 1835, the French political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville had foreseen the fact that there would be a day on which USA and Russia would play a very important role in the international system.<sup>1</sup> He was confirmed 110 years later, after the end of World War II. However, the way the two superpowers that emerged after the war reached the top of the international political scene could not be more different. Despite their significant ideological differences, both USA and USSR, were aiming to maximize their power and political influence in the world, and finally, rule over the world. But since they both created the atomic bomb,<sup>2</sup> they knew that going to a war would probably mean their economic and military destruction, at least partially. As a consequence in the Cold War era, we observe the paradox of the maximum struggle for power between the USA and USSR and their efforts to avoid the extensive immediate conflict between them which would probably lead to a nuclear disaster. The Americans' main goal was the containment of the Soviets' ideological expansion, which meant the forbiddance of the Soviets to control, directly or indirectly, the main geopolitical centers of the globe. In other words, the Americans had to play the offshore balancer role which the British took over during the Second World War.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, J.P. Mayer, transl. George Lawrence, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, p. 412-413

<sup>2</sup> The USA invented the first atomic bomb in 1945 and the USSR made its own 4 years later in 1949.

<sup>3</sup> For the offshore balancer role, the main geopolitical centers of the earth and the consequences of their capture see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W. W. Norton, New York 2001,

Furthermore, USA and Russia had never tried to continue their politics with other means<sup>4</sup> and had never actually settled their differences in the battlefield. The latter fact did not decrease their struggle for power which continued to exist and was tested in any other non strategic way open to them, one of which had been the sports arena. The linkage between physical culture and national defense was used to demonstrate the relative prowess of the “New Soviet Man” and the “All-American Boy”. Since the societies of both superpowers are future oriented, the use of sports on both sides of the iron curtain reflects the desire of each superpower to demonstrate superior vitality. Since USA was not a member of the regional European sports federations, it could not use regional games to establish contacts with the USSR and additionally the world championships, at that time, did not attract the necessary public attention for the full utilization of sport as a tool in public diplomacy. The only remaining point of contact between USA and the Soviet Union in sports, in order to gain more prestige, was the Olympic Games.

In the case of Ping Pong diplomacy there was also a prestige situation, where both hostile countries used to see their relationship as a zero-sum game.<sup>5</sup> That meant that in the rapprochement procedure they had to find a way so that they would not be seen as the losers or the retreaters. Each country for its own reasons wanted the rapprochement to succeed and they were hoping to increase their country’s security through this future alliance. Additionally the aggressive policies of USSR and the fear they caused to both US and China actually accelerated the improvement of the two countries relations. But they were both concerned how to conduct a successful communication channel, without be seen as the supplicant, which was finally conducted through the Pakistanis. In 1971 the American national table tennis team visited Beijing in order to participate in a table tennis tournament, and this is exactly how it all started. The interaction between the Chinese and the American delegations, combined with the positive adoption and coverage of the events by the media contributed significantly to the diminishment of the prejudgments in both countries.

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<sup>4</sup> See Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Wordsworth Editions Limited, London 1997, p.22

<sup>5</sup> A zero-sum game means that one country’s wins are the other country’s loses.

The case of South Africa was much more complex. The apartheid policy they practiced in their territory caused many reactions, both internal and external. The discrimination policies against black people, in daily life in general and in sports in particular, violated almost every acceptable behavior in sports and made the world to intervene. While the IOC President was in favor of the participation of the athletes of South Africa, the IOC body voted to exclude the Republic because it failed to comply fully and substantially with the Olympic rules and principles. Despite the progress the Republic of South Africa did, the fear of a massive boycott of more than 50 nations withdraw the IOC's invitation for 1968 Mexico Olympic Games. Moreover in the next years the boycotters expanded their initial goal of countering apartheid in sport to countering apartheid policy in general, since it continued to abuse all human rights of black people.

## **Sports Diplomacy**

By its nature sports is a highly sensitive, coherent, ambivalent and conditional means of communication. Sports have frequently been used by states in their foreign policies because although sports diplomacy runs the risk of unpredictable results, it is generally concerned to be a low-risk, low-cost but high profile tool of foreign policy.



Sports diplomacy has been defined as “the whole range of international contacts and competitions that have implications for the overall relations between nations concerned”.<sup>6</sup> Through sports diplomacy state and non-state actors can express their views and objections on the actions, policies and practices of others.

The use of athletes as “diplomats in tracksuits” by many nations shows the significance of sport to a nation wishing to make a foreign policy statement through the sporting arena. Despite the obvious relationship between sports and diplomacy and the many examples of sports’ utility in supporting the achievement of a diplomatic objective, many scholars have questioned the effectiveness of sports diplomacy in general.

Sports diplomacy has been used to improve the bilateral relations between hostile nations. In this aspect sports diplomacy is used as a first contact point in the rapprochement process between the two countries, after that rapprochement frequently has been expressed before. Sports contacts and competitions can contribute effectively to the elimination of ideological conflicts, nationalism and propaganda, while on the other hand can increase mutual understanding and conversational space. Characteristic examples of such sports diplomacy usage had been the Ping Pong diplomacy between USA and China and the Wrestling diplomacy between USA and Iran.

However a much more frequent utility of sports diplomacy has been the negative sports diplomacy, which is used to express disapproval and disagreement with specific, both internal and foreign, state policies. Such examples had been the Olympic boycotts of 1976, 1980 and 1984, as well the exclusion of Israel from the Mediterranean and Asian Games because of Arab countries objections.

Many scholars have been concerned about the motives and effectiveness of the negative sports diplomacy. Great and major powers, which have a variety of economic, military and diplomatic options to choose from, choose sport whenever

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<sup>6</sup> Marc Keech, *The Ties the Bind: South Africa and Sports Diplomacy 1958-1963*, *The Sports Historian*, Volume 21,1, May 2001, p.71 in

<http://www.la84foundation.org/SportsLibrary/SportsHistorian/2001/sh211f.pdf>

they want to make a highly public protest without escalating in tension and affecting importantly the bilateral relations between the two countries. On the other hand for poor and smaller countries negative sports diplomacy is usually the only choice they could follow in order to express their disapproval, rather than being a well calculated decision. As far as the effectiveness is concerned there is a huge range of opinions whether the negative sports diplomacy and sport sanctions finally work or not. However one thing can be ensured, that the personal life and efforts of the athletes, especially in occasions of sports boycotts, are destroyed. And the sports boycotts are usually used as an expression of indignations whenever one country is unable to change another country's policies.

What is more, the IOC itself, although it is a NGO, acts as a diplomat when it comes to the Olympic Movement's, NOC's or Olympic athletes' interests. This has been the case both in Barcelona 1992 Summer Olympic Games and Lillehammer 1994 Winter Olympic Games, where the IOC with the assistance of the UN achieved to ensure the participation of the athletes of Yugoslavia. Additionally an important achievement on behalf of the IOC was the revival of the notion of the "Olympic Truce", which since 1992 is permanently on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly in the year prior to the Olympic Games.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Cold War's Political Scene**

The Cold War (1945–1991) was the continuing state of political conflict, military tension, and economic competition existing after World War II,<sup>7</sup> primarily among the USSR and its satellite states, and the powers of the Western world, including the United States. Although the primary participants' military forces never officially clashed directly, they expressed the conflict through military coalitions, strategic conventional force deployments, nuclear arms race, espionage, proxy wars, propaganda, and technological competition, such as the Space Race.

Despite being allies against the Axis powers and having the most powerful forces, the USSR and US disagreed about the configuration of the post-war world while occupying most of Europe. The Soviet Union created the Eastern Bloc including the eastern occupied European countries, annexing some as Soviet Socialist Republics and maintaining others as satellite states, some of which were later consolidated as the Warsaw Pact (1955–1991).<sup>8</sup> The US and some western European countries established containment of communism as a defensive policy, establishing alliances such as the NATO to that end.

Several such countries also coordinated the Marshall Plan, especially in West Germany, which the USSR opposed. Elsewhere, in Latin America and Southeast Asia, the USSR fostered communist revolutions opposed by several western countries and their regional allies; some attempted to roll back with mixed results. Some countries aligned with NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and others formed the Non-Aligned Movement.

By 1947, United States president Harry S. Truman's advisers urged him to take immediate steps to counter the Soviet Union's influence, citing Stalin's efforts (amid post-war confusion and collapse) to undermine the US by encouraging rivalries among capitalists that could precipitate another war. The American government's response to

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<sup>7</sup> Micahel Cox, From the Cold War to the war on terror in John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens (Editors), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford University Press, Fourth Edition, Oxford 2008 , p.72-76

<sup>8</sup> William J. Duiker and Jackson J. Spielvogel, *World History: Comprehensive Volume*, West Press, 1994, p.1029-1036

this announcement was the adoption of containment, the goal of which was to stop the spread of communism. Truman delivered a speech that called for the allocation of four hundred million dollars to intervene in the war and unveiled the Truman Doctrine, which framed the conflict as a contest between free people and totalitarian regimes.<sup>9</sup> Enunciation of the Truman Doctrine marked the beginning of a US defense and foreign policy focused on containment and deterrence that weakened during and after the Vietnam War, but ultimately held steady.<sup>10</sup> In June 1947, in accordance with the Truman Doctrine, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan, a pledge of economic assistance for all European countries willing to participate. The plan's aim was to rebuild the democratic and economic systems of Europe and counter perceived threats to Europe's balance of power, such as communist parties seizing control through revolutions or elections.<sup>11</sup> The plan also stated that European prosperity was contingent upon German economic recovery. One month later, Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947, creating a unified Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Council. These would become the main bureaucracies for US policy in the Cold War.

The Cold War featured periods of relative calm and international high tension<sup>12</sup> – the Berlin Blockade (1948–1949), the Korean War (1950–1953), the Berlin Crisis of 1961, the Vietnam War (1959–1975), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), and the Able Archer 83 NATO exercises in November 1983. Both sides sought détente to relieve political tensions and deter direct military attack, which would likely guarantee their mutual assured destruction with nuclear weapons.

In the 1980s, the United States increased diplomatic, military, and economic pressures against the USSR, which had already suffered severe economic stagnation. Thereafter, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the liberalizing reforms of

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<sup>9</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, Penguin Press, London 2005, p.38

<sup>10</sup> Robert Higgs, *Depression, War, and Cold War: Studies in Political Economy*, Oxford University Press, New York 2006

<sup>11</sup> Zachary Karabell, Chambers, John Whiteclaus, ed., *Cold War (1945–91): External Course*, Oxford University Press, New York 1999, p.916

<sup>12</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, Penguin Press, London 2005, p.33

perestroika in 1987 and glasnost (openness) in 1985. The Cold War ended after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, leaving the United States as the dominant military power, and Russia possessing most of the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal. The Cold War and its events have had a significant impact on the world today, and it is commonly referred to in popular culture.

## **Cold War's Sport Participation**

Sporting relations in the Cold War have been extensive because both sides have had a clear understanding of their political function. The first sport which was used in bilateral relations between the two superpowers was chess, when in 1946 American chess players went to Moscow. The superiority of the Soviet players was obvious, since chess had not been such a popular sport in the USA compared with the

Soviet Union. The International Chess Federation was the first organ of international sport the USSR joined.

Although the first socialist representatives appeared in the Olympic Games in London 1948, the Soviet Union's athletes did not join the Olympic Games before 1952 in Helsinki. Those Games were used as "a demonstration of depths of the Cold War, with the United States accusing Stalin that he created athletic factories in which he trained unfeeling mechanical athletes and USSR accusing the US that they were a vast military camp which was trying to take over in international sport as they had in international politics".<sup>13</sup> In the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki both countries tried to show their superiority over the other rival, with the Soviets performing very well for a newly joint state in the Olympic Movement. Both countries declared supremacy and victory over the opponent by creating and using their own scoring system, although the International Olympic Committee did not allow the existence of any scoring systems.

If the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki were a field of demonstration for both the US and USSR powers, the situation changed in the Olympics of 1956 in Melbourne, where although the continuing propaganda wanted each country's athletes to be rivals, someone could notice a suddenly and unusual friendship between the American and the Soviet athletes. This friendly behavior between the rivals was seen by some scholars as the starting point of the Peaceful Existence as the general line of the Soviet Communist Party.<sup>14</sup> But this did not mean in any way that the Cold War rivalry was finished. The 1956 unusual friendly attitude between the US and Soviet athletes probably reflected the cooperation between the superpowers over the Suez crisis at that time, where the common interest of both countries was to secure the British, French and Israeli withdrawal.

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<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Lowe-David B. Kanin&Andrew Strenk, *Sport and International Relations*, Stipes Publishing Company, Illinois 1978, p.252

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Lowe-David B. Kanin&Andrew Strenk, *Sport and International Relations*, Stipes Publishing Company, Illinois 1978, p.253 The Peaceful Existence was a soviet policy which aimed to structure the fight against capitalism in a period when the danger of a nuclear destruction was really possible. And sport was the perfect tool at that time because the Soviets athletes could defeat the American ones without the fear of military reprisal.

But since the Olympic Games were held only once every four years, they could not serve as a permanent basis for sport relations. For that reason the bilateral sport exchanges between the two sides were often. Having started with the chess, they moved on to a more popular sport on both sides, and that was track and field. And since the American government seemed reluctant to cooperate, the Soviets focused on private American sport organizations, starting with the Amateur Athletic Union.<sup>15</sup> In late 1957, the A.A.U. agreed with some Soviet officials on some financial and athletic arrangements for sport exchanges and one year later they signed the first of a series of agreements related with cultural, technical and educational exchanges. After the American government reduced its demands for a fingerprinting process of all the Soviet athletes, the relations between the two countries in several sports could commence. The same year took place the first USA–USSR track and field meeting, setting the starting point of a regular and systematic form of Soviet-American public diplomacy, despite the international political situations in Lebanon and the second Berlin crisis. Although sport could not provide a solution for these problems, it could arise many hopes from the superpowers cooperation. It is worth to mention in the general US-USSR sports contact, the “friendly face”<sup>16</sup> of the Soviet team in the Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley in California. But in 1966 the first cancellation of a track and field meeting by the Soviets happened, where they claimed the reason of the Vietnam War.<sup>17</sup> The use of these track and field meetings was to reduce the stereotyped fear of the other side as it was presented to both publics by the respective national presses.

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<sup>15</sup> The Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) controlled most American participation in international sport and it was the largest American amateur athletic organization. Moreover it was the one set up more closely to the European pattern and it had the most experience with the international sport federations that the Soviets were becoming a part of.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Lowe-David B. Kanin & Andrew Strenk, *Sport and International Relations*, Stipes Publishing Company, Illinois 1978, p.255

<sup>17</sup> The Americans claimed that the Soviet team was weak and as a consequence afraid to lose. It is questionable that the Soviets were afraid to lose, since in 1965 they had accomplished their most impressive triumph winning both the male and female track and field contest. Moreover in the occasion they would lose, it did not matter so much if it was not witnessed in Soviet soil, and the meeting was scheduled to take place in Los Angeles. On the contrary it seems more logical the view that the Soviets wanted to demonstrate that they were annoyed with the American air war on Northern Vietnam without at the same time risking to create political tensions.

The problems the Soviet Union had with some other socialist-communist countries such as Czechoslovakia and China played an important role in the consideration of improving the relations with the United States, since the Soviets were considering the US as being in the same position with them in the international system after the disaster of the Vietnam War. Although the track and field meetings continued to be organized, their importance was gradually decreasing. A new outstanding and groundbreaking policy adopted by the Americans was the Ping Pong Diplomacy,<sup>18</sup> where there was an exchange of ping pong players between USA and China, in order to approach each other as future allies and to continue the containment of the Soviet Union's ideology from the American side.

Each one of the two rival countries had its own favorite sport, in which they often, if not always, used to win. This is the case in basketball which was Americans' pride. The Americans had invented basketball and they were pretty good at playing it too. They could not think of losing in a basketball game, especially from a communist country. They counted on basketball to show the strength of their capitalist system. But in 1972, in the Munich Olympic Games, it was the Soviets turn to celebrate their first gold medal in basketball. In a tremendous and exciting final match for the first place, the teams of USA and USSR gave their best to succeed and make their nation proud once more. Although the Americans thought that this was "their game",<sup>19</sup> they finally lost by the Soviet team and got the second place.<sup>20</sup> But the Americans managed to take their revenge in the same year when their national representative in chess Bobby Fischer bitted the Soviet champion Boris Spassky. Although these two incidents were the exception in the rule, they were accounted by each side as significant achievements which symbolized their better economic, political and ideological system.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Alfred E. Senn, *Power Politics and the Olympic Games: A history of the power brokers, events and controversies that shaped the games*, Human Kinetics, Illinois 1999, p. 164

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Lowe-David B. Kanin&Andrew Strenk, *Sport and International Relations*, Stipes Publishing Company, Illinois 1978, p.257

<sup>20</sup> Actually the first lost in a basketball game happened in 1959 in a bilateral exchange tournament between the two countries, but losing an Olympic medal was something much more serious and it contained at the same time a significant amount of prestige for the Soviets

<sup>21</sup> That was Capitalism for the USA and Communism – Socialism for the USSR.



In general, although the superpowers adopted a friendly approach through each other in sport, when it came to the field of play, such like a battlefield, the representatives of the two rival countries were not friendly at all. The competition between the athletes was very strong and passionate, because each one of them represented a whole nation and he or she had to win in order to show his or her supremacy over the opponent. This athletic supremacy was then used in a political aspect to show the supremacy of one political system over the other. In 1980, the use of the Olympic Games for political reasons between USA and USSR reaches its top.

## **The Olympic Boycotts: Moscow and Los Angeles**

In December 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan claiming that the official government of that country asked them for aid.<sup>22</sup> President Jimmy Carter, at the same time, accused the Soviets that they violated the principles of the UN Charter by committing aggressive actions. However, the US government did not want to get involved militarily in the area, which meant that they had to find a different way to express their opposition to the Soviets' acts. Then, on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1980, the US President threatened the USSR with an Olympic boycott,<sup>23</sup> if they did not withdraw their troops from Afghanistan till the 20<sup>th</sup> February. The deadline passed without any positive answer or action by the Soviets and President Carter decided to implement his

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<sup>22</sup> The true reasons for that invasion had been the Soviet concern for the stability of their Muslim population, the interest of the oil springs of the Persian Gulf and the expansion of the Soviet ideology after they managed to reach power in that country

<sup>23</sup> Christopher R.Hill, *Olympic Politics*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1992, p. 129

threat. Although the Olympic boycott had only economic and political sanctions taken by the USA, it was considered, at that time, as an adequate tool to resist Soviets' aggression. The Soviets had spent huge amounts of money for the preparation of the Games, which were important for them since they intended to use them for propaganda reasons, and an Olympic boycott was aiming not only to deter the present or future aggression, but also to minimize the effects of the Soviet propaganda.

Nevertheless, the United States demanded that the Games had to be moved in another place, but they faced the opposition of the International Olympic Committee, an organ which also rejected the idea of postponement or cancelation of the Games. Finally, the USOC along with other 65 National Olympic Committees decided to boycott the Games, but some of its allied Olympic Committees, such as France and Britain, allowed their individual athletes to participate in the Moscow Games, although the official government was opposed to that. There were some problems inside the United States too, with USOC wanting also to participate in the Games, but after the pressure of President Carter himself, the Congress and the public opinion,<sup>24</sup> it finally decided to abstain from the biggest athletic event.

In 1984, it was the USA's turn to host the Olympic Games. As Peter Ueberroth said "then came the time for a retaliation for the 1980 Carter's boycott".<sup>25</sup> Although there was increasing tension in the relations between USA and USSR, particularly because of the 1982 doubts of the Soviets on how adequately could the Americans organize and secure the Olympic Games according to the Olympic Charter, the Soviet walkout of the arms control negotiations in Geneva, but mostly because of the downing of the Korean airliner in 1983, the Soviets had not at that time rejected the idea of participating in the Olympics of 1984. Considering the security problems they were complaining about and the anti-Soviet demonstrations that were taking place in US, it was not hard to foresee what would be the outcome of their final decision. Although US President Ronald Reagan tried to give his personal assurance for the

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<sup>24</sup> Christopher R.Hill, *Olympic Politics*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1992, p. 129

<sup>25</sup> Peter Ueberroth, *Made in America: His Own Story*, William Morrow & Company, New York 1985, p. 268

Peter Ueberroth was the President of the Los Angeles Organizing Committee (LAOOC).

security of the Soviet delegation, the USSR officially announced its withdrawal from the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. The decision of the USSR was followed by almost all the Soviet Block with the exception of Romania, which wanted to show the world that it could act independently.<sup>26</sup> One more communist country that joined the Los Angeles Olympic Games was China continuing the good Sino-American relations.

The official reasons for this withdrawal which the Soviets claimed were the poor security measures of the Americans and the politicizing of the Olympic Movement by the USA. But the actual reasons behind this decision were political in nature. It was said that the Soviets intended to harm politically the President Ronald Reagan in a reelection year. Moreover, according to U.S. News & World Report, the Soviets desired to justify their control over other Eastern European countries by forcing them to withdraw from the 1984 Olympics too.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Christopher R.Hill, *Olympic Politics*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1992, p.181

<sup>27</sup> Martin Barry Vinokur, *More Than a Game: Sports and Politics*, Greenwood Press, Westport 1988, p.124

## Chapter 2

### **Ping Pong Diplomacy**

In 1969 the Presidency of the United States of America was taken by Richard Nixon, an experienced Republican who had served as the Vice-President of USA for two quadrenniums in a row. After following for twenty years faithfully the wilsonian idealism and the strategy of containment against communism, the foreign policy of the country was stuck in the impasse of Vietnam War. Combining this situation with the fact that the internal legitimation of this war had declined, Nixon had to find a way to disengage the US from this harmful for the American national interest situation. In his difficult mission he collaborated closely with Henry Kissinger, who had been appointed as a consultant of national security in the White House. Both of those men apprehended international politics in terms of balancing of power and Realpolitik.<sup>28</sup> But Nixon did not want to get absorbed exclusively by the problem of Vietnam in his foreign policy, as Johnson had done before him, and neglect other important matters of the international politics. The Nixon's government wanted to focus on the global balance of power and its linkage with the several international matters.<sup>29</sup> One

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<sup>28</sup> See Χαράλαμπος Παπασωτηρίου, *Αμερικανικό Πολιτικό Σύστημα και Εξωτερική Πολιτική: 1945-2002*, Β' Έκδοση, Εκδόσεις Ποιότητα, Αθήνα 2003 p.263

<sup>29</sup> See Χαράλαμπος Παπασωτηρίου, *Αμερικανικό Πολιτικό Σύστημα και Εξωτερική Πολιτική: 1945-2002*, Β' Έκδοση, Εκδόσεις Ποιότητα, Αθήνα 2003 p.263-264

important issue of foreign policy for the US at that time was the rapprochement of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The Sino-American alliance in World War II was broken after US officially supported the Nationalists' government in the Chinese Civil War. Although the Nationalists' lost the civil war, they managed to take military control of the island of Taiwan, where they established the Republic of China government. The United States of America maintained diplomatic relations with the Republic of China government and recognized it as the sole legitimate government of all China, as well the representative of the whole Chinese nation in the United Nations.<sup>30</sup> At the same time the Communists under Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China in mainland China. By the early 1950 USA had no diplomatic relations with the mainland China<sup>31</sup> and there was a ban on direct US trade with that country. But the Sino-American relations became even worst in the Korean War, when US military forces, supporting the South Koreans, fought directly against Chinese military forces, which supported the North Koreans. The division of Korea issue has affected the Sino-American relations ever since. Moreover the entry of the Chinese in the Korean War caused the full and almost obsessional support of the US to the Taiwan's government in any aggression of the People's Republic of China. The Sino-American relations were contradicted also in the Vietnam War. The US were fighting on the same side with the "weak" Southern Vietnamese Army, while China was supporting the Northern Vietnamese army<sup>32</sup> and was deeply concerned about the American military actions in Indochina.

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<sup>30</sup> The American support to the Republic of China's government was part of the general US anti-communist policies in accordance with the Strategy of Containment.

<sup>31</sup> The only diplomatic contacts between the two states were some meetings of their ambassadors in Warsaw.

<sup>32</sup> China supported the Northern Vietnamese Army only by providing it with military equipment, but they did not send them Chinese troops to support them.

## US Interest for Rapprochement

But the hostile climate started to change after both the US and Chinese governments reconsidered their interests and thus policies through each other in the late 1970s. Both states estimated that a potential alliance with the other country would benefit them much more, than continuing to be enemies. The important thing is that both leaders, Richard Nixon and Mao Zedong, understood and set their national foreign policies on the basis of national interest, abandoning the former ideologically affected policies in that sector.

In particular the US government started to reconsider its old aggressive policies against the People's Republic of China, replacing them with more friendly ones, as they estimated that a friendly, to the US, China would be more useful for the promotion of the American interests. This was exactly what President Richard Nixon was intending to express in 1967, before taking the presidency of the country, through his article in the *Foreign Affairs* magazine, where he stated the need of the development and improvement of the bilateral Sino-American relations.<sup>33</sup>

A number of new, not so important, initiatives were taken by the Nixon's government in order to show the change of the US attitude toward the PRC. Therefore in July 1969 they announced the end of the traveling restriction for American citizens who wanted to visit the People's Republic of China, they allowed the American citizens to bring back home Chinese products with maximum value of 100\$ and they

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<sup>33</sup> See Richard M. Nixon, *Asia after Vietnam*, *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 46, Art. 1, October 1967, p. 121

also allowed the sending of some American cereals in PRC.<sup>34</sup> In an interview in *Time* magazine in October 1970, Nixon declared that he viewed China as a world power and he expressed publicly his desire to visit the communist country in the near future.<sup>35</sup> In 1971 Nixon's administration issued its second "Foreign Policy Report"<sup>36</sup> in which it was repeated the American willingness to improve relations with China. A very significant element in all these US policies and initiatives was that initially the US was trying to create the impression that they were exploring a move toward China, so that it would disquiet the Soviets.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover there was a strategic reason that the US wanted to come close to PRC after the USSR had moved a significant amount of its army near the Sino-Soviet borders. In the potential invasion of USSR in the Chinese territory, and in the occasion that they would manage to concur on the PRC, it would mean that they would be able to control almost the whole Asian continent and thus the global balance of power would change, something the US definitely did not want to happen. What is more if such an expansion would have happened, it would mean that the strategy of containment would have partially failed since the ideology of USSR communism would have expanded in a tremendous territorial size. As a consequence and following the saying that "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" the USA took advantage of the bad Sino-Soviet relations at that time and the danger of a war between them, and announced in public that they will support China if there would be an open war between China and the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> The important element in this US tactic was that although they wanted to approach PRC, at the same time they did not want to challenge directly USSR. What they were hoping to achieve was to create a triangular

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<sup>34</sup> See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York 1994, p.723

<sup>35</sup> *I Did Not Want the Hot Words of TV and Other Presidential Reflections in a Crisis Week*, Time Magazine, Vol. 96, No. 14, October 1970, p.12.

<sup>36</sup> The Second "Foreign Policy Report" was the first U.S. government document which referred to the PRC by its official name. See Yafeng Xia, *China's Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972*, Journal of Cold War Studies, Volume 8, Issue 4, p.15

<sup>37</sup> See Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, Little Brown and Company, Boston 1979, p.169

<sup>38</sup> See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York 1994, p.723 This announcement was compatible with the basic principles of the Nixon's Doctrine. For the Principles of the Nixon's Doctrine See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York 1994, p.708

relation between the three states, in which the US would have a central and leading role and both of the communist countries would apprehend each other as more dangerous than the United States of America, and thus they would try to improve their relations with the US.

The combination of the facts that the American nuclear advantage had disappeared, its economic superiority was doubted by the rise of other new economic powers, like Japan and Europe, and the Vietnam War harmed the American national interest, set the new facts under which the United States of America had to define their new place and role in the international system. Taking into account these new facts it was the first time after World War II that the USA was obliged to act in a leadership role instead of a dominance role. The survival of mankind depended on the relations of the two superpowers, but the world's peace depended on the fact whether USA could separate its own responsibilities in which the US role was supplementary, from those that the US role was obligatory and if it could follow the second role without losing huge amounts of its military forces.<sup>39</sup> In his effort to define the rules of the US military engagement in other countries, President Nixon announced in July 1969 the basic principles of these engagements mostly known as the Nixon's Doctrine. The new element in the Nixon's Doctrine was that all decisions of foreign policy were made on the basis of the national interest and that all states were treated according to their behavior and actions in the international system. That meant that USA could negotiate and agree with any country, even USSR and PRC, if there was a common interest, although their different ideologies and internal political systems.

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<sup>39</sup> See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York 1994, p.707



## Chinese Reactions

On the other hand the Chinese government was also well-disposed in improving the bilateral relations with the imperialist country of US. The first Chinese expression of its desire for rapprochement with the US was the Ministry's of Foreign Affairs Statement of 26 November 1968, which was calling for "an agreement on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence", a document addressing in Sino-American relations.<sup>40</sup> But the Americans were so preoccupied with the Vietnam War that "they could not respond to events whose origins they could little understood and whose significance took some weeks to become apparent, not to mention the fact that at that time both President Nixon and Kissinger considered the People's Republic of China as the most aggressive of the communist powers".<sup>41</sup> But the existence of a large number of Soviet military units, along the Sino-Soviet borders, deeply concerned the Chinese government, especially after the armed hostilities of 1969 between the two countries. As a consequence Mao and Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Prime Minister, started rethinking more seriously the improvement of the country's relations with the US, especially after the disaster the radical phase of the Cultural Revolution caused to China. The positive changes it brought to the political conditions of the country helped Mao and Zhou control the Chinese foreign policy. In other words the fear of war gave the Chinese leaders sufficient incentive, both strategically and psychologically, to reconsider their long-standing confrontation with the United States. The perception of a serious and immediate threat from the Soviet Union pushed Mao Zedong to break with the existing conceptual framework of Chinese policy. Furthermore Mao wanted to eliminate any chances of Soviet-American collusion.

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<sup>40</sup> See Allen S. Whiting, *Sino-American Détente*, The China Quarterly, No.82, June 1980, p. 335

<sup>41</sup> See Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, Little Brown and Company, Boston 1979 p.172

For many centuries the Middle Kingdom assured its security by using distant barbarians to fight against its near neighbors, a policy Mao adopted as well by trying to reestablish his country's relations with the USA. What is more the withdrawal of the US military forces from Vietnam had a positive effect on the Sino-American relations. His concern, like the American's, was also how to conduct such a communication channel. In a way to show the Chinese goodwill in improving relations with the United States, on December 1969 the Chinese released two Americans who had been held in China since mid-February, when their yacht had strayed into China's territorial water off Guangdong.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>See Yafeng Xia, *China's Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972*, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 4, p.11

## Communication Channels

Trying to find a communication channel, the two countries decided to resume the ambassadorial talks in Warsaw with sessions alternating between the Chinese and U.S. embassies. But because of the large-scale cross-border operation of the US troops that Nixon ordered in order to destroy the Vietnamese Communist bases inside Cambodia, the Chinese reacted by abandoning this communication channel.<sup>43</sup> As a consequence a new one had to be created. And that was through the Pakistanis.<sup>44</sup>

After US forces withdrew from Cambodia and the tensions decreased, there was a more obvious desire and encouragement from both sides for the improvement of the Sino-American relations. In an effort to express his will for improvements in the two countries' relations, Mao invited the American journalist Edgar Snow and his wife to review the annual National Day celebration parade on the wall of the Forbidden City, allowing them to sit by the chairman's side.<sup>45</sup> What is more Mao, during an interview with Snow, announced that all Americans are welcomed in China and more specifically that he would be pleased to meet President Nixon in China either as a president or as a tourist.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore he also announced that he did not expect

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<sup>43</sup> In late April 1970, when Nixon ordered U.S. troops in South Vietnam to conduct a large-scale cross-border operation to destroy Vietnamese Communist bases inside Cambodia, the Chinese halted the talks in Warsaw. See Yafeng Xia, *China's Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972*, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 4, p.13

<sup>44</sup> Despite the miracle of modern communication systems, the medieval practice of handwritten notes by a head of state acting as an intermediary between two adversaries who wish to improve relations played a very crucial role. This makes credible Nixon's subsequent defense of his support for Yahya Kfhan throughout the disastrous mishandling of East Pakistan and the resultant revolution that spawned Bangladesh. See Allen S. Whiting, *Sino-American Détente*, *The China Quarterly*, No.82, June 1980, p.337

<sup>45</sup> Sitting at the chairman's side during the National Day celebration parade was thought of being such a great honor.

<sup>46</sup> The Chinese government predicted that the Americans would learn about the Snow's interview immediately, but it was only after several months that they were informed about that incident. See Yafeng Xia, *China's Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972*,

anything to come of his invitation before 1972, which was an election year in the US, a declaration that shows Mao's magnificent understanding of political matters outside his country's political system. But this seemingly innocent declaration was not so innocent indeed. The fact that the initiative towards a Sino-American détente had come from Beijing, which feared a potential Soviet attack, made China the supplicant. However, the pressure Nixon would feel if the negotiation of the détente would occur during a presidential election year, in which the president should appear successful in his foreign policy, would not make America the supplicant, but it could provide a tactical advantage to the Chinese.<sup>47</sup>

In late April 1971 Zhou Enlai sent a message to the US government, through the Pakistani Prime Minister Yahya Kfhan, formally inviting a special envoy or even the President himself for a direct meeting. The White House replied that a formal answer would be made in the next 15 to 20 days. However Kissinger and Nixon were not willing to proceed in such an action, thus they convinced Yahya to communicate to Zhou Enlai as his own view the significance of continuing the US-China exchanges through that channel, until an official link could be securely created. This can be explained on the concerns, both Kissinger and Nixon had, that China might approach other American political figures as well.<sup>48</sup>

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Journal of Cold War Studies, Volume 8, Issue 4, p.13-14

<sup>47</sup> See Allen S. Whiting, *Sino-American Détente*, The China Quarterly, No.82, June 1980, p.338

<sup>48</sup> These concerns arose from the knowledge that the Chinese government was intending to send invitations to three prospective Democratic presidential candidates Senators Muskie, McGovern and Kennedy. The pattern of hosting opposition politicians was standard Chinese practice at that time. Finally the Nixon's government chose the continuation of the Pakistani communication channel and the Chinese government cancelled the Democratic invitations before they were sent. See Allen S. Whiting, *Sino-American Détente*, The China Quarterly, No.82, June 1980, p.339

## Ping Pong Diplomacy and Its Effects

In the conversations for direct diplomatic relations and high-level meetings between USA and China, both sides haggled over the terms, each one trying to promote its own concerns and interests.<sup>49</sup> But then happened what is known in international relations as the Ping Pong Diplomacy. The birth of Ping-Pong Diplomacy in part owes itself to the Thirty-First World Table Tennis Championship held in Nagoya, Japan from 28 March to 7 April 1971. Because of the political differences between China and Taiwan, as well the political issues between China and USA, the Chinese table tennis delegation was initially not planned to go to the world table tennis championship. After the interference of Zhou Enlai and Koji Goto, who was the president of both the Japanese Table Tennis Association and the Asian Table Tennis Association, the Chinese table tennis delegation finally traveled and participated in the world table tennis championship in Nagoya.<sup>50</sup> The interaction between the Chinese and the American players in the World Table Tennis Championship in Nagoya,<sup>51</sup> and the apparent willingness of the American players to visit China, resulted in convincing Mao Zedong to approve an invitation for the American table tennis delegation to visit China.<sup>52</sup> This visit offered a very good opportunity for both countries to open relations with each other. And what both sides understood very well was that the significance of this important event was much greater in politics than in sports. Finally in April 1971 the American ping-pong team traveled to China, where the Chinese welcomed them in

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<sup>49</sup> China was first of all interested in the withdrawal of the US forces from Taiwan, while the United States were interested in discussing global and regional security issues, that could affect the global balance of power.

<sup>50</sup> For more details on the interference of Koji Goto and Zhou Enlai see Zhaohui Hong and Yi Sun, *The Butterfly Effect and the Making of "Ping Pong Diplomacy"*, Journal of Contemporary China, 2000, p. 429-434 in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713675951>

<sup>51</sup> Although the Chinese players were not allowed to initiate a greeting or conversation when encountering American delegates, or in the case of playing against the American team, there would be no exchange of team flags, though hand-shaking was allowed, some Chinese players did not follow strictly these rules. See Zhaohui Hong and Yi Sun, *The Butterfly Effect and the Making of "Ping Pong Diplomacy"*, Journal of Contemporary China, 2000, p. 434 in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713675951>

<sup>52</sup> See Zhaohui Hong and Yi Sun, *The Butterfly Effect and the Making of "Ping Pong Diplomacy"*, Journal of Contemporary China, 2000, p. 434-440 in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713675951>

a very friendly and enthusiastic atmosphere. In April 14 there was a meeting of Zhou Enlai and the six ping-pong teams, among which were the Americans and the Chinese, in the Great Hall of the People, where the Chinese premier stated that “Your visit has opened a new chapter in the history of relations between Chinese and American people”.<sup>53</sup> After that meeting Washington announced some new measures concerning China.<sup>54</sup>

As a consequence of the official visit of the American ping pong team to China and the obvious improvements in the Sino-American relations President Nixon decided to visit the communist country. But before him it was Henry Kissinger who traveled twice to the Chinese capital in order to prepare the President’s visit. The important fact in the second of these secret trips, in October 1971, was that the date was picked up by the Chinese without any counter-proposal on behalf of the American side. And this date had been very carefully calculated by the Chinese side so that it coincided with the United Nations vote on the Chinese representation which ousted Taiwan and seated the PRC in its place. This not so accidental coincidence might have affected the result of the United Nations vote for the benefit of the PRC’s state.<sup>55</sup> Finally in less than a year and after the secret trips of Henry Kissinger to China, President Nixon became the first American president that visited the Chinese territory after World War II.

Additionally the ping pong diplomacy constituted a very useful tool in the hands of the politicians of both countries, USA and PRC, in order to prepare their own people for the change in their country’s policy towards the other side and thus make it easier for them to accept the different culture.

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<sup>53</sup> See Yafeng Xia, *China’s Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972*, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 4, p.16

<sup>54</sup> These new measures were: 1. The termination of the 22- year-old trade embargo. 2. The permission for trade in commodities nearly equivalent to those traded with the Soviet Union. 3. The end of U.S. currency controls relating to China. 4. Expedited processing of visas for any Chinese seeking to visit the United States. See Yafeng Xia, *China’s Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972*, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 4, p.16-17

<sup>55</sup> See Allen S. Whiting, *Sino-American Détente*, *The China Quarterly*, No.82, June 1980, p.340

In the case of USSR, the failure of a substantial arms control agreement between the two countries in the 1960's and 1970's, as well the belief of both Nixon and Kissinger that there could not be a successful cooperation in a specific sector when at the same time the two countries' interests were contradicted in other important sectors, created the "linkage" policy. According to the "linkage" policy there could be cooperation between the two states in one sector and by taking advantage of that cooperation, substantial progress could be made in other sectors. But the "linkage" policy was not successful from the beginning. It was only after the United States rapproched China that the USSR started reconsidering its inflexible policies because of the fear of a potential Sino-American alliance. On the other hand the Soviets had no other logical options on the table. If they continued their aggressive and inflexible policies, then the Sino-American relations would have been tightened and thus an important strategic disadvantage would have been created for the USSR. Although some scholars supported the belief that the Sino-American rapprochement would have forced the Soviet country to become even more aggressive, finally reality proved them wrong. The Soviets tried also to improve their bilateral relations with the US and as a consequence they became more cooperative and there were significant progress in the US-Soviet détente. In spring 1972 President Richard Nixon became the first American president who visited Kremlin, where the SALT I agreements were signed between the USA and USSR.<sup>56</sup> Since both of the communist countries believed that the other one was more dangerous than the United States, they both tried to create and maintain good relations with the capitalist country. That meant that the US finally accomplished their initial target, which was to create a triangular diplomacy among the world's three largest powers, USA, USSR and PRC, in which triangular relation USA played a central role.

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<sup>56</sup> SALT I: Strategic Armaments Limitation Talks I, See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York 1994, p. 748

## **Chapter 3**

### **Human Rights in South Africa**

The definition of the relationship between sports and human rights has raised numerous disagreements and conflicts among the sports and international relations scholars. The provisions of the IOC in the Olympic Charter have been questioned accountable times in the past, however these provisions provide a powerful legal framework for defining the relationship above. In the Olympic Charter two of the fundamental principles of Olympism state that “The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit” and “Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement”.<sup>57</sup> What is more, one of the main missions of the IOC is “to act against any form of discrimination affecting the Olympic Movement”.<sup>58</sup> The NOC’s are obligated as well to take action against any form of discrimination in sports and “to ensure that no one has been excluded for racial, religious or political reasons or by reason of other forms of discrimination”.<sup>59</sup>

### **Apartheid in Sport**

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<sup>57</sup> See Olympic Charter, *Fundamental Principles of Olympism*, IOC, p.11

<sup>58</sup> See Olympic Charter, *Mission and Role of the IOC*, IOC, p.14

<sup>59</sup> See Olympic Charter, *Participation in the Olympic Games: Invitations and Entries*, IOC, p. 83



It all started because of the apartheid policy which was used in South Africa.<sup>60</sup> After the coalition of the National and the Afrikaner Parties won the elections in 1948, it was the first time in the Union's history that the cabinet was constituted only by Afrikaners.<sup>61</sup> After winning the election the Prime Minister Daniel Francois Malan stated that "South Africa belongs to us once more. May God grant that it will always remain so."<sup>62</sup>, a statement which showed the birth of the apartheid regime. The National Party quickly started to promote and defend the whites' interests in contrast with the weak Afrikaners' interests. Apartheid was aiming in a more general white supremacy and a strict segregation policy between blacks and whites.<sup>63</sup>

It was the same scene in the sports sector as well. Although the National Party did not introduce specific legislation<sup>64</sup> to prohibit racially mixed sport, the custom and tradition of the apartheid policy was so imbued in the consciousness of the people of South Africa, both black and whites, that there was no need for such legislation in order to keep sports segregated. The promising words of some officials about the unity of black and white sports people were never put in practice. On the contrary there were plenty of attempts to manufacture community solidarity among whites in various sports and actions of harassment and intimidation of, both local and foreign, black sports people. The white sports administrators accepted the segregation in sports without any objection, but most important is the fact that the members of the South African National Olympic Committee (SANOC) did not dissociate the Committee

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<sup>60</sup> A characteristic example of the progress of the apartheid policy was the right to detain suspects for interrogation without charge which was increased to 90 days in 1963 and to unlimited periods without judicial authorization in 1967.

<sup>61</sup> See Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.56

<sup>62</sup> See Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.56

<sup>63</sup> For a detailed description of the Apartheid Policy see Hermann Giliomee, *The Making of the Apartheid Plan, 1929-1948*, Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Jun., 2003), p. 373-392 and David Simon, *Crisis and Change in South Africa: Implications for the Apartheid City*, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1989), p. 189-206

<sup>64</sup> There was already enough legislation which affected sports as well like the Population Registration Act, Native Consolidation Act of 1945, Group Areas Act and Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953. For more details about these Acts see Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.57-58

from the apartheid policy.<sup>65</sup> The absence of specific legislation of segregation in sport proved to be an effective threatening tool in the hands of the government, in order to forbid South Africans to play mixed sport within and beyond the state's borders. Finally in 1962 the minister of interior announced the National Party's sport policy, which was based on four main principles:<sup>66</sup>

1. Each racial group would form a separate controlling association in each sport.
2. White associations would control the code, send representatives to the world federations and assist the development of black associations.
3. Racially mixed teams would not represent South Africa.
4. Sports officials would not invite racially mixed teams from abroad to play in the Republic.<sup>67</sup>

In less than a decade the National Party's laws controlled almost every aspect of black people's life in South Africa.

Generally the participation of black people in sports was low mainly because of poverty. When almost 50% of black people were living in poverty it meant that they had to focus on work and how to gain more money, than spending their free time in sports. Even the ones who were above the limits of poverty, they could not afford to have good equipment or receive the necessary nutrition in order to reach the desirable levels of physical preparedness and sporting performance. Additionally to the previously mentioned health problems and material deprivation, the racial ideology and racial legislation worsen the problem.

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<sup>65</sup> Douglas Booth, *Hitting Apartheid for Six? The Politics of the South African Sports Boycott*, Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 38, No. 3, Sage Publications, July 2003, p.478-479 in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180648>

<sup>66</sup> Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.61

<sup>67</sup> Because of this sport policy and the non participation of the country's teams in competitions against racially mixed teams, South Africa decided to withdrawn from the Commonwealth Games. See Marc Keech, *The Ties the Bind: South Africa and Sports Diplomacy 1958-1963*, The Sports Historian, Volume 21,1, May 2001, p.76 in <http://www.la84foundation.org/SportsLibrary/SportsHistorian/2001/sh211f.pdf>

## **Internal Reactions**

The absolute segregation, clear racism and cruel manipulation of blacks from the apartheid regime quickly transformed the initially passive behavior into peaceful

protest and civil disobedience, especially after the unacceptable use of violence against unarmed protesters in the early 1960s, well known as the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.<sup>68</sup> After the African National Congress (ANC) became a mass movement with nearly 100,000 members and it formed the Congress Alliance with the South African Indian Congress, the Colored People's Congress, the Congress of Democrats and the South African Council of Trade Unions, they adopted the Freedom Charter<sup>69</sup> as an alternative proposal to the Union's Constitution.<sup>70</sup> Immediately the state used the Freedom Charter to charge all leaders of the Alliance with treason and in 1960 it declared the ANC as an illegal organization. But before that, in 1958 the Africanists abandoned the ANC and formed the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) because of ideological differences.

Since ancient times in sport competitions and sport in general, racist structures were unwelcomed. The same happened in South Africa where blacks challenged racist practices in sport. But since the apartheid policy affected all aspects of daily life, black people had to react and assert their sporting rights, so in 1948, since mixed sports were not allowed and since black table tennis players could not participate in whites' tournaments, they decided to form their own board and apply to the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) for recognition. Surprisingly for the whites' Table Tennis Union, the ITTF agreed to recognize the black's Table Tennis Board.<sup>71</sup> The recognition of the blacks' Table Tennis Board from the ITTF was a sign that the western white interests dominance in the sports world was changing. Moreover in 1958 after the refusal of the IOC to recognize the black weightlifters federation and the delayed affiliation on behalf of the white Union, the black weightlifters, led by Dennis Brutus and Alan Paton, called for a conference of

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<sup>68</sup> For more information about the Sharpeville Massacre see

<http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/a/SharpevilleMassacrePt1.htm>

<sup>69</sup> For the full text of the Freedom Charter see <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=72>

<sup>70</sup> For the full text of the Union's of South Africa Constitution see [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/South\\_Africa\\_Act,\\_1909](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/South_Africa_Act,_1909)

<sup>71</sup> Marc Keech, *The Ties that Bind: South Africa and Sports Diplomacy 1958-1963*, The Sports Historian, Volume 21,1, May 2001, p.73 in

<http://www.la84foundation.org/SportsLibrary/SportsHistorian/2001/sh211f.pdf>

black federations in which the first non racial sports organization, South African Sports Association (SASA), was created.<sup>72</sup>

SASA was struggling for a more equal and fair treatment of black sportsmen in South Africa and their inclusion in the country's national teams. In this purpose they wrote a memorandum to the IOC explaining the racist structure of South African sports, hoping that the IOC would put pressure on the South African National Olympic Committee (SANOC) in order for the latest to include black sportsmen in the national teams. The IOC, and Avery Brundage in particular, after considering the above situation as a domestic political issue of South Africa, it had no intention to intervene in a member country's internal political situation. But just like NAC and PAC, SASA chose more drastic forms of protest which almost automatically made it an illegal organization for the apartheid state and thus it ordered the police to investigate SASA's offices and arrest its leaders.

The reaction was the creation of South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) by some SASA's officials in 1963, which primary goal was to destroy the segregation policy in South African sports and to expel SANOC from the Olympic Movement.<sup>73</sup> SANROC tried to put pressure on the IOC and International Federations by calling them for a sports boycott against the white South African affiliates. It was strange though that the state did not ban SANROC, but it chose to adopt very strict harassment and banning orders. The fact that the apartheid regime restricted almost all the rights of black people in combination with the state's violence made NAC and PAC turn into armed struggle. SANROC was the first organization which called the IOC and the International Federations for a sports boycott against the white South African affiliates.

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<sup>72</sup> SASA aimed to promote non racial sport and lobbied international sports federations to withdraw recognition of whites-only South African affiliates. See Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.76

<sup>73</sup> Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.78

## **The First Exclusion**

Initially there was little interest in apartheid sport from the international sport community. Particularly among others the IOC President, Avery Brundage, was supporting the view that the Games must go on at any cost and he did not believe that racial discrimination was an adequate reason to exclude SANOC from the Olympic

Games.<sup>74</sup> In his opinion IOC could only ensure that SANOC was respecting and following the Olympic Charter, as he declared in one of his speeches: “We must not become involved in political issues, nor permit the Olympic Games to be used as a tool or as a weapon for extraneous causes”.<sup>75</sup> But despite Brundage’s opinion the IOC was not satisfied by the apartheid policy in sport and it demanded, through an ultimatum, for a state sponsored non-segregated policy in sport combined with the substantial acceptance of the Olympic Code and Principles. Although there was some progress after SANOC nominated seven blacks to the national team, the IOC insisted that it was not a governmental policy, but rather a temporary and opportunistic decision targeting in South Africa’s participation in the next Olympic Games, without any substantial and permanent change. After in 1961 the minister for the interior, Jan De Kler, disapproved openly the participation of mixed South African teams in international competition, he simply justified IOC’s opinion. Although IOC gave time till 1963 to South Africa to comply with the IOC rules and to eliminate the apartheid policy in sport, it finally withdrew the Republic’s of South Africa invitation to 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

## **Second Exclusion and the Sports Boycott**

The new Prime Minister Balthazar Johannes Vorster in his efforts to include South Africa in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games made some initial progress in racist sport, although apartheid policy in general was becoming more and more strict and violent. To everyone’s surprise Vorster agreed to accept some racially mixed

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<sup>74</sup> “A primary reason for Brundage support was South Africa’s role in maintaining the status quo within the Olympic movement, which ensured that power remained firmly with established (white) sporting nations rather than be shared with the newer ex-colonial nations who were increasingly demanding greater influence in the Olympic movement.” See Marc Keech, *The Ties that Bind: South Africa and Sports Diplomacy 1958-1963*, *The Sports Historian*, Volume 21,1, May 2001, p73 in <http://www.la84foundation.org/SportsLibrary/SportsHistorian/2001/sh211f.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> Richard Edward Lapchick, *The Politics of Race and International Sport: The Case of South Africa*, Greenwood Press, London 1975, p.97

sports teams from abroad. He introduced a new sports policy and delivered a set of concessions to the IOC, by which South Africa would be represented by a single mixed team if there were any blacks good enough to join that team, something that made the white dominated IOC to reconsider the South Africa's exclusion. The insane nature of apartheid policy though could be seen in the controversy that mixed sport would continue to be forbidden inside the country, as well in the fact that after 1965 black spectators required to have a special permission in order to attend sport events in white areas.

The Basil d'Oliveira case had a significant impact in South Africa's isolation. After he experienced the consequences of the apartheid policy in sport and he was excluded from the Springbok team, Oliveira left South Africa in the early 1960s to go to England as a professional, where he managed to play senior county cricket with much possibilities to be selected in the national English team. But when in 1968-1969 the English team was planning to visit South Africa, the government of South Africa tried to make sure that he would be excluded from the team. Finally Oliveira was included in the team,<sup>76</sup> but after Vorster stated that the English team was actually the team of Anti-Apartheid Movement, England cancelled the tour.<sup>77</sup> The fact that a federation of a friendly country cancelled its team's tour to South Africa because of non racist reasons was an important blow to the Republic's prestige and apartheid policy.

In an attempt to comply with the IOC rules and thus be allowed to participate in the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games, South Africa, through the president of SANOC, delivered a set of concessions to the IOC, in which they declared that there would be only one team representing the Republic, whose members would wear the same uniform and march under the same flag. With 38 to 27 votes the white dominated IOC decided to invite the Republic of South Africa to the Mexico Olympic Games, a fact

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<sup>76</sup> Initially Basil d'Oliveira was excluded from the English team, but since there was another player who withdrew because of injury, they decided to include him in the final players.

<sup>77</sup> For the Basil d'Oliveira case see Rob Nixon, *Apartheid on The Run: The South African Sports Boycott*, Transition, No.58, Indiana University Press, Indiana 1992, p.78-79 in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934968>



that gave success to Vorster's concessions. But that was not the final outcome. After the Second World War and during the decolonization period there were plenty of new and old countries that deprived racist policies. As a consequence much pressure was put on South Africa's governments, especially from Third World countries, in order to abandon racist practices and its insane apartheid policy in general.

When in 1963 the African states formed the Organization of African Unity,<sup>78</sup> their influence in international sport increased significantly, and because the apartheid policy was totally opposed to the organization's principles, they decided to combat openly the South Africa's policies and practices. The Organization's Permanent Committee of African Sport<sup>79</sup> set as one of his primary goals: "To obtain the expulsion of South African sports organizations from the Olympic Movement and from international federations should South Africa fail to comply fully with IOC rules."<sup>80</sup> That was the beginning of the sport boycott.<sup>81</sup> Although its initial objective was to remove racism from sport, it became quickly a strategy against the apartheid policy in general. The Africans concern was mainly what would follow after the Games, something the whites did not tried to foreseen. Finally in 1968 more than 50 nations announced their withdrawal from the Mexico City Olympic Games protesting for the inclusion of South Africa. Under such pressure and under the threat of a failure of these Olympic Games, IOC decided to withdraw once again South Africa's invitation.

Since South Africa continued its apartheid policy and it did not respect the fundamental human rights of its own citizens, it made the world to revolt and demonstrate for a more just globe in every single chance they had against that kind of practices. Such demonstrations occurred in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand

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<sup>78</sup> For more details about the Organization of African Unity see Naldi Gino J., *The Organization of African Unity: An Analysis of Its Role*, Mansell Publishing, London 1999 or <http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/global/ilo/law/oau.htm>

<sup>79</sup> The Permanent Committee of African Sport declared itself as the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Edward Lapchick, *The Politics of Race and International Sport: The Case of South Africa*, Greenwood Press, London 1975, p.80

<sup>81</sup> Many Africans refer to the secretary general of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, Jean-Claude Ganga, as the "father" of the sports boycott.

when the Springbok rugby team toured in these countries.<sup>82</sup> Reacting to the second exclusion of the Republic from the Olympic Games, South Africa organized its own national games in 1969 under the Olympic Symbol, in which whites and blacks participated in different competitions and in different venues. Almost immediately after these games the IOC voted to expel the Republic from the Olympic Movement and by the end of 1970 more than 10 international federations had either suspended or expelled South Africa.<sup>83</sup> The white South Africans were so obsessed with the apartheid policy and their nationalism that they considered the sports boycott as part of a coordinated communist campaign, although it was nothing more than a world reaction to the expansion of the apartheid policy's effects in the field of sports. Sport and politics were almost absolutely related in that country, when at the same time sports people in Mao's China or in other totalitarian regimes were treated as heroes. Although the protection of human rights is by nature a political issue, the IOC was almost obliged, by the circumstances, to intervene and act in order to protect its own interests, even by violating some of its own principles.

## Success of the Sports Boycott

The success of the sports boycott can be connected to three main reasons. First of all SANROC, after it abandoned the territory of the Republic and re-established itself in London in 1966, was the main coordinator of the boycott campaign,<sup>84</sup> mainly

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<sup>82</sup> Queensland in Australia declared a state of emergency that suspended all normal laws and rights. See Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.97

<sup>83</sup> These federations were netball, athletics, gymnastics, wrestling, fencing, basketball, judo, big game fishing, David Cup tennis, boxing, cycling, soccer and weightlifting.

<sup>84</sup> Marc Keech-Barrie Houlihan, *Sport and the End of Apartheid*, The Round Table, Volume 88, Issue 349, Routledge, January 1999, p.113-114 in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/003585399108306>

under the leadership of Sam Ramsamy.<sup>85</sup> Although in the beginning SANROC was accused by many international federations and even the IOC Commission that it was introducing politics into sport, it was its clear and fair objectives, combined with some effective practices and strategies it used that increased its international reliability.<sup>86</sup> What is more, it managed to cooperate with some anti-apartheid organizations and increase the global awareness of the discrimination problems black people were facing in South Africa. While it had the support of Third World and Socialist countries, it tried successfully to awake the attention and moral consciousness of both the IOC and IFs because the apartheid practices were by nature opposed to their constitutional principles related to any kind of discrimination, and thus they had to react and support the sports boycott immediately if they wanted to be committed to the sport values they represented. On the other hand SANROC did not want to relate itself with the public demonstrations and it insisted on the non-violent nature of the boycott, which could make the Republic's government to substantially change its ideology. Ramsamy managed also to connect SANROC with the United Nation's International Committee Against Apartheid Sport and he achieved to persuade many international federations not to accept South Africa again as a member before the end of apartheid.<sup>87</sup>

Secondly the madness of apartheid policy created a global anti-apartheid movement, in which some countries tried to apply sport sanctions against other countries that had still relations with South Africa. These "third party" actions, whether they were caused by a sport or non-sport related issue, had a significant impact in the further isolation of the Republic. Such a well known action was the 30 nation boycott of the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games, where the African countries, leaded by Jean-Claude Ganga, refused to compete against New Zealand, because the latest had toured South Africa with their national rugby team, and they demanded the withdrawal of its invitation from the IOC. But the IOC refused to proceed, simply because rugby was a non-Olympic sport and it had no jurisdiction on it. These third-party disputes made many governments to intervene directly in the boycott in order to

<sup>85</sup> For more information about Sam Ramsamy see <http://www.olympic.org/mr-sam-ramsamy>

<sup>86</sup> SANROC's primary objective was to eliminate racism in sport.

<sup>87</sup> Sam Ramsamy was at that time a member of the Apartheid and Olympism Commission and he officially became a member of the IOC in 1995. See <http://www.olympic.org/mr-sam-ramsamy>

protect their national sport interests and to eliminate the internal reactions back to their homelands. A result of these interventions had been the Gleneagles Agreement, adopted by the Commonwealth countries, which forbidden any contact with the Republic of South Africa.<sup>88</sup> Although there were some differences in the implementation of this agreement by each country, it managed to isolate more the Republic especially in the sports of rugby and cricket. Furthermore the United Nations took some initiatives and tried to create an international convention against apartheid in sport and eliminate the sport contacts with South Africa, but the most important and effective practice was the “blacklist” of sports people who visited South Africa, which discouraged many of them to visit and compete with South African athletes by fear of being blacklisted. Many countries had claimed in the past that they have no legal jurisdiction over their sports people and thus they cannot obligate them not to participate in sport events. But normally sports boycotts are part of a country’s foreign policy and thus this country is supposed to control the behavior of its representative athletes.<sup>89</sup>

Thirdly in 1970 the nonracial South African Council on Sport (SACOS) was created which continued, like its predecessors SASA and SANROC, to support the boycott of South African teams by the foreign governments and the non recognition of the whites-only affiliates by the international federations. The members of SACOS also tried to negotiate with the whites-only sports federations in order to be united in the interest of sport. Although some new confederations were created, whites were still leading them and they were not interested in implementing democratic structures in sport. Moreover these white leaders did not trust at all the nonracial officials and the state continued to obstruct their normal life by, for example, denying them passports. But on the other hand SANOC was significantly influenced by the Black

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<sup>88</sup> For more information about the Gleneagles Agreement see <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/document/211690/gleneaglesagreement.htm> and <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/news/34580/212035/206732/110609archivesouthafrica.htm>

<sup>89</sup> However there are plenty of examples in sports history that sports people did not follow the central governmental orders and they finally participated on their own in sport competitions, like in 1980 where although the NOC of Great Britain officially forbidden its athletes from participating in the Moscow Olympic Games, some of them finally did participated on their own and broke the boycott.

Consciousness<sup>90</sup> and its reactive strategies and practices. As a consequence nonracial leaders openly rejected multinationalism and tried to promote the idea of the deceiving nature of the new confederations about integrated and non-segregated sports. Although there had been an ideological change in the National Party's thinking about the social stability that could have been achieved through mixed sport, SACOS only focused on the negative aspects like the wasted negotiation time and the existing clues of racism. Thus it was convinced that segregated sport was an integral part of the apartheid system, which could not change while black people suffered mass unemployment, low public services, including education and health, and poor living conditions. In its attempt to find a solution to the problem of discrimination in sport, SACOS officials concluded that only integration in sport was not enough. The whole social system of South Africa had to change. As a result SACOS argued that the global sport community and all the countries of the world should use the sports boycott in order to confront apartheid in general rather than just apartheid in sport.

## **Internal Effects of the Sports Boycott**

After the second withdrawal in a row of the invitation to the Olympic Games, South Africa understood and started to appreciate more the significance which sport can have on international affairs. Vorster and his team tried to create a new sports policy which aimed to ease international pressure through multinationalism.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> The Black Consciousness movement was supporting the non-collaboration and non-negotiations between black and white sports people until the apartheid policy was ended and the people of South Africa could enjoy Democracy.

<sup>91</sup> For more details about the use of multinationalism in the new sport policy of South Africa see Douglas Booth, *Hitting Apartheid for Six? The Politics of the South African Sports Boycott*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Sage Publications, July 2003, p.478-479 in

Significant progress was made and the government of Pretoria started accepting mixed teams to compete with each other and mixed events to take place. Having on their side many white sports people and boycott broker countries like Australia and New Zealand which toured with their rugby teams in South Africa, they started urging the international community to lift the sports boycott. But although multinational sport at club level, and not only, was a huge step forward for the Republic, substantially what the government tried to do, was to present its apartheid policy in sport with a more guiltless and attractive way by using the multiracial element, in order to be seen that it complies with the IOC rules and principles. “Multinationalism did not deracialize, liberalize or democratize sport at all, but on the contrary it imposed an inflexible racial structure upon sport.”<sup>92</sup>

But just like the Republic’s government decided to change its ideology and policies in sport, the same happened with the sport boycotters. The boycotters expanded their initial campaign goal of non segregated sport participation, to the other aspects of life as well. Now they claimed that sport is not a separate sector of a country’s life and they demanded for total termination of the apartheid policy in the whole territory of South Africa. Finally one could conclude that the sports boycott had some important impact in South Africa, since the Republic started to change its sport practices and it became more indulgent with apartheid in sport. But still the boycotters thought that although they achieved some progress to their initial goal, the apartheid policy had to be confronted in total. Finally it was only in late 1991 early 1992 that the sports boycott was ended and after the Republic of South Africa repealed the legislative foundations of apartheid it became again a member of the IOC.

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180648>

<sup>92</sup> Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.106

## **Chapter 4**

### **Historical Background of US – Cuban Relations**

The US – Cuban relations started deteriorating after the Cuban Revolution took place in 1959. Although the Americans helped Fidel Castro to overthrow the government of President General Fulgencio Batista, by imposing an arms embargo against his government in 1958, it was Castro's obvious revolutionary and communist tendencies and views, in combination with the fact that by 1960 his government

increased significantly the taxation on American products,<sup>93</sup> it nationalized many subsidiaries of US corporations among other private companies and it seized private land that caused an irreparable tension and conflict between the two countries. The US administration's response at that time was to impose trade restrictions on everything than medical and food supplies. Therefore Castro started to trade with the Soviet Union, something the Americans couldn't stand for a country that is situated only 160km away from their borders. As a consequence they cut all diplomatic relations.<sup>94</sup>

The international agenda of the last nondemocratic nation in the western hemisphere, especially the support of revolutions in South America and Africa, the violation of human rights and the unacceptable repressive policies toward its own citizens, strengthen the US side that demanded for further isolation of the Cuban government. As a result on February 1962 President J.F. Kennedy issued a permanent embargo against Cuba which still exists nowadays. Between 1961 and 1963 there were numerous attempts to overthrow, by almost any means, Castro from power. The operation of the Bay of Pigs, in which some Cuban exiles were trained properly by CIA in order to make a ground attack, was the first unsuccessful attempt on behalf of the Americans.<sup>95</sup> Then they were planning to destabilize the Cuban government through the "Cuban Project"<sup>96</sup>, which was a series of political and military sabotage, including intelligence operations, even assassination attempts against important and powerful political figures. Finally none of these attempts had the desired results, but

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<sup>93</sup> The increase on American products had as a consequence the significant decline of the US exports in just two years time. See <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1891359,00.html>

<sup>94</sup> Since then the two countries have discussions and talks through Switzerland and in 1977, during Carter's administration, both the U.S. and Cuba opened interests sections in each other's capitals.

<sup>95</sup> Angelo Trento, *Castro and Cuba : From the revolution to the present*, Arris books, Moreton - UK 2005

<sup>96</sup> Also known as Operation Mongoose. See <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1891359,00.html>



on the contrary they managed to create a wave of anti-Americanism and to soldier the Cubans on Castro's side.

However the most significant and threatening incident between the two countries happened in 1962, when US spy planes discovered the construction of intermediate-range missile bases of the Soviet Union on the Cuban territory. This is when the Cuban Missile Crisis began, in which both President Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, were struggling to avoid a direct conflict, which could progress to a massive nuclear war, without being seen to retreat. Only after the American President ensured the withdrawal of the US missiles from Turkey, the Soviet leader accepted to remove the Soviet missiles from the Cuban soil. Although the Cuban Crisis was ended without any conflict and victims, the Americans did not intend to forgive the Cuban leader for allowing such a huge threat to be placed so close to the territory of their country.

In the following years there had been some progress in the two countries bilateral relations, however in 1992 with Congress's Cuban Democracy Act<sup>97</sup> (CDA) during the Bush's presidency and in 1996 with the Helms-Burton Act of Bill Clinton the trade embargo was strengthened, after the Cuban air force shot down two U.S. civilian airplanes. The Clinton's administration main target in its Cuban policy was to achieve stability on the island, so that they would prevent a huge immigration flow to the US. Although the embargo was a threat to that policy, it could not be terminated because it was strongly supported by the Congress. So Clinton with his fellows tried to create a people to people approach to achieve their goals. The last decade depending on whether the democrats or the conservatives were on power in the US, the trading embargo is becoming more tightened or relaxed.

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<sup>97</sup> The CDA established a two-track policy to reach out to the Cuban people while strengthening the economic embargo against the regime. It permits humanitarian donations, including food and medicines, while attempting to increase economic pressure on the Cuban government by prohibiting U.S. subsidiaries from trading with Cuba and prohibiting any vessel from entering a U.S. port for a period of 180 days if that vessel had handled freight to or from a Cuban port. See Fisk W. Daniel, *Cuba: The end of an era*, Routledge, The Washington Quarterly, 24: 1, p.94 in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/016366001561573>

It was and still is very difficult for the US Congress to reach a political consensus in the embargo policy, since there are some factors that undermine this consensus. Firstly there is an active interest of Vatican and the Catholic Church in order to participate in the Cuban civil society, after Pope John Paul II visited Cuba in early 1998. Secondly there was a drift in the presence of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) because of the death of its leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, in 1997. Thirdly the US business and agricultural communities were mobilized to demand the end of the embargo. Last but not least Castro is still trying to portray himself as the victim of an American conspiracy against his country through the embargo, an image he uses in order to attract foreign investments in Cuba.

## **Baseball Diplomacy**

In January 1999 President Clinton announced a series of people to people exchanges,<sup>98</sup> in which he approved some exhibition baseball games between a selected Cuban national team and the Baltimore Orioles team. As a result in March 1999 the American team flew to Cuba and two months later the Cubans traveled to Baltimore in order for the baseball games to take place. The US-Cuban relations, like in Ping Pong Diplomacy or in Cold War's US-USSR sports competitions, were put in the baseball

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<sup>98</sup> These people to people exchanges were also permitted by the Cuban Democracy Act.

field.<sup>99</sup> The results of these games were of no interest at all, but the significance was in the improvement of peoples relations. Although these baseball games did not convince Washington to lift its embargo or travel ban against Cuba, they managed to change both Cubans and Americans opinion for the other side. In particular the US public opinion although it used to favor the US embargo, after the games it started supporting the normalization of US-Cuban relations, further engagement with them and even the ending of the embargo.

Even some embargo supporters inside the American Congress were affected by the new dynamics. CANF by taking advantage of the pope's visit in Cuba and through Senator Jesse Helms initiated a proposal of humanitarian assistance of 100 million US dollars to the Cuban people. Known as the Cuban Solidarity Act<sup>100</sup> its significance was that it proposed some direct US humanitarian aid to the Cuban people, which meant change of thinking of some embargo supporters. However it was made clear by the embargo supporters that none initiative of that kind would be approved in the Congress.

## What's Next?

The question after the baseball diplomacy was finished has been how to take advantage of these people to people relations and positive public opinion, which was created among both countries citizens, in order to improve the countries' relations in general. It is a fact that there has not been any important political or economic fundamental change in Castro's system, even when his brother replaced him in 2008, and the Cuban system is still a repressive, controlling system. The change in the US Congress opinion has been based on US domestic perceptions and priorities and many scholars argue that there is an obvious need for someone determined to take the lead in

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<sup>99</sup> For U.S. public opinion, this exchange was perhaps as significant as the pope's visit. See Fisk W. Daniel, *Cuba: The end of an era*, Routledge, The Washington Quarterly, 24: 1, p.98 in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/016366001561573>

<sup>100</sup> Also known as the Solidaridad.

order for the two countries' relations to be improved. This determined President should focus his efforts more on what's happening in Cuba, rather than on what the US government is failing to do.

Firstly it should be permitted, under specified conditions, some US investment in Cuba by American businesses. But the Cuban government should ensure that these businesses will have the right to deal directly and independently with their Cuban staff<sup>101</sup> and Cuban governmental entities, without any central governmental interference. On the other hand the US businesses would comply with all additional principles in Cuba.<sup>102</sup> Additionally the travel restrictions should be lifted on behalf of the American government, so that both trade and tourism would be favored. Like it happened during President Clinton that the restrictions were being ignored in order to favor the people to people contacts, nowadays the termination of these restrictions is of vital interest for both countries. It should be paid special attention though to the fact that Cuban citizens are not allowed to freely visit other countries. In the US efforts to spread the new messages to the Cuban people they would probably need to use properly again both the Radio Marti and the TV Marti.

It would be a good idea as well for the United States to open their borders to goods and services produced by self-employed Cubans. Although the economic impact would be of minimum importance for both countries, its symbolic significance would encourage further the self-employed individuals or privatized Cuban enterprises, since they could sell their products or services in the huge US market. Moreover supporting these private Cuban businesses could be a very important ace in the sleeve for the country's post-Castro recovery.

It is well known everywhere that Castro's government and its successors after 2008 do not respect even the basic human rights of their own citizens. Democracy-building efforts in the island accompanied with humanitarian aid to nongovernmental

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<sup>101</sup> Having the freedom to hire or fire them according to their rules and not according to Cuban governmental policies.

<sup>102</sup> Such principles for example are the Arcos Principles through which human rights, fair hiring and employment practices are promoted.

Cuban organizations are of major significance for a peaceful transition to democracy in that country. Furthermore the American government should seek for new allies in order to promote democratic changes in Cuba. Such a country could be Mexico, which especially after Vicente Fox won the elections in 2000, is moving towards the values of democratization and free market. Since these values are shared between US and Mexico, there could be an alliance in order to promote these values to the island of Cuba as well.

The embargo is still going no matter what are the Cuban's government actions. Until they will meet a minimum standard of western accepted democratic governance, it would be extremely difficult that any substantial political agreement would occur. The upcoming American political figures should focus their efforts on assisting the democratic evolution in the Cuban island, trying to further support the reconciliation of the Cubans inside and outside the Cuban territory, as well to continue supporting the view that the Castro's regime should have chosen the capitalist side years ago.

## **Conclusion**

The sports diplomacy between USA and USSR succeeded mainly in reducing the tension in their relations. The political and ideological rivalry of the two post World War II superpowers did not take much time to be implemented in the sports arena. Since both countries were considered to act as rational players within the international system, they knew pretty well that a direct conflict would probably lead to a nuclear war, which would mean mutual destruction for both of them. As a consequence, the two superpowers were trying to compete with each other in any possible way except of that of the battlefield, one of which had been sports. Particularly, after the Soviets were accepted in the Olympic Movement in 1951, a great sport rivalry started, in which one superpower was trying to beat the other in as many sports as possible, by any means.

A serious problem that derived during the period of the Cold War rivalry was the doping issue. And since the two superpowers were trying to beat each other by any means available, doping became a very important issue in the performance of their athletes. In this way, doping was linked to nationalism and the performance-enhancing substances became an everyday aspect of the athletes' life. The pressure which was put on both the American and Soviet athletes by their government, that it was their obligation to win the rivals, made them use amphetamines, steroids and other performance-enhancing substances in order to improve their performance. And especially after the outstanding performance of the German Democratic Republic's athletes in the 1972 and 1976 Olympic Games, the Americans adopted a similar strategy with the GDR, although their program had not such an obvious interpretation, like the state-sponsored doping program of the GDR. The attempts for the creation of an effective anti-doping world program had met many political obstacles and oppositions, without any substantial outcome.<sup>103</sup>

The Cold War era can be considered that it raised the interest in sports since this sector became the "battlefield" for the rivalry of the two superpowers. Since they never went on a direct conflict with each other, their differences were put on the field of play and on their athletes. The Cold War rivalry increased the excitement and the passion of the spectators, as well as the interest of the official governments of the states, since the athletes and their performance were simulated with the representation of a whole political and ideological system.

The utilization of sports as a political instrument of national policy for both East and West reached its pick through the two Olympic boycotts of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games, two incidents that showed clearly the increasing significance of sports in politics. No matter the reasons, both boycotts were not adequately legitimized and violated the basic principles of the Olympic Movement. Moreover, the

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<sup>103</sup> For more information on the doping issue of the cold war see Thomas M. Hunt, *Sport, Drugs, and the Cold War: The Conundrum of Olympic Doping Policy, 1970–1979*, in Robert K. Barney(edit), *Rethinking the Olympics: Cultural Histories of the Modern Games*, Cardinal Publishers Group, Indianapolis 2010, p.190 - 211

Olympic Games took place normally in both occasions and the only damaged parts were the Olympic Movement in general and the athletes in particular.

During the Cold War era the Ping Pong Diplomacy was a revolutionary policy for both the US and PRC, because the two leaders, Nixon and Mao, had to overpass the existing ideological difficulties and internal sociopolitical obstacles to manage to cooperate with each other. Although they were both well disposed in cooperating and starting again their official diplomatic relations, both leaders were deeply concerned about the way they would achieve it, so that their country would not be seem losing its prestige. Each country had its own reasons to come closer to the other. But both Washington and Beijing hoped to benefit their security by achieving a Sino-American rapprochement.

Moreover the Ping Pong Diplomacy and the improvements it caused to the Sino-American relations affected the US-Soviet relations as well. Because the USSR was fearful of a Sino-American alliance it became more cooperative and flexible in its demands. Although the Americans had lost their dominant role in the international system, they managed through a very successful diplomacy and without any cost to create a triangular relation between the world's three largest powers, in which they were playing the central role. As long as the two communist countries apprehended each other as more dangerous than the USA, the Americans set the rules of the game of the global balance of powers.

But there was also created an additional strategic disadvantage for the USSR through the US rapprochement with China. By tightening relations with the Chinese, the Americans managed to surround the Soviet territory with friendly and devoted to the US countries and thus made it impossible for the USSR, according to Mackinder's geopolitical theory, to dominate in the whole world. According to that geopolitical theory whoever dominates in the East Europe and Middle East, controls the Heartland. Whoever dominates in the Heartland controls the global island of Eurasia. And

whoever dominates on the global island of Eurasia controls the world.<sup>104</sup> So what the Americans were trying to do, through the containment policy, was to prevent the dominance of a hostile power in Eurasia. This theory explains the US interest in making alliances with the Western European countries and Japan, as well the security commitments it made with other countries, including some countries of the Middle East. Finally by reproaching China the puzzle of surrounding USSR was completed and thus the danger of a global dominance of USSR was seriously eliminated.

Furthermore the agreement for the sport of ping pong on behalf of the Americans, which was part of the Chinese tradition and in which the Chinese were world champions, expressed two important issues. The first one was that the Americans chose this sport in order to express their acceptance of the Chinese tradition and culture, as well the fact that they had no problem to cooperate with them, despite their communist ideology. The second one was that the Americans were disposed to harm their national prestige by losing in these sport contests from a communist country, since the Chinese were world champions, something they could not accept to happen by the other big communist country of the world, the USSR. But on the other hand the Chinese chose the sport of ping pong, because since it was not widely practiced in the US, they assumed correctly that the competitive tensions could be minimized and the athletic success would not be so tighten to the national prestige of the American team.

The Sino-American rapprochement constitutes a very good example of the role that individual personalities have while conducting foreign policy. The facts that both Nixon and Mao were charismatic leaders who understood, formed and controlled their foreign policies mainly according to the national interest of their country, the initiatives they took by overpassing their country's official foreign policy bodies, the fact that they both consulted only their closer consultant, Kissinger and Zhou, as well the obvious elements of the American exceptionalism in the Nixon's decisions and policies, affected significantly the march of events. Even the effort of the Chinese to

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<sup>104</sup> See Harold Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, Geographical Journal, No. 4, Vol. XXIII, April 1904, p.434



transmit their messages to the Americans through Edgar Snow, because they thought he was important in the US, shows the role of misperceptions in the outcome of international politics.

The clue of the ping-pong diplomacy is that through the sport of ping-pong it managed to change the political climate during the Cold War, between two ideological and geopolitical enemies, something the official diplomatic efforts had failed to achieve for more than 20 years. It is an excellent example about how two states can proceed from cooperation on matters of low politics to cooperation on high politics issues. Moreover it should be mentioned that both countries were well disposed in putting aside their important bilateral problems, such as the significant issue of Taiwan, for the implementation of a successful cooperation and the strategic advantage it could provided to them. It is very important that the Sino-American detente in 1972 did not terminate the American security commitments to Taiwan. The fact that these important bilateral problems were not solved would affect the Sino-American relations later in the future.

In the case of South Africa the implementation and strict following of the apartheid policy in sport substantially meant the presuming violation of all the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement related to discrimination issues. Although there was no need for specific legislation to keep sport segregated in the Republic due to the strong impregnation of apartheid policy in South Africans, surprisingly SANOC did not react at all to the government's discrimination policies in order to follow the rules of the Olympic Charter and maintain its main mission, which is "to develop, promote and protect the Olympic Movement in its respective country, in accordance with the Olympic Charter".<sup>105</sup>

History has proved that sports can eliminate any form of racial, religious, social or political prejudices and it can constitute a vehicle through which all people from different civilizations and cultures can come together. Although this is a speculative proposition which cannot be proved according to any rule, there are

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<sup>105</sup> Olympic Charter, Mission and Role of the NOC's, p.61

uncountable examples in practice that can confirm the fact that sports can integrate people with different backgrounds coming from different societies.

The sports boycott was not an organized and planned conspiracy against South Africa. The Republic actually created all the necessary conditions for the boycott to be implemented and made the world to interfere because of the unfair apartheid policy it practiced. These practices awaken the international moral consciousness and made people all over the world to disapprove it and demand for a substantial change. What is more, the sports boycott was not initiated by governments, but it was the international sport federations and some foreign sport associations, which took the initiative. In simply words it was South Africa itself, through its blatant and cruel racist practices that broke almost every principle of accepted behavior in sports, and thus gave legitimation to the sports world to react and proceed to the isolation of the Republic through the boycott.

Another factor which played a crucial role in the implementation of the sports boycott was the changes in the structure of international sport. Because of decolonization there were created a significant number of new states, which demanded for more justice and thus most of the times opposed to white Western nations' interests. This general attitude affected the sports world as well, where the new members from the Third World and Eastern bloc countries weakened the European-American domination of the IOC and international federations.<sup>106</sup>

“There is a very thin line between legitimate and non-legitimate violence, especially when it comes to the violation of human rights. A state may define the legality of an action, but only the actors can really evaluate its legitimacy.”<sup>107</sup> And in the case of South Africa there is a variety of opinions among scholars whether the state violence against black people and the black people's violent reaction were legitimate or not. That was exactly the success and legitimacy of the sports boycott, because it

<sup>106</sup> Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.98

<sup>107</sup> Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Frank Cass Publishers, New York 2005, p.80

managed to affect the daily life of South Africans through a non-violent anti-apartheid policy, which although it took more than 30 years, at the end it managed to change the ideology and discrimination practices of a whole country and its people.

Furthermore the promotion and protection of human rights is clearly a political issue, and since the IOC's practice for the violation of human rights has been the isolation of racist governments and thereby the exclusion of their national athletes from international competitions, one could argue that there is an obvious contradiction in the Olympic Charter's rules between the obligation of the IOC to comply with the human rights laws and the customary rule against exclusion of athletes for political reasons. This exactly has been the situation in South Africa where the IOC did not accept the South African athletes to participate in the Olympic Games from 1964 till 1992, since it did not want to put itself in the position of sanctioning de facto segregation.<sup>108</sup>

Additionally the case of South Africa also constitutes a good example of how individual personalities can affect the conduct of one country's foreign policy. Personalities like Sam Ramsamy , Jean - Claude Ganga, Avery Brundage, Balthazar Johannes Vorster and even Basil d' Oliveira with their actions, contacts and personal beliefs had an important impact, either direct or indirect, on the decisions and practices which were chosen and implemented.

The baseball diplomacy although it had no important political effects, however it had an impact in loosen the US-Cuba policy. All of these sport exchanges between the United States and USSR, China and Cuba managed to reduce the existing stereotypes, increase the mutual understanding and transfer the conflict in the sports field rather than the actual battlefield. Many scholars have argued that sport competitions are an extremely effective and safe way to ease a country out of isolation, constituting the first step of engagement between countries. Sports can constitute a channel of understanding and goodwill because they have the ability to reduce, at least temporarily, the notion of nationalism and can make spectators cheer

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<sup>108</sup> See James A.R. Nafziger, *International Sports Law*, Transnational Pub Inc, New York 1988, p.81

for accomplishments and effort regardless of nationality. Therefore governments should encourage sports exchanges in order to find contact points or even improve their relations with other countries.

The sports movement in general and the Olympic Movement in particular had a significant impact on the events of all these three situations. The relationship between the IOC, the IFs and the governments of the countries was of an interactive nature, which means that both sides had to flinch in their demands. Although the states' relations are political in nature, however the sports movement can constitute a very successful platform on which the countries can develop their cooperation. What is more the sport movement and the Olympic Movement can set a number of moral principles in the actions of countries and their efforts to take advantage of sports, so that they do not act uncontrollably. A characteristic example of this has been the issue of doping, in which the IOC in coordination with the WADA have set a number of rules and a list of performance-enhancing substances the athletes are not allowed to take. Furthermore through the sports movement the countries have found common interests and belong to the same organizations, something that increases automatically the chances of alternative solutions in their differences. Last but not least the sports contests have successfully constituted, uncountable times in the past, a way to either eliminate or increase the bilateral tensions between countries.

On the other hand the states' relations have affected the sports and Olympic Movement as well. In the Cold War era the two superpowers had such a strong influence in the Olympic Movement that the IOC was seem helpless to react in their decisions. In both of the Olympic Boycotts in Moscow and Los Angeles the IOC could do almost nothing to prevent the Superpowers from boycotting the Games. Moreover in the case of South Africa it was the threat of the failure of the Olympic Games, through the more than 50 nations boycott that made the IOC to withdrawn its invitation to the Republic for the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games. One could argue that the IOC has violated its own principles in order for the Olympic Games to take place with the minimum interest casualties. This is exactly the reason why the IOC excluded the Republic of South Africa the second time. Additionally the IOC through these

incidents understood clearly that in order to survive in today's world, it has to protect its own interests as well, some of which may contradict its own principles. So what the IOC and the sports movement in general are trying to do in practice nowadays is to survive in a very competitive and controversial world, at the minimum moral cost.

Whether sports are utilized to build bridges between countries, like in the case of ping pong diplomacy, or as a contact point of countries like it was during the Cold War between USA and USSR, or even to express disapproval about a country's policies or practices, through the sports boycotts or sports sanctions in the case of South Africa, sports diplomacy remains a low-cost, low-risk and highly profile diplomatic tool in the hands of nations that can affect the states relations both in the short and long-term period. Sports diplomacy is a very effective soft power tool which can constitute a very successful platform for nations to transfer and upgrade from low politics, to high politics cooperation. As far as sports competitions are going to attract the interest of people and thus the states, politics will never be separated from sports.

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