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## LASTING EFFECTS IN CHINA OF BEIJING OLYMPICS

With the conclusion of the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in Beijing, we have just experienced one of the greatest moments in recent Chinese history. Chinese officials can definitely give themselves a pat on the back for a job well done. The venues were great, the volunteers were extra helpful, the city ran smoothly, and even the smog seemed to lift as the Games went on. After all the preparations and work, the Beijing Olympics are now over. There seems to be a sense on the streets of Beijing of 'What's next?' In this issue of the China Resource Journal, we'd like to briefly look at the potential lasting benefits of the Beijing Olympics for China's future.

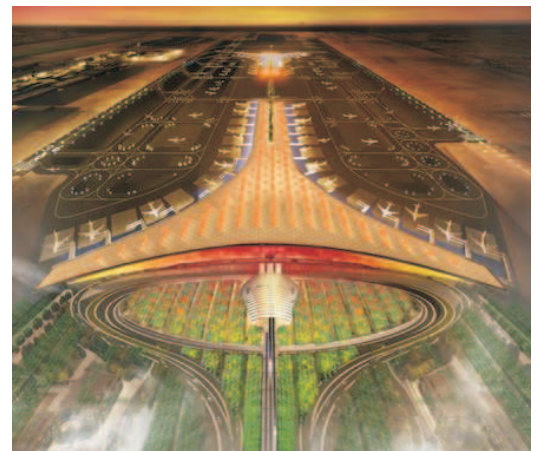
### Chinese Leaders Listening to Thoughts of Change

In China today, there is a pride and deep longing in the Chinese to be accepted by the World as an equal and China wanted to use these Olympics to show the world that they were no longer second to anyone. China spent more money than any other host country (\$42 billion), had more volunteers (100,000), and engaged more performers in their opening ceremonies (15,000) than anyone in Olympic history. With this attention to be treated equally, China was also introduced to international standards and expectations over the seven years it prepared for the Olympics. Unlike the past where any constructive criticism from the world would only garner a Chinese rebuff, the Olympics provided an opportunity to encourage China to comply with World standards since the Olympics are the world's business.

One key area where this was seen most was in the area of International Property Rights (IPR). China has stepped up efforts to protect the intellectual property rights of Olympics products. It is an interesting paradox since normally the products copied by the Chinese are not Chinese products. For Beijing Olympic products though, they stood to lose more financially. One would hope that this would be good experience for the government to recognize the damages caused by infringement violations.

### Infrastructure Changes

For those familiar with Beijing, your next trip to the Capital city may cause you to do a double take with all the new changes. From new subway lines to new buildings, Beijing is a much different place than it was even 10 years ago. The infrastructure changes alone are amazing. Since the bid for the 2008 Olympics, the government has made it a priority to develop the mass transit system. By the start of the Olympics, Beijing had 5 new subway lines and increased the number of metro lines in the Chinese capital to eight and the total length of track to 124 miles from the previous 77 miles of track. The subway lines open up previously hard to reach areas of Beijing and will feature a light-rail line connecting the Beijing Airport to the city center. Metro builders have set aside room in the Dongzhimen Railway Station, which is on the downtown end of the Airport Line, where passengers will be able to check in for their flights and have their luggage delivered. In addition, a new Beijing to Tianjin passenger railway, now the country's fastest long-distance train, can reach 217 mph and cuts the travel from 70 minutes to just 25 minutes. Another long-term benefit is the new Terminal 3 at the Beijing Capital Airport. It is the world's largest airport building with over 10 million square feet of interior space and is expected to be the fifth busiest airport in the world by the end of this year. Hospitals



The New Terminal 3 at Beijing International Airport is the world's largest airport building.

have also received massive renovations to meet the need for the Olympics.

## Architectural Changes

The Chinese have a saying, "If the old doesn't go, then the new cannot come," and certainly Beijing has been transformed by the scores of new buildings built in preparations for the Olympics. One of the most surprising features of these ultra-modern buildings and structures is the Chinese use of foreign architects and the departure from traditional Chinese architectural forms. Many of us saw some of these structures during the television coverage of the Beijing Olympics. The National Stadium, dubbed the Bird's Nest, was designed by a Swiss firm, and the Beijing National Aquatics Center, dubbed The Water Cube, was designed by an Australian firm. But Beijing also has been building many other buildings to modernize the city. Buildings like the National Center for the Performing Arts, dubbed The Egg, is a titanium and glass building that appears to float on the lake that surrounds it, was designed by a French architect, and the new CCTV building, which is now the second largest building in the world next to The Pentagon in terms of useable floor space, was designed by a Dutch architect and has an interesting and unusual 'loop' feature in its design.



The new Chinese Central TV Building in Beijing was completed in 2008.

## Volunteerism

The Chinese people have never been known as people who readily volunteer, so the idea of volunteerism has never really caught on in China. But with the Olympics, 730,000 people signed up to be a volunteer, out of which 100,000 people were selected. Many of these volunteers were recent University graduates and these young people found out the blessings of helping others. In a country where the non-profit sector is young and volunteer service projects have been sparse, one hopes that the spirit of volunteerism catches on into the future.

## Other Changes in Beijing

There are many other changes that will stay in Beijing after the Olympics. For example, Beijingers have been enthusiastically speaking English and translating signs and menus into English. Taxi drivers have been required to take an English competency test to keep their jobs and neighborhood English clubs have sprung up all over the city. Beijing has also been put on notice about its air quality and knows it must try harder to maintain acceptable levels of its air quality. Beijing officials also had the opportunity with its Olympic experience to see that a loosening of restrictions on media and internet did nothing to compromise their position in authority. One would hope that this would be a positive lesson for them.

## Conclusion

On July 13, 2001 when the International Olympic Committee awarded Beijing the bid to host the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad, they stated that the Olympics would be used in China as a 'force of good' in opening up the country. We think history will show that indeed the Olympics were one of many factors in the development of China. As Wang Chao Yong, a Chinese venture capitalist based in Beijing said recently, "The Olympics are changing Beijing, but Beijing was already changing fast; the Games just add another layer."