

“SPORT OUT OF POLITICS” AS THE MAIN PRINCIPLE OF INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS

Prof. Yi Lu
China Institute of International Studies



<http://dx.doi.org/10.26739/2433-202x>

Issue DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.26739/2433-202x-2017-12-12>

Article DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.26739/2433-202x-2017-12-12-16>

The article presents the most well-known cases of conducting propagandist and informational campaigns directed to the discredit of sporting systems of world powers based on use of controlled international sporting and anti-doping organizations. The revealed in this research trends allow concluding that sport becomes recently a tool of political pressure of the West on the “unwanted countries”.

Keywords: Olympic Movement, World Anti Dope Agency (ВАДА), doping test, information campaign, sanctions policy, 2018 FIFA World Cup, Asia-Pacific Region, ARD TV channel, Hajo Seppelt, Xue Yinxian, sport and policy.

Ambition of world powers to be qualified for organization of such sporting events as the Olympic Games or World Championships in different

Yi Lu

sports is dictated by their wish to establish themselves on the world scene through the demonstration of achievements of their athletes to the world community. Thereafter the results showed by the national team during the competitions become the point of national pride and patriotism; moreover, they contribute to increasing the reputation of country in world public opinion, as well as in the opinion of their own citizens.

However, more recently we can often observe that the international sporting and anti-doping authorities being Western-controlled act as a tool of geopolitical pressure and discredit of countries and people. The increased information attacks and political scandals directly or tangentially related to the Olympic Games in Sochi, Rio de Janeiro, PyeongChang, and to 2018 FIFA World Cup, which is held in Russia, are the evidence of the fact that the sporting sphere is used as an independent channel of informational influence.

Within the large-scale anti-Russian campaign organized by Western countries with the participation of World Anti Dope Agency (WADA), various levers of influence were used: manipulation of public opinion, disqualifications and bans from participating of sportsmen in competitions, use of boycott system towards the further competitions, showing of “revealing” documentary films, which often did not contain any proofs. Due to the active participation of Western media in this campaign, the world sporting public was formed an opinion that Russian sportsmen had followed dirty politics. There were many negative and critical declarations from foreign sportsmen, which called for boycott both Russian sportsmen and international sporting events in Russia.

Meanwhile, in February 2017, the International Olympic Committee published an open letter, where they admitted that the reports by independent expert Richard McLaren had not contained any reasonable grounds to accuse Russia of change the dope tests during the Olympic Games in Sochi, as well as of existence of state dope program in Russia¹. Nevertheless, the damage resulting from that informational campaign was so great that despite the policy of full disclosure the reputation of Russian sportsmen suffered from “dope scandal” would not restore soon.

It should be noted that the informational campaign against Russian sport was politically motivated and was held together with the sanctions policy

realizing by the USA and other Western countries, which concerned the annexation of Crimea and conflict in eastern Ukraine². In addition to it, the inflated before the Olympic Games in South Korea dope scandal, the unproved poisoning of Skripals, as well as the existing calls to boycott the FIFA World Cup in Russia are links of the same chain, which are directed to create the image of Russia as an outsider country in the western public mind.

Upon the fundamental analysis of the events, it becomes apparent that spokespersons of Western countries feed widespread tendentious information into the controlled media concerning the insecurity of attendance in Russia during global-scale sporting events. As a rule, this information makes reference to doubtful marketing and sociological researches of some nameless foreign centers. For example, in South China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Xiamen, where the influence of Western countries is quite widespread, there are many postings of local web-media about the threatens related to the attendance of citizens of People Republic China at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

The Russian leadership makes great efforts directed to the countering the informational attacks of the West. High level of organization of sporting events, effective work of Russian law-enforcement authorities, as well as the obtained results related to the safety of attendance of citizens during the Olympic Games in Sochi and the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup allowed the world public forming an opinion on Russia as a state, which fully corresponds the demands making on organizers and providers of security of international events.

Despite this, the USA together with their partners have undoubtful advantages within the informational confrontation against any of state of the world thanks to their all-round control of Internet and huge financial support. The occurring in the world events give evidence of readiness of Western countries to use the international sporting events as a political bargaining chip to influence on the other “unwanted” countries.

On the threshold of Olympic Games in Asia-Pacific region (in Japan in 2020 and in People Republic China in 2022) the Western countries led by the USA use the same methods of influence and discredit of sporting system, which were tested on Russia, towards another sport superpower, i.e. China.

Against the background of existing confrontation in a dialogue between Beijing and Washington related to trade and economic cooperation, as well as to territorial disputes concerning the viewpoint on Taiwan with such partners of the USA as Japan, South Korea and Philippines, the Western countries work towards making of profitable for them decisions by Chinese leadership. In case of nonobservance, they are ready to launch a tendentious large-scale campaign directed to the discredit of country and people on the global scene.

Thus, for example, WADA stopped the work of Anti Dope Laboratory in Beijing in April 2016 due to the “non-observance of standards” and possible falsification of tests during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing³. In the same year, a decision was made concerning the foundation of a modern chemical and toxicological laboratory for work on dope tests in Tokyo for the period of the Olympic Games in Asia-Pacific Region.

In late 2017, WADA started a new investigation related to doping towards China. According to the report on the official web site of the organization, it concerns the system of doping by Chinese sportsmen, which is thought to have taken place in 1980s and 1990s. The provided information is quite doubtful, as the investigation of WADA bases on the documentary of German TV channel ARD, filmed by journalist Haio Seppelt, who is known by his negative speeches towards Russian sport. No evidences of charges, which were brought towards Russia in this video, had been presented, but just this work became the reason of total bullying of Russian sportsmen sideways WADA and other international sporting organizations.

Nowadays one cannot exclude that China will face the similar pressure as well. In his new documentary, Seppelt refers to Xue Yinxian, the former doctor of Chinese national team, who asserts that reportedly more than ten thousand sportsmen took doping drugs during that period⁴. Thereat it should be noted that Xue Yinxian left in due course China and asked for political asylum in Germany. For people who do not know the reality of Chinese sporting system, it is difficult to suppose how proved is her evidence. However, her interview to ARD anyway made WADA convoke an independent group, which will investigate the scale of the raised problem. It is unlikely that the Chinese sportsmen will be stripped off their medals, because

they were won too long ago, but the reputation of China as the host country of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games may be essentially compromised.

Taking into account the current circumstances, the Chinese leadership should do the following:

- 1) to organize the informational and propagandist work concerning the bearing up the principle of independence of sport from politics;
- 2) to develop and realize a set of additional measures directed to the confrontation against anti-Chinese initiatives of the Western authorities;
- 3) to renew the national program related to doping prevention;
- 4) to fix an active cooperation with the International Olympic Committee with respect to the confrontation against the attempts of Western-controlled anti-doping organizations to compromise the national sport and to falsify the results of domestic investigation to please the states concerned.

REFERENCES:

¹https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/News/2017/02/2017-02-24-IOC-Letter-On-the-Current-Situation-of-Anti-Doping-System-Reforms-English.pdf#_ga=1.76732757.1157916578.1477502763

² Remarks by the Vice President at the John F. Kennedy Forum (2014), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/03/remarks-vice-president-john-f-kennedy-forum>

³ WADA suspends the accreditation of the Beijing Laboratory (2016), <https://www.wadama.org/en/media/news2016-04/wada-suspends-the-accreditation-of-the-beijing-laboratory>

⁴ China's doped ascent to sports superpower (2017), Von Florian Riesewieck, Hajo Seppelt und Christian Siepmann, <https://www.sportschau.de/doping/doping-chinesische-aerztin-fluechtet-102.html>