

China, History and the Beijing Olympics

”The Olympics in China”

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Historical factors

- 4000 years of civilization, unbroken history
- In 1820 still world's largest economy
- Loss of sovereignty – semicolonialism after Opium Wars.
- Japan's warfare in East Asia , 24 mio dead
- '100 years of humiliation' ends 1949, 'never again' ,isolation ends 1979, status regained 20??, developing country until 2040?

Huntington-quote

- “The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion, but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do”
—— The Clash of Civilizations, p.51.

China's perception of the world

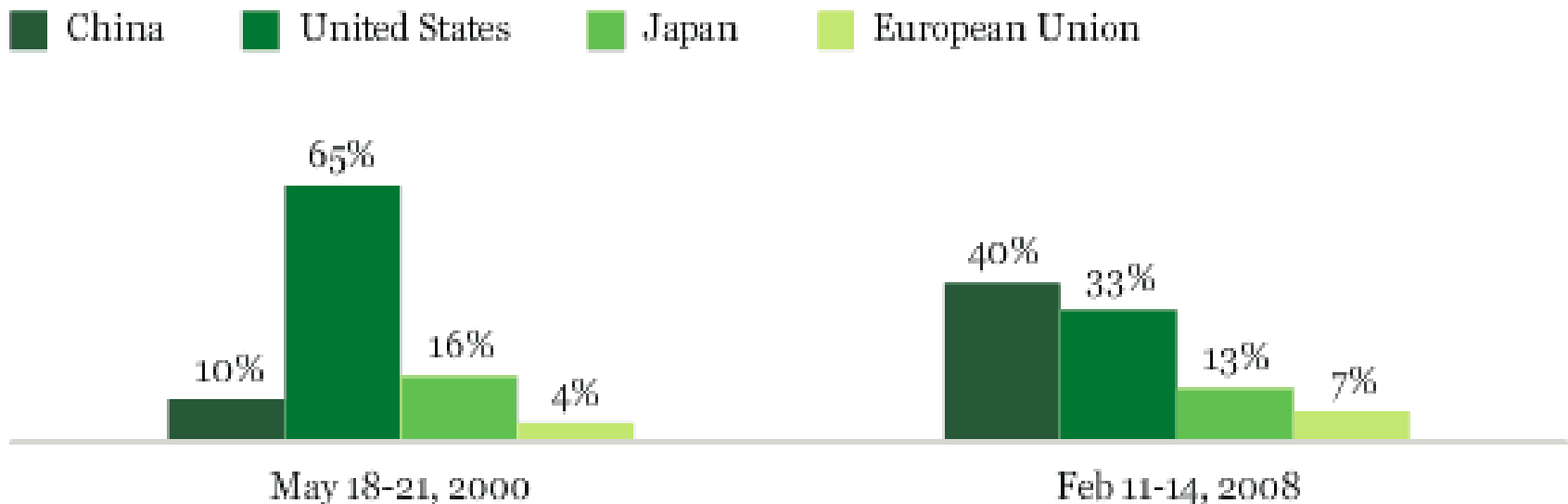
- Victimization-complex/ xenophobic, aggrieved and defensive nationalism
- US/West adulation in the 1980s. 1993!
- Pride in own culture and achievements from 1990s: confident, cosmopolitan nationalism. "Linking up" w. international
- Resulting stress on diplomacy, multilateral cooperation, openness to globalization, 'responsible great-power' in this decade

World's perception of China

- Lack of knowledge (educ., firsthand, fresh)
- Narrow reporting: HR and econ/threat.
Often black/white framing by media
- Diffuse fear of speedy economic growth, cf Gallup
- A symbol of globalisation –blamed for ills
- Some politicians use for 'blame game' and short-term domestic gains

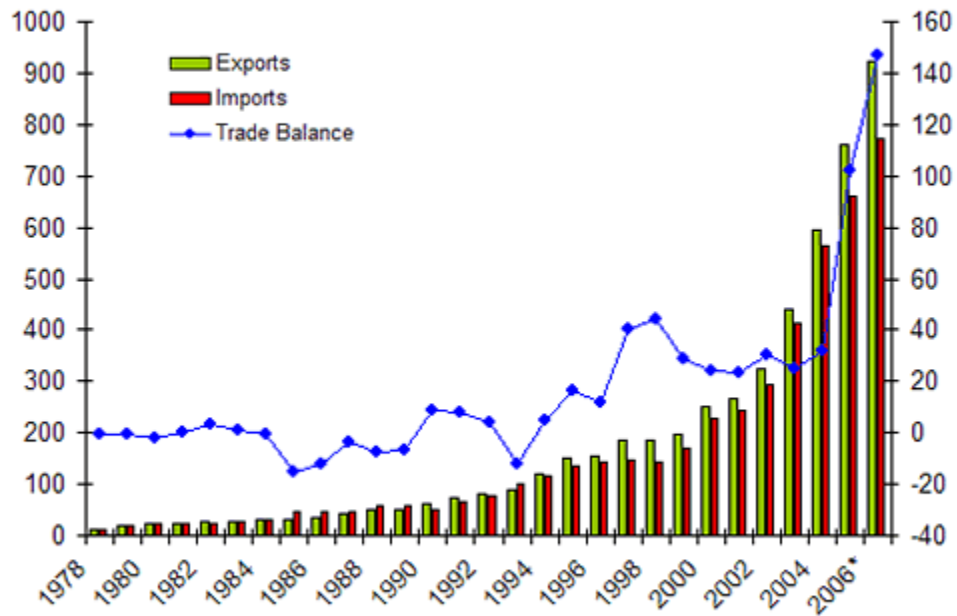
Nye Gallup-tal 1

Country or Group of Countries Perceived as the Leading Economic Power in the World "Today"



(India and Russia mentioned by 2% or fewer respondents in both time periods)

China Trade (\$ billions)



Data: National Bureau of Statistics of China

* estimate based on actual data up to Q3

Problems in perception of China

- Snapshot vs historical, non-static view
- Ethnocentric view vs accept of pluralism
- Impatience vs incremental change
- Totalitarian notions vs attention to lively debate and wide spectrum of opinions
- (See also article in Danish on "RÆSON" website)

Roots of present conflict?

- Popular nationalism reacted against distorted reporting on Tibet and general Western lack of recognition of China's wider progress. (Shi)
- Red lines crossed: sovereignty and taking OG hostage. Back up the government.
- Quake confirms regimesupport, but has positive effect on mutual perceptions and strengthens civil society (+ pol. reform)

Chinese colleague, prof. Shi Yinhong

- "The Western response to Tibet has ignited this sense that although we've become richer and more liberal, they still treat us like it's the 19th Century .. If the purpose of the West in initially supporting the 2008 Olympics was to promote a more open, pro-Western China, they have failed now three months before."

Why is boycott a bad idea?

- OG a popular cause, not a party-affair
- Further increase in nationalism, support for party-state and reduced demand for democracy and Human rights
- No positive effect (cf Moscow)
- Further deterioration of EU-China relation
- Not supportive of Olympic participants

Human rights problems

- Amnesty-points: capital pun/local use of various torture/administrative detention/freedom of speech and association
- Latter two derive from ruling party attempt to preserve its monopoly on political power
- This again derives from fight to modernise quickly: reduce poverty, quit developing country situation, gain strength, unite country.

Is China the Soviet Union?

- Privatized market-economy, driving component in global economy.
- Non-threatening state in close cooperation with US, and at 1/10 of its defence-budget
- No Warsaw-pact, COMECON, Eastern bloc or Brezhnev-doctrine
- Constructive member of huge number of international org and regimes, incl WTO
- Democratic grass-roots reforms