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Bidding for the 1968 Olympic Games: International Sport's Cold War Battle with NATO

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to be especially careful in these efforts, because going to war in the middle of significant transitions can have extremely negative consequences. While the United States has a much larger ability to buffer its frontline forces from such turmoil, similar concerns do exist. Given the scope of potential changes, U.S. leaders need to think through ongoing and future transitions most carefully.

Perhaps even more important will be new requirements leveled on U.S. troops and their officers during an all-out conflict. Despite advances in protective equipment and sensors, casualties resulting from war with a peer or near-peer competitor will be continuous and far larger in number than those seen since the Vietnam War or even before. The physical and mental stress placed on U.S. service personnel will be worse, if only in scale, than any experienced by almost any unit in decades. Leadership and decision-making will be exercised in very different conditions. Commanders will be forced to push decision-making authority further and further down the chain of command. The kaleidoscopic nature of the fight will require even more resiliency and mental toughness, including the ability to accept and deal with potentially ugly mistakes. To survive and attain victory requires extensive and realistic training, not just for the active component, but for the reserves and National Guard as well.

Finkel's book does not have all, or even most of, the answers to these issues. But he does present a strong set of initial questions that open the door to the discussions and decisions that are necessary if we are to be as ready as possible for an all-too-likely future conflict. This is a book well worth reading.

RICHARD NORTON

Bidding for the 1968 Olympic Games: International Sport's Cold War Battle with NATO, by Heather L. Dichter. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2021. 275 pages. $29.95.

In 2022, the White House announced a "diplomatic boycott" of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Like all the boycotts of Olympic gatherings that came before, it failed to alter the political landscape. One could be forgiven for thinking that sport and politics are so alien to one another that they do not mix. Heather L. Dichter has written a stunningly good book that shows that this simply is not true.

Using a plethora of research, Dichter begins her accounting in the late 1950s as international sports federations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) found themselves having to address a serious political issue: the status of Germany. After the creation of the German Democratic Republic, there was a real question whether German sports federations, all based in the West, represented all German citizens. The IOC solved this situation by saying that they did, and by requiring the two Germanys (East and West) to compete as a unified team. That solution worked for about a decade.

Wishing to bolster its legitimacy, East Germany established a series of national sports federations and obtained membership in the international governing bodies of these various sports. As more and more East German federations obtained certification from the different international federations, questions about national symbols (flags, national anthems, and team uniforms) moved to the forefront. Could the East Germans use their flag, anthem, and team uniforms even in

nations that did not extend diplomatic recognition to the German Democratic Republic? Another factor at play was the establishment of the Berlin Wall. The wall offended the Western alliance, striking at the freedom of movement of individual citizens. West Germans and their NATO allies did not want to grant the Communist regime any form of legitimacy, and they struck back, refusing to grant visas to East Germans.

The result was that international sports became caught up in the Cold War. Sports administrators in NATO nations suddenly found political litmus tests being applied to the events they were organizing—and they did not appreciate it. When the national governments of municipalities hosting world and European championships refused to allow the athletes of all member sports federations—which is to say, refused to allow the East Germans—to attend, sports administrators responded by either canceling or moving the events. During planning sessions for future events, sports administrators required statements that the national government would allow all teams to attend. The NATO nations refused, and the response was to schedule these events in Eastern Europe or in neutral nations.

Dichter explores new territory in her book. Drawing heavily on NATO records, she shows that the leaders of the alliance were interested in issues other than military strategy and operations. They believed the prestige of sport made it a "soft power" that they could use to influence popular opinion, so NATO devoted significant attention to the issue. Sports administrators realized they had to consider geopolitical realities as they organized meets. The issue of East German passports had impact on ten world championships, three European championships, six sports congresses, and eleven other cases between 1959 and 1963.

The IOC refused to let itself be a pawn in the Cold War. Knowing that the sports federations could not make promises on behalf of foreign ministries that all passports and visas would be honored, the committee decided it would not award the Olympics to a city in a nation that would refuse entry of athletes from any national Olympic committee. Many sports federations followed suit, refusing to put official recognized matches and championships in NATO member nations. The result was that Western Europe and North America began to lose their dominant position in international sport.

All these issues came to a head in 1963 when the IOC met in Baden-Baden, West Germany, to select the host for the 1968 Summer Olympics. The IOC gave Mexico City a majority of votes quickly—in only one round. In Mexico, there would be no issue about the East Germans. When the IOC met a few months later to vote on the 1968 Winter Olympics, the governments of France, Canada, and Norway broke with NATO and provided legal assurances that the East Germans would be allowed to cross their borders and compete in the games. Dichter argues that this incident marked the origins of détente.

Dichter's research is nothing short of remarkable. This book is the product of work in twenty-five different archives in nine different nations, requiring competence in four languages. While those numbers are impressive, the intellectual dexterity she shows is exemplary. Her account also shows complexity and nuance. She visited the archives not

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only of foreign ministries but also of sports federations, NATO, and the IOC. Since all national Olympic committees had to communicate with the IOC in French or English, she uses these records to internationalize her account, documenting the views of the Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, Greeks, and others.

To make a long story short: Confusion plagued NATO delegates, but national Olympic committees and individual members of the IOC acted with purpose.

NICHOLAS EVAN SARANTAKES

Commanding Petty Despots: The American Navy in the New Republic, by Thomas Sheppard. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022. 264 pages. $44.95.

All naval officers are familiar with the phrase "six-thousand-mile screwdriver," although its origins are not entirely clear. A likely source is Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf, who felt that the evacuation of Saigon in 1975 had been micromanaged from Washington, DC. The lesson Metcalf drew from this experience was to have his staff send two situational reports every hour to the higher command authority. The more information they had, he hoped, the less likely they would be to intervene (Christopher J. Lamb, *The Micromanagement Myth and Mission Command: Making the Case for Oversight of Military Operations* [Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense Univ. Press, 2020], p. 43).

This tension between commanders on the spot and authorities in Washington was not invented in Vietnam, as Thomas Sheppard shows in his useful new book. Metcalf's frustration would have resonated with most officers of the U.S. Navy in the first fifty years of its existence. While communication technology meant that Metcalf's superiors had far greater ability to intervene than the first leaders of the Navy, the fundamental tension between the authority of a captain on board "his" ship and that captain's relationship to his superiors is strikingly similar across the centuries.

Take, for example, the vignette that Sheppard uses to open the book. In June 1813, Captain James Lawrence sailed USS *Chesapeake* out of Boston Harbor to fight HMS *Shannon*. A year into the war, the British blockade was beginning to tell. With *Shannon* alone guarding Boston, Lawrence saw an opportunity to break out. He misjudged his opponent, however, and his aggression cost him his life and his ship. *Shannon*'s well-trained crew captured *Chesapeake* and mortally wounded Lawrence in an action lasting just fifteen minutes. For Sheppard, what is most interesting about this famous episode is that Lawrence directly disobeyed orders. The Secretary of the Navy, William Jones, had ordered Lawrence to avoid risking his ship in battle and instead to attack British merchant ships. In this case, leaders in Washington had been right to meddle, and the officer on the spot did not have some unique insight into the best course of action.

What Sheppard explores is how common it was for officers to ignore Washington's instructions and how difficult it was for civilians to gain control over officers. Secretaries of the Navy did not wield six-thousand-mile screwdrivers in the early republic, both because communication times limited their ability to do so and because officers