

## **Key Studies in Diplomacy**

Series Editors: J. Simon Rofe, Giles Scott-Smith

Emeritus Editor: Lorna Lloyd

The volumes in this series seek to advance the study and understanding of diplomacy in its many forms. Diplomacy remains a vital component of global affairs, and it influences and is influenced by its environment and the context in which it is conducted. It is an activity of great relevance for International Studies, International History, and of course Diplomatic Studies. The series covers historical, conceptual, and practical studies of diplomacy.

Previously published by Bloomsbury:

*21st Century Diplomacy: A Practitioner's Guide* by Kishan S. Rana  
*A Cornerstone of Modern Diplomacy: Britain and the Negotiation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations* by Kai Bruns  
*David Bruce and Diplomatic Practice: An American Ambassador in London, 1961-9*  
by John W. Young  
*Embassies in Armed Conflict* by G.R. Berridge

Published by Manchester University Press:

*Reasserting America in the 1970s* edited by Hallvard Notaker, Giles Scott-Smith, and David J. Snyder  
*The diplomacy of decolonisation: America, Britain and the United Nations during the Congo crisis 1960-64* by Alanna O'Malley

**Sport and diplomacy**  
**Games within games**

Edited by  
J. Simon Rofe

**Manchester University Press**

## Friendship is solidarity: the Chinese ping-pong team visits Africa in 1962\*

Amanda Shuman

There is great promise in these [Ghanaian] West African players and one day, soon, they'll make the table tennis world sit up and applaud.

Rong Guotuan, China's first ping-pong world champion, following the team's visit to Africa in 1962.<sup>1</sup>

Many people today are aware of the so-called 'ping-pong diplomacy' that helped thaw US–China relations in the early 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Few know that the Chinese leadership already had two decades of experience using sport, including ping-pong, for diplomacy. There had been an official desire in China to see athletes represent the nation through their athletic success on the world stage for several decades prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949.<sup>3</sup> The PRC leadership, however, was the first to use international sport for its broader foreign and domestic policy goals. In the 1950s, as the PRC battled with the Republic of China (ROC-Taiwan) for international recognition in sport and beyond, sport became a prominent site for legitimising the new socialist state and solidifying its place within the Soviet-led socialist world. Chinese leaders and media touted exchanges that focused on 'learning from the Soviet Union' (*xuexi Sulian*) and the socialist bloc as proof of growing friendship and solidarity between 'fraternal countries' (*xiongdi guojia*).<sup>4</sup>

By the late 1950s, however, the political tides had already begun to turn. When Rong Guotuan won the men's singles title at the 1959 Table Tennis World Championships – the first Chinese athlete to win any major world championship – he became a national and international celebrity at a crucial moment.<sup>5</sup> China was in the midst of the Great Leap Forward, a massive political, economic and social movement that kicked off in 1958 with Mao proclaiming that the nation would overtake UK production in fifteen years.<sup>6</sup> State-sponsored sport in China had proliferated in the second half of the 1950s, culminating with the First National Games held in Beijing in October 1959. These Games, coinciding with national day celebrations, were meant to showcase a decade of progress under Communist Party rule. Chinese sports leaders argued that Rong's win represented a major achievement of the new state sports system. He was, in short, a positive image of socialist success that also extended beyond China's borders.

Less than two years later, in the face of financial disaster and widespread famine, the leadership called off the Great Leap campaign. Mao retreated while Liu Shaoqi (Mao's second in command), Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping undertook a more pragmatic approach to domestic growth.<sup>7</sup> Austerity measures implemented nationwide meant that funding for sports programmes ran out – except, that is, for top athletes like Rong. Major changes in Chinese foreign policy were taking place, including the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, the establishment of diplomatic relations with newly decolonised nations, and a rise in participation in various Afro-Asian solidarity movements. Sino-Soviet competition began in the Third World, with both sides determined to influence and gain the upper hand in national liberation struggles worldwide.<sup>8</sup> The country was broke, but Chinese leaders were determined to build relations with new allies while positioning China as the ideologically superior socialist model, and they believed sport could help accomplish this.

PRC leaders thus engaged in a form of sports diplomacy in the 1960s explicitly for the purposes of improving China's image and wielding what in today's terms would be called 'soft power'.<sup>9</sup> The state intended its athletes and sports leaders to deliver a positive image of the nation through 'cultural attraction, ideology, and international institutions' and legitimate its alternative model of socialist development 'in the eyes of others'.<sup>10</sup> Chinese sports diplomacy was also a form of public diplomacy that aimed to spread China's soft power. The leadership believed that foreign media exposure of its sports teams, as well as drawing large audiences of spectators for competitions and exhibition matches, would 'influence broader opinion in foreign societies'.<sup>11</sup> The peak of propaganda efforts came with the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEF) movement, a Sino-Indonesian-sponsored challenge to the International Olympic Committee's dominance in sport that also attempted to solidify China's geopolitical position as a Third World leader.<sup>12</sup>

More typical than such mega-events, however, were state-sponsored sports delegation visits, in which sports leaders and top athletes like Rong served as bona fide diplomats. This was especially true of Chinese involvement in international sport in the 1950s and 1960s, which revolved almost exclusively around smaller sports competitions and delegation visits.<sup>13</sup> At a time when travel for Chinese citizens was severely restricted, the State Sports Commission and the Chinese Foreign Ministry worked together to send Chinese sports delegations abroad and receive foreign delegations in China. The plethora of official documents produced during official sports visits speaks to their broader diplomatic importance to the Chinese state.<sup>14</sup> As far as the leadership was concerned, these could be just as successful or even more successful than larger events in expanding Chinese influence and in gathering leaders together for diplomatic purposes.

Sports delegation visits between China and recently decolonised countries in the 1960s carried out a form of diplomacy that emphasised affective relations. The goal of visits was to build 'friendship' – a code word for cultivating better strategic political relations under the umbrella of 'people's diplomacy'. This entailed making 'as many friends as possible' through direct people-to-people contact, while also exposing enemies and promoting China.<sup>15</sup> These visits sought to reinforce political solidarities by

strengthening emotional bonds between those involved, while showcasing a Chinese brand of socialism that leaders hoped would appeal to these new 'friends'. This brand professed, among other things, placing the revolutionary struggle of oppressed peoples against colonialism and imperialism above the struggle against capitalism.<sup>16</sup> PRC leaders firmly believed that underdeveloped African and Asian countries could learn from China's alternative (non-Soviet) socialist path of development. They were, in other words, building personal affect in an effort to take the lead over the Soviet Union in the Third World.

In China, sport delegation visits in the 1960s were also always simultaneously about reinforcing foreign and domestic policies.<sup>17</sup> The official framing of visits in the domestic media – which usually highlighted meetings and receptions with important political leaders and always claimed 'warm' relations between 'friends' – was clearly geared towards a general readership. In the wake of the Sino-Soviet split, such visits were used to teach the Chinese public about the nation's position in the world among new 'friends' and to demonstrate the early successes of China's own socialist path.

Following a brief background to the relationship between sport and the Chinese Communist Party's understanding of the world, the remainder of this chapter provides a case study of the Chinese ping-pong team's tour of several African countries (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, and the United Arab Republic (UAR)-Egypt) in spring 1962.<sup>18</sup> Declassified telegrams and reports from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, as well as official media, show how the Chinese leadership utilised this first-ever sports delegation sent to West Africa to strengthen political solidarities and uphold a positive image of China. Some scholars have argued that public diplomacy is distinct from propaganda because the latter is 'uninterested ... in any meaningful form of relationship building'.<sup>19</sup> Yet, as this case study demonstrates, the PRC did engage in cultivating 'meaningful' relations through the method of 'finding things in common' with their hosts.<sup>20</sup> The official Chinese media as well as the summary report from the Foreign Ministry on the visit shed light on the ways in which the leadership measured and understood diplomatic efforts through sport – sometimes in very concrete ways, but more often in terms of building affective relations. Furthermore, the Chinese leadership made no distinction between public diplomacy and propaganda. The ping-pong team's popularity abroad and its sports achievements were portrayed officially with an air of superiority, and as evidence of Chinese socialist influence burgeoning in Africa, while the team's exchange of sports skills and participation in non-sports activities was touted as proof of a growing 'friendship' that represented genuine political solidarity. In sum, Chinese leaders considered the visit a resounding diplomatic and propaganda success.

### Placing China on the world stage through sport

Sports development in the Mao years (1949–76) was closely connected to the oscillations of official understandings of China's place in the world. Chinese Communist Party leaders understood their nation as belonging to a global community made

up of other nations and peoples with similar historical backgrounds, all engaged in a struggle against colonialism and imperialism – a community often described in secondary literature as the ‘Third World’.<sup>21</sup> This was especially true after the 1955 Bandung Conference, but the origins of this understanding pre-date the founding of the People’s Republic of China.<sup>22</sup>

As early as 1940, Mao Zedong advocated finding a ‘third state’ of development that could serve former colonial and semi-colonial states in their transition to socialism.<sup>23</sup> This transitional ‘new democratic’ state would differ from that found in the Soviet Union, by skipping the bourgeois or capitalist dictatorship stage and moving directly into a society headed by a proletarian-led, joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. Mao also argued, however, that the Chinese revolution needed the assistance of the Soviet Union in order to succeed. Thus, in the first few years of the PRC, the Chinese Communist Party carried out a programme of ‘New Democracy’ at the same time that it also promoted ‘learning from the Soviet Union’ under the official policy of ‘leaning to one side’.<sup>24</sup> The development of Chinese sports programmes and sports exchanges in the first half of the 1950s sought to fulfil the goals of New Democracy, while also adopting Soviet-inspired sports programmes in China.<sup>25</sup> In the late 1950s, as Mao became increasingly disillusioned with Khrushchev’s policies of de-Stalinisation, the PRC shifted away from following the Soviet Union and towards creating a Chinese socialist model in the world of sport.<sup>26</sup> By the time the Great Leap Forward began in 1958, although Soviet-inspired models remained, PRC leaders had decided to forge their own path in sport.<sup>27</sup>

Parallel to these developments, the 1955 Bandung Conference gave voice to an emergent global community of recently decolonised and Third World nations. Recent scholarship on this conference has especially emphasised its utmost importance in helping forge solidarities among participants by building on their emotions, creating what Christopher Lee has called a ‘community of feeling’.<sup>28</sup> United primarily (and sometimes only) through a sense of shared historical struggle against imperialism and colonialism, leaders of participating nations sought to create new organisations for themselves, such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organization (AAPSO).<sup>29</sup> The PRC leadership professed an early interest in these developments; Premier Zhou Enlai argued in his closing speech at Bandung that cooperation was possible and achievements could be made simply ‘because we peoples of the Asian and African countries share the same fate and the same desires’.<sup>30</sup> In the late 1950s, as Sino-Soviet relations grew tense and the Great Leap Forward began, the Chinese government invested more heavily in building relations with newly independent African states and in supporting various national liberation movements.<sup>31</sup> This included sending official delegations on visits to African countries (especially the UAR and Algeria) and paying for African delegations to come to China to engage in ‘people’s diplomacy’. Through these visits, the government worked to generate favourable impressions and new contacts that would help the PRC gain further recognition while convincing Africans that Chinese support for their independence was genuine.<sup>32</sup>

Sino-Soviet relations meanwhile deteriorated further after 1960 and culminated in a split. Chinese leaders had come to believe that China, as the greatest underdeveloped

nation in the world that had already undergone a social revolution, should lead the rest of the world's revolutionary movements.<sup>33</sup> In their analysis, the Soviet Union had abandoned the international socialist movement and forgotten about oppressed peoples around the world; the PRC should instead set the example. The fundamental ideological difference between the Chinese and Soviet communist parties in these years was in their divergent understandings of the world revolution. Soviet leaders, as they had done for decades, prioritised an anti-capitalist revolution, while Chinese leaders emphasised an anti-imperialist one.<sup>34</sup>

As the two sides competed for influence in the Third World, sport played an increasing role in Chinese efforts to become more involved in burgeoning African and Asian solidarity movements. In fact, the state-sponsored development of elite competitive sport in China in the 1960s existed almost solely for the purpose of propagating the Party's alternative socialist path within the global community – especially to recently decolonised nations in Africa and Asia.

### Afro-Asian solidarity and Chinese sports diplomacy in the 1960s

Between 1961 and 1965, when the influence of Chinese leaders vis-à-vis Soviet and Indian leaders in the AAPSO reached its height, sports also played an important role in expanding Chinese influence in Africa.<sup>35</sup> Although in mid-1960 China had diplomatic relations with just five African countries (the UAR, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan and Guinea), by July 1965 it had established relations with twenty.<sup>36</sup> Official sport visits and other cultural exchanges with these nations, which often occurred after the signing of cultural cooperation agreements, helped foster diplomatic relations at a time when prominent international organisations like the United Nations did not recognise the PRC.<sup>37</sup> PRC leaders clearly believed that sending around cultural delegations could and did promote a favourable image of China and Chinese socialism. Moreover, because surprisingly little was known about some of these countries, delegation visits became an avenue for basic knowledge acquisition on new allies.<sup>38</sup> Information gathered during a visit helped provide subject matter for Chinese foreign propaganda during this period, which expanded even as delegation members themselves sometimes helped distribute it.<sup>39</sup>

The production in China of official reports and media on delegation visits also served an important but often overlooked purpose: helping reshape the worldviews of a domestic audience. By employing official reports and media to fashion delegations as expressions of China's solidarity with and guiding role among oppressed peoples in African and Asian nations, the Chinese leadership conveyed to its own citizens a new position in the world for China in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split.<sup>40</sup> As Julia Strauss has argued, the rhetoric used in Chinese publications was not simply 'empty words', but rather a method of legitimating the state's policies and attempting to 'attract, persuade, mobilize or consolidate support within'.<sup>41</sup> Sports interactions with the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc in the 1950s, in fact, had already set a precedent in Chinese official media. Coverage of well-known Soviet and socialist bloc athletes,

as well as numerous delegation visits, had helped disseminate to the general public China's geopolitical position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and its allies.<sup>42</sup> Sport was therefore already a popular and familiar medium for teaching ordinary citizens about their nation's role in the world, but the message in the 1960s was different. Instead of 'friendly' learning from the Soviet Union and socialist bloc, 'friendship' was reserved for those engaged in the worldwide struggle against colonialism and imperialism, and Chinese socialism was the model for oppressed peoples everywhere to follow. Sports exchanges and competitions became sites where Chinese leaders sought to foster affective relations based on these principles.

By the early 1960s, concerted attempts to use international sport to build relations with African and Asian nations and negotiate Afro-Asian solidarities began with ping-pong. China's earlier international success in the sport, as well as the fact that the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) was one of the few international sports organisations that consistently recognised the PRC, also meant that the state continued to heavily fund the sport after the Great Leap Forward.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the ITTF gave the nation its first opportunity to host a major international sporting event, and in April 1961 Beijing was the site of the World Championships. Athletes from more than thirty nations showed up to this event – where they watched Chinese players take home most of the awards.<sup>44</sup>

The ping-pong team's success attracted attention worldwide, and in 1962 it received a request that presented a unique opportunity. In January, the Ghanaian central sports council contacted the Chinese Foreign Ministry, via its embassy in Beijing, to ask for a ping-pong delegation to be sent to Ghana in May or June of that year.<sup>45</sup> Ghana had joined the ITTF in 1961 and was one of only two African nations to send a delegation to the World Championships in Beijing where, according to official results, the players lost every match.<sup>46</sup> The request made in 1962 asked for five players (three male and two female) and for a coach who would then remain in Ghana for a year, all expenses paid, to help train the national team for the upcoming first Pan-African championships to be held in Cairo in September.<sup>47</sup> As was typical for delegation visits, China was responsible for travel costs to and from the country, and then Ghana would take care of lodging, food and in-country transportation. The Chinese side partially agreed to the request, adding another female player, a group leader and a French translator to the delegation.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, the *Daily Graphic* reported that the visit would without a doubt 'give a new fillip to the game in Ghana'.<sup>49</sup> The Ghana Table Tennis Federation enthusiastically prepared for the visit by holding interregional championships to select players for further training. The Chinese side revised down the request for a coach to stay a year in Ghana to three months, although the Ghanaian side hoped that one might come in the future for a year and a half to train a new coach.<sup>50</sup> Most importantly, the PRC leadership decided this was an ideal chance for the delegation to visit several additional African countries. At a time in which Chinese leaders had little experience with West Africa, the delegation could at the very least make a good impression and gather information on some of these countries.

So in April 1962, a year after the World Championships held in Beijing and a year and a half before Zhou Enlai's high-profile tour of Africa, the government sent its top



ping-pong athletes to the continent.<sup>51</sup> Over the course of two months, the Chinese athletes visited the UAR, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Sudan. In charge of the ping-pong delegation was Huang Zhong, vice-chair of the State Sports Commission, and a cadre trusted by the Chinese top leadership. The Commission's plan for the visit stated that, since it would be the first time a Chinese sports team was going to West Africa, the team's mission would be to support diplomatic work, hold 'friendship activities' (*youhao huodong*), carry out sports exchanges that would foster understanding and friendship, and 'expand our nation's political influence'.<sup>52</sup> Though not explicitly stated, the leadership believed that the high-profile ping-pong players had the potential to propagate a positive image of China in a way that might appeal to a broader audience, especially in countries like Ghana and the UAR where the sport was already popular.

The Chinese press reported on the delegation's activities during the visit, often delivering timely but brief accounts of where the delegation was and if they had played any matches. Articles in *People's Daily* (for a domestic audience) and *New China News Agency* (for an international audience) rarely mentioned anything further about matches or players, but frequently described the team's effusive welcome everywhere they went and listed the names of any important political leaders they had met. During the visit, *New China News Agency* described the team's reception as 'warm' and 'cordial' – such as being 'warmly welcomed' upon arrival or 'warmly applauded' during a match – no fewer than twenty-two times, while the terms 'friendship' and 'friendly' made at least nineteen appearances.<sup>53</sup> Twenty-five times articles named African sports leaders, finance ministers, presidents and other dignitaries. Though much is missing about the actual activities and meetings, the Chinese message delivered was one of growing friendly relations with Africans.

Articles published in China afterwards and Huang's post-visit summary report sent to the Foreign Ministry provide more details on the nature of the visit. Huang's report begins by summarising the basic facts, including that Coach Wang Chuanyao had remained in Ghana to work.<sup>54</sup> The team had played thirty-four matches and exhibitions, thirteen of which occurred in Guinea and twelve in Ghana, and it had won the vast majority. Huang also estimated a total audience of approximately 15,000 that had come to see the team play. The report then moves straight into outlining the diplomatic efforts, including the ping-pong team's 'warm' reception and courting by leaders at all levels in each country. This included a high-profile meeting with Guinean president Sékou Touré at the Presidential Palace, mentioned not only in Huang's report but also in an article published in the English-language *China's Sports* (an official mouthpiece) that was ostensibly penned by Rong Guotuan himself.<sup>55</sup>

Rong's article and Huang's report both went to great lengths to list the ways in which the delegation had worked to build China–Africa solidarities by developing affective bonds with its hosts. This often had little to do with sport and everything to do with strengthening relations or connections (*guanxi*) as one might find in China, such as in spending time together and exchanging small gifts. Associated with the concept of feelings (*ganqing*), the cultivation of *guanxi* is even today often attached to (and sometimes conflated with) 'friendship'.<sup>56</sup> Thus when Rong states that 'friends' in Mali gifted the team handbags and wallets made of crocodile skin following a sight-

seeing visit to a crocodile park in Bamako, he calls these 'tokens of the friendship the Mali people have for the Chinese people'.<sup>57</sup> The gift exchange in Sudan was apparently so emotional that everyone was 'moved to tears' (*gandong de liulei*).<sup>58</sup> Rong's article and Huang's report also worked to convince their readers that relations on both sides were profound, authentic and enduring. For example, Ghana's national men's and women's singles champions, E. A. Quaye and Ethel Jacks, who had both attended the 1961 World Championships in Beijing, greeted the team at the airport with a Chinese folk song that was 'moving to hear' from 'Ghanaian friends'.<sup>59</sup> In the UAR, a vice-president of the ITTF invited the players to his home, which was decorated with Chinese paintings, ornaments, and figurines, showing his 'esteem and affection ... for our country'.<sup>60</sup> Youth that had studied in China came to greet the team after matches in the UAR, including a young Chinese-speaking couple who spent an evening with the team, gave them a family photo and stated that they wanted to go back to China for a visit. A Chinese folk song, a house decorated in a Chinese style and a Chinese-speaking couple dreaming of China: the article recollected such comments not just as proof of how these people had deeply personal relationships with the country, but also of how their strong admiration for it reflected China's growing influence in Africa.

During the visit, the team's non-sports activities helped reinforce a bond based on narratives of shared historical struggle against colonialism and imperialism. In their meeting with Touré, Rong's article reported, the Guinean president had reiterated that the 'friendship' between the Chinese and Guinean peoples was based on 'our common aim and common anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist sentiments'.<sup>61</sup> Emphasising commonalities was considered essential in creating better relations with Africans.<sup>62</sup> Huang stressed in his report that the team had used all opportunities – from the fourteen official meetings with leaders to numerous other sports and non-sports activities – to express the 'deep camaraderie' (*shenhou qingyi*) between the Chinese and African people (figure 6.1). This included visits to important historic and cultural sites in order to learn about the 'heroic struggle' of African people against imperialism and colonialism.<sup>63</sup> In Ghana, for example, the delegation visited the Cape Coast Castle, a black slave fort that had served as a prison in colonial times, the report noting that slaves from this particular location had also been 'fettered and handcuffed' and then sent to North America.<sup>64</sup> When visiting the UAR, the team made a stop at Port Said, where they saw vestiges of the 1956 Suez Crisis – or, in the words of the report, where the Egypt had resisted 'the attack of English and French imperialism'<sup>65</sup> – such as the tomb of the unknown soldier (figure 6.2).<sup>66</sup> The delegation found a particularly resonant historical thread when they visited the memorial of Khartoum Mahdi in Sudan, where they saw the yellow robe and mandarin jacket presented to British general Charles Gordon by the Qing court for his help in suppressing the Taiping rebellion in the 1860s. Chinese revolutionary leaders, including Mao, admired the Taiping rebels as early heroes in their attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty, and they viewed Gordon as an interfering British colonialist siding with the Qing. Gordon was later killed during an attempt to suppress Mahdist rebels in Khartoum and with his clothing on display had thus been, according to the report, 'duly punished' in Sudan.<sup>67</sup> Huang concluded from all of these experiences that the team had received a 'profound education'



6.1 'They found friendship warm and deep'. Chinese national team ping-pong players Sun Meiyong (left) and Hu Keming (right) with Khadidjata Diallo of Guinea



6.2 Team leader Huang Zhong places a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Port Said

in both patriotism and internationalism,<sup>68</sup> but performing these ritual visits while drawing upon the language of a shared historical struggle against colonialism and imperialism also fell in line with Mao's 1956 pronouncement to 'use the past to serve the present, make the foreign serve China'.<sup>69</sup> Such non-sports sightseeing visits were, in other words, clearly meant to develop affective bonds between Chinese guests and their local hosts that would boost their 'friendship' in a broader sense – and fulfil a PRC political agenda.

Couched in terms of Afro-Asian solidarity, the 1962 sports delegation also went beyond affect by working to promote China's national image and Chinese socialism through the lens of sport. In the UAR, Huang's report noted that the visit was preceded by one week of showing a documentary on Chinese ping-pong in movie theatres, and the Chinese team's first match was broadcast on television.<sup>70</sup> Although Huang does not specify who decided to show the film, where it was shown, or who watched it, the implication throughout the report is that the team's reputation in these countries was already well established and they were very popular. Local media had also helped boost the team's image. Ghana's *Daily Graphic* published a series of articles about the team, including brief biographies on the players and a front-page group photo of the 'Tennis stars' the day prior to their arrival,<sup>71</sup> as well as subsequent reports on exhibition matches that managed to 'thrill the fans'.<sup>72</sup> (The latter included Huang losing in a 'special exhibition match' to Kofi Baako, Ghana's Minister of Defense and Table Tennis Federation chair.) Huang reported that the team had been overwhelmed by fans' requests for autographs and photos after each match held in the UAR, and in every country youth had become 'wildly excited' after seeing the team play.<sup>73</sup> The *Ghanaian Times* meanwhile published an article calling the 1961 World Championship in Beijing a 'milestone' in which it noted that sixteen of the world's best players now came from China. The Chinese report noted that this article attributed China's achievements to an improvement in Chinese peoples' material and cultural lives under socialism. According to Huang, grand receptions given for the ping-pong team in every country were also an indication of respect for China as a whole, as were comments throughout the visit praising China's socialist construction, anti-imperialist position and 'support for all oppressed peoples struggling for independence'.<sup>74</sup> The popularity of this Chinese ping-pong delegation, the report thus insinuated, represented a broader admiration of African peoples towards China and Chinese socialism.

Furthermore, despite public proclamations about shared struggles and the building of 'friendship', what Huang's internal report to the Foreign Ministry clearly indicates is that the PRC leadership never saw relations with African countries as equal. The report constantly attempts to place China and Chinese socialism on a pedestal, and suggests that PRC superiority extended beyond sport. Huang argued that the visit showed African people China's 'vigorous development' across all of society. For example, he noted that female ping-pong players from China, where officially the slogan was 'men and women are equal', had especially drawn attention in Guinea, Mali and Sudan, 'where women have not been fully liberated'.<sup>75</sup> The implication here was that a morally superior society – which China already had but these countries had yet to

achieve – included the emancipation of women. Huang cited the Guinean president Touré as having praised the Chinese leadership and socialist system for support of the worldwide people's liberation movement based on a real desire to eliminate the foundation of imperialism. Ghana's national defence leader meanwhile stated that Ghana could learn a lot from China's experience with socialist construction. It probably helped that in the previous year Chinese leaders had already satisfied some Ghanaian ping-pong-related requests, such as providing them with an unspecified number of paddles and issues of the English-language magazine *China's Sports*.<sup>76</sup> The gifting of these shows how, in the eyes of Chinese leaders, an inexpensive request for sports items could easily be fulfilled even when the country was financially strapped – if, that is, it served a strategic foreign policy goal and especially if it included propaganda that might raise China's image and influence in a particular country.

While a major task of this visit was raising or reinforcing China's image through exposure of the ping-pong team, the report also made some general observations on sports programmes in these countries. Huang, for example, commented that sports activities in African countries, especially Guinea, Mali and Sudan, were somewhat 'backward' and their sports programmes 'incomplete', lacking mass participation, appropriate sports facilities and equipment, and (especially) specialised sports talent. The only exception to this was some 'rather good' advances made in sport in the UAR, where the delegation watched the national football team beat the European champions Portugal.<sup>77</sup> The report added with disgust, however, that sport in the UAR was unfortunately 'in the hands of the rich' – a comment that further disparaged President Nasser and the Soviet-leaning UAR leadership while also insinuating that the UAR could not be trusted. Nevertheless, the report noted that the future for all of these African countries was bright because following independence their governments had placed a lot of importance on sports. In Ghana, for example, soccer, ping-pong, field hockey, cricket and boxing were not only widespread, but the government was also ambitious and seeking to lead Africa in them. Guinea was in the middle of building a stadium to seat 25,000 and developing new programmes not just in ping-pong but also in gymnastics. Furthermore, an All-African Sports Federation established earlier in the year had branches in individual sports disciplines, some of which had already held championships.<sup>78</sup> This kind of information gave the Chinese leadership some ideas on the current state of sport that could then be used either for spreading its own influence in specific countries, or in shoring up potential supporters for other battles brewing in the world of international sport.<sup>79</sup>

In fact, the Chinese ping-pong delegation had already begun to spread its influence by concretely engaging with sports development in these countries. Where the skill level was considered 'low', such as in Guinea and Mali, the Chinese delegation helped establish ping-pong associations, visited schools and work units at all levels, and held various exhibitions for the masses. A few months prior to this visit, the Chinese government had already made the decision to send Guinea a modest amount of sports equipment, including a few ping-pong tables.<sup>80</sup> These endeavours also clearly met with some success in Mali, which subsequently set up a national Table Tennis Federation and in 1963 became a member of the International Table

Tennis Federation.<sup>81</sup> In Ghana and Egypt, where the skill level was considered better – Ghanaian E. A. Quaye was West African champion in men's singles and had played in the 1961 ITTF World Championships in Beijing – the focus was on promoting and extending the sport through exhibitions held at, for example, local schools.<sup>82</sup> Several practice competitions were also held with the Ghanaian national team to help improve their skills.

Nevertheless, as the post-visit report indicates, the Chinese leadership measured the success of the 1962 visit less in terms of local sports endeavours and more in terms of what it did to build affective relations with Africans and boost China's image in these countries. Chinese official media wasted no time in delivering the good news to a home audience. The State Sports Commission held a reception on 27 June, less than a week after the delegation had returned to Beijing, to honour the countries for their hospitality. Speaking to a room full of invited envoys and diplomats from these countries, Foreign Minister Chen Yi thanked the African countries for their warm reception of the ping-pong team before then adding that China and these countries found themselves in a similar situation: standing up to oppression from imperialism and colonialism.<sup>83</sup> *People's Daily* also quoted the Ghanaian ambassador to China as having stated that the visit had left a 'deep impression' and encouraged 'friendship' between 'the peoples of China and Africa'.<sup>84</sup> Other leaders from the State Sports Commission, the Foreign Ministry and the Chinese-African People's Friendship Association were also present. And, of course, so were the ping-pong players, who played an exhibition match for these guests following the reception.

## Conclusion

Over the course of 1965 and 1966, Chinese politics became increasingly radical and militant. Mao's personality cult gained new traction following his epic swim in July 1966 – an event that included a colour video of Mao bobbing around the Yangzi and was understood in China as a display of the ageing leader's good health – and the subsequent rise of Red Guard factions.<sup>85</sup> African delegations visiting China in the summer and autumn of 1966 experienced some of this first hand when they received a heavy dose of Chinese socialism that emphasised Mao Zedong thought.<sup>86</sup> In late 1966, sports leaders and top athletes came under heavy criticism, and sports activities – including delegation visits – had largely ceased by the end of the decade. Over the course of several months in 1968, three famous ping-pong players, including Rong Guotuan, committed suicide.<sup>87</sup>

In the early 1970s, the leadership revitalised ping-pong and ushered in the adoption of an official sports policy in China known as 'friendship first, competition second'.<sup>88</sup> The policy and accompanying slogan instructed athletes and leaders to put 'friendship' above all else at international sports competitions and during delegation visits, and this was especially true with African and Asian nations. One prominent example was the Afro-Asian Table Tennis Friendship Invitational Tournament held in Beijing in November 1971. The Chinese press emphasised repeatedly that the purpose of

the event was 'enhancing friendship' with people from African and Asian countries and promoting table tennis development.<sup>89</sup> The international press often portrayed this approach as a new attempt on the part of the Chinese Party-state to broaden the scope of its amicable foreign relations. 'Ping-pong diplomacy', as it continues to be well known today, helped thaw Sino-American relations – and the PRC joined the United Nations in October 1971. Yet, as I have shown, this official soft power sports policy to create 'friendly' foreign relations with African and Asian nations existed in the previous decade.

For the Chinese leadership, the 1962 visit of the ping-pong team to Africa was clearly considered a successful use of sport for diplomacy. In his 2011 book, Joseph Nye cites a recent book of multinational surveys as having deemed China's soft power efforts 'ineffective'.<sup>90</sup> He argues that although persuasion in soft power can be manipulative, attractiveness ultimately depends on 'emotional appeals and narratives' made by non-elites (i.e. unofficial third parties).<sup>91</sup> Emotion was indeed at the very heart of Chinese sports diplomacy in the 1960s, but it was dictated according to the Chinese leadership and not the masses. This did not make these visits ineffective. On the contrary, Chinese leaders measured the success of a visit both tangibly in terms of numbers or visits with leaders, as well as intangibly in their building of affective relations ('friendship') between delegation members, their African hosts and any other Africans with whom the Chinese team came in contact during a visit. As Anne-Marie Brady has previously noted, China's 'friendship diplomacy is not just cultural diplomacy – it's a remarkably effective way to deal with the outside world'.<sup>92</sup> This was certainly the case with sports diplomacy under Mao.

The long-term political success of the 1960s sports delegation visits might be difficult to assess, but the leadership used the vocabulary, narratives and framework from this visit – and likely others, in combination with the leadership of its embassies in these countries – to aid subsequent efforts at cultivating Sino-African relations. The history of Ghana's Cape Coast castle and Gordon's 'punishment' in Sudan, for example, both made it into speeches given by Zhou Enlai when he visited these countries in January 1964 as part of his high-profile African tour.<sup>93</sup> Such narratives linking China with many African countries based on a colonial past are, in fact, still in use today: visiting the Khalifa museum to see Gordon's infamous 'yellow jacket' continues to be a sightseeing stop for Chinese delegations.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the ping-pong team's connections in several African countries clearly helped bolster these countries' participation in later events like the Afro-Asian tournament in 1971.<sup>95</sup> And, as the famous US ping-pong team visit to China indicated, the Chinese leadership knew how to use sports diplomacy to its advantage.

Overall, Chinese leaders used elite sport in the 1960s to accomplish goals directly related to China's international and domestic political agendas. In the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward and Sino-Soviet split, elite sport helped open up new transnational networks and establish foreign relations that reconfigured China's place in the world. Central-level sports policies siphoned limited state resources to athletic superstars with the hope that Chinese athletes would reach and compete at world levels, break world records and win glory for China in the international arena. This,

they believed, would truly elevate the nation's image. China's official media coverage of its athletes at mega-events like the GANEFO, as well as during smaller sports delegation visits, was intended to spread a positive national image to recently decolonised Third World nations and a domestic audience. Persuading local Chinese – whether leaders, athletes or ordinary citizens – has always been as important to the Chinese government as reaching foreigners. At a time in which the country was recovering from the Great Leap Forward and the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, this method of sports diplomacy helped legitimate the regime's policies and deliver a new understanding of China's place in the world to an international as well as domestic audience.

## Notes

- \* I would like to thank Maggie Greene, Chuck Kraus, Heather Dichter and Simon Rofe for their insightful comments on this piece. A special thank you to Matt Johnson for providing crucial feedback on an earlier draft. I am also grateful for the assistance of Claire Nicolas in locating copies of newspaper articles from Ghana.
- 1 Rong Guotuan, 'African tour', *China's Sports*, 4 (1962), 8.
- 2 For a recent account of this famous period, see Nicholas Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: The Secret History Behind the Game That Changed the World* (New York: Scribner, 2014), especially 'Part three: East meets West', 165–234.
- 3 Both Andrew Morris and Xu Guoqi have looked at how Chinese interest in international sport in the first decades of the twentieth century stemmed from a wish to raise national image in the world. Andrew Morris, *Marrow of the National* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004); Xu Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sport, 1895–2008* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- 4 As part of the official policy to 'learn from the Soviet Union', the Chinese sports world frequently interacted with the Soviet Union and the Soviet-led socialist bloc through sports exchanges. Amanda Shuman, 'The Politics of Socialist Athletics', PhD dissertation, University of California Santa Cruz, 2014, 91–112.
- 5 In addition to the usual claims in the official China media that Rong brought 'glory to the motherland', the *Daily Mirror* in London recognised Rong's achievement as one of those sporting 'miracles' performed by nations 'virtually overnight'. Quoted in Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy*, 86. However, Rong was no ordinary athlete. Born in Hong Kong to a family originally from a town in nearby Guangdong province, the PRC leadership recruited him 'back' to the mainland in the 1950s exclusively to play ping-pong for the new socialist state. In the 1950s, the designation given to athletes like Rong – of which there were others – was 'returned Chinese'. Rong's decision to play for the PRC was probably influenced by a series of fortuitous events: top leaders He Long and Chen Yi called him to a private meeting to make an offer; Jiang Yongning, another famous player and colleague from Hong Kong, was already in Guangzhou and the two met to discuss the matter; and finally, despite Rong being a top player, the Hong Kong team did not choose him for the upcoming Asian championships. Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy*, 77–82.
- 6 R. Macfarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution Volume 2: The Great Leap Forward, 1958–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 16–17.



- 7 Lorenz Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 194.
- 8 Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
- 9 The term 'soft power', coined by Joseph Nye in 1990 and elaborated upon in subsequent articles and books, has been used to describe how liberal states with civil societies influence others through 'attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment'. However, the term has become popular in recent years in China, and Nye himself describes the Beijing Olympics and programmes such as the Confucius Institutes as forms of Chinese soft power, even while he continues to assert that this soft power cannot be successful without a civil society. Joseph S. Nye, Jr, 'China's soft power deficit', *Wall Street Journal*, 8 May 2012, available at [www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304451104577389923098678842](http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304451104577389923098678842) (accessed 13 April 2016).
- 10 Joseph S. Nye, Jr, 'Soft power', *Foreign Policy*, 80 (1990), 153–71, 167.
- 11 Jan Melissen, 'Beyond the new public diplomacy', *Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael Papers* 3 (October 2011), 9.
- 12 Amanda Shuman, 'Elite competitive sport in the People's Republic of China 1958–1966: the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEF0)', *Journal of Sport History*, 40:2 (2013).
- 13 Sports visits between China, the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc were prolific throughout the 1950s. In the case of China, the leadership publicised many of these visits in order to promote new domestic sports policies and an image of socialist solidarity for a mainland Chinese audience, in addition to the more common understanding that these were exchanges of technical expertise and knowledge. Amanda Shuman, 'Friendship and fraternal ties: learning from the Soviet Union and building the People's Republic of China through sport in the early 1950s', *The Whole World Was Watching: Sport in the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).
- 14 Some documents – including the ones I use in this chapter – reside in the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives in Beijing, which following a decade or so of opening some files, has as of 2014 closed its doors to the public once again. This makes it difficult to conduct research on Chinese delegations travelling abroad. However, documents on foreign delegations visiting China can be found in various provincial and municipal archives in areas where delegations travelled.
- 15 Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 1, 23.
- 16 Friedman, *Shadow Cold War*, 1.
- 17 Jeanne L. Wilson, 'Soft power: a comparison of discourse and practice in Russia and China', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 67:8 (2015), 1171–202, 1193. As Wilson notes, Nye understands 'soft power as a tool of foreign policy' rather than the Chinese understanding that it is also about domestic policy.
- 18 Between 1958 and 1971, Egypt was known as the United Arab Republic.
- 19 Melissen, 'Beyond the new public diplomacy', 8.
- 20 Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 14.
- 21 Alexander Cook, 'Third World Maoism', in T. Cheek (ed.), *A Critical Introduction to Mao* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), especially 288–9; Arif Dirlik, 'Spectres of the Third World: global modernity and the end of the Three Worlds',

- Third World Quarterly*, 25:1 (2004). Dirlik notes that the term 'Third World' seems to have outlived its Cold War counterpart, the 'Second World' largely because 'the invention pointed to certain realities that endowed the concept with substance' (Dirlik, 'Spectres', 135). Specifically, the use of the term 'Third World' during the Cold War was the product of ideological restructuring based on the teleology of capitalism, where the First World was capitalism, the Second World was socialism, and the Third World was everything else and was set on a path towards reaching the First and Second World. The problem with the Cold War use of such a term, according to Dirlik, is that it did not take into account a 'Third World' concept that consisted of a 'complex history of the search for potential "third worlds" as developmental and utopian projects' ('Spectres', 136). The result was that the term itself marginalised and discounted these searches for alternatives by presuming all societies 'had to be headed towards either capitalism or socialism as it existed' ('Spectres', 136).
- 22 Cook, 'Third World Maoism', 289.
  - 23 Mao Zedong, 'On new democracy', January 1940, available at, [www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2\\_26.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm) (accessed 1 September 2014).
  - 24 This policy accepted the Soviet Union as the leader of the international socialist movement and provided for a Sino-Soviet alliance in foreign affairs. It also included Soviet assistance to numerous Chinese domestic policies related to the arts, culture, education and sciences. T. P. Bernstein and H. Y. Li (eds), *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949–Present* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011); Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 31–3; Shen Zhihua and Li Danhui, *After Leaning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War* (Washington, DC and Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford University Press, 2011), 118.
  - 25 Shuman, 'The politics of socialist athletics', 46–51.
  - 26 Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 46–7.
  - 27 Shuman, 'The politics of socialist athletics', 200–34.
  - 28 Christopher J. Lee, 'Introduction: between a moment and an era: the origins and afterlives of Bandung', in C. J. Lee (ed.), *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Movement and its Political Afterlives* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 25.
  - 29 Lee, 'Introduction', 25–6; Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, new edn, 2011), 106.
  - 30 'Speech by Premier Zhou Enlai at the Closing Session of the Asian–African Conference', 24 April 1955, History and Public Policy Programme Digital Archive, Translation from China and the Asian–African Conference (Documents) (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1955), 29–31, available at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121624> (accessed 26 July 2016).
  - 31 Alaba Ogunsanwo, *China's Policy in Africa 1958–1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 15–60.
  - 32 Ogunsanwo, *China's Policy in Africa*, 31–5. According to Ogunsanwo, these were largely successful politically even though the Chinese did not have the ability to provide economic aid (as compared with the US or the Soviet Union).
  - 33 Mao Zedong, 'Speech at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee', September 24, 1962, available at [www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8\\_63.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_63.htm) (accessed 24 November 2014); Franz Schurmann,

- Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), 29, 37–43.
- 34 Friedman, *Shadow Cold War*, 2.
  - 35 Omar Ali Amer, 'China and the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization', PhD dissertation, Université de Genève Institut Universitaire de Hautes Études Internationales, 1972, 10.
  - 36 Bruce Larkin, *China and Africa 1949–1970: The Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 66–7. Relations with Burundi had already been suspended, however, by early 1965.
  - 37 Ogunsanwo, *China's Policy in Africa*, 84.
  - 38 Friedman, *Shadow Cold War*, 51. Friedman argues that Chinese expertise on Africa in 1961 was so dismal that it influenced diplomatic efforts. In April 1961 Mao even admitted to a visiting delegation from Africa and Asia that China did not have a 'clear understanding of African history, geography and the present situation' in Africa. Quoted in Li Anshan, 'African Studies in China in the twentieth century: a historiographical survey', *African Studies Review*, 48:1 (2005), 59–87, 62. The Institute of African-Asian Studies (under the Central Party External Ministry and Chinese Academy for Social Sciences) was only founded in July 1961 (Li, 'African Studies', 63).
  - 39 Çağdaş Üngör, 'Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949–1976)', PhD dissertation, Binghamton University (SUNY), 2009, 196, 236. Üngör calls the period from the Great Leap Forward to the Cultural Revolution a 'golden age' for Chinese foreign propaganda like Radio Peking and the Foreign Languages Press ('Distant Comrade', 315, 317–18).
  - 40 Zachary Scarlett shows how official media accomplished this by creating new kinds of Maoist taxonomies that 'recategorized, remapped and reordered the rest of the world'. Zachary Scarlett, 'China After the Sino-Soviet Split: Maoist Politics, Global Narratives, and the Imagination of the World', PhD dissertation, Northeastern University, 2012, 48.
  - 41 Julia Strauss, 'The past in the present: historical and rhetorical lineages in China's relations with Africa', *China Quarterly*, 199 (2009), 777–95, 779.
  - 42 Shuman, 'The politics of socialist athletics', 93.
  - 43 The ITTF president at the time, Ivor Montagu, was a staunch communist (a British spy for the Russians) who supported the PRC and did not allow ROC participation. For more on Montagu, see Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy*.
  - 44 For an account of this event see Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy*, 120–5. Coincidentally, Beijing held this international event around the same time the central leadership and sports leaders began discussing budget cuts and readjustments across the board following the disaster of the Great Leap Forward.
  - 45 Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives (CFMA) 108–00816–01: telegram sent by the Ghanaian Embassy to the State Sports Committee and International Cultural Affairs Committee, 3 January 1962.
  - 46 'The entire results booklet of the 1961 World Championship can be found online in the ITTF archives available at [www.ittf.com/museum/archives/index.html](http://www.ittf.com/museum/archives/index.html) (accessed 18 April 2016). From the main page, select '1961- Peking' from the dropdown and then '37. Programs: Results' to navigate through. The only other participating nation from Africa in 1961 was Nigeria.

- 47 CFMA 108-00816-01: telegram sent from the Ghanaian Embassy to the State Sports Commission and International Cultural Affairs Committee, 3 January 1962; 'Meet the Chinese stars', *Daily Graphic*, 24 April 1962, 11.
- 48 CFMA 108-0816-01: Tiwaizi 2010 hao: Guanyu wo pingpangqiudui fangwen Jiana ji qita Feizhou guojia de qingzhi [Instructions concerning our ping-pong team's visit to Ghana and several other African countries] (undated, January or February 1962).
- 49 'China team to tour Ghana', *Daily Graphic*, 18 February 1962.
- 50 CFMA 108-0816-01: telegram sent from the Ghanaian Embassy in Beijing to the State Sports Commission and the International Cultural Affairs Committee, 28 March 1962.
- 51 Strauss, 'The past in the present', 779.
- 52 CFMA 108-00816-01: Tiwaizi 2030 hao: Zhongguo pingpangqiudui fang Fei huodong jihua [Plan of activities for the Chinese ping-pong team's visit to Africa] (undated, April or May 1962).
- 53 This is based on my own assessment of more than a dozen *New China News Agency* press releases from late April to early June 1962. I speculate that part of the reason more information was not provided in the releases is because during the actual visit Chinese officials did not yet have a firm grasp on what to expect from their hosts or the visit.
- 54 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao [Report on the Chinese ping-pong team's visit to Africa], 1 August 1962.
- 55 Rong Guotuan, 'African tour', 6.
- 56 Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 15.
- 57 Rong, 'African tour', 7.
- 58 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 59 Rong, 'African tour', 7.
- 60 Rong, 'African tour', 8.
- 61 Rong, 'African tour', 6.
- 62 Anne-Marie Brady argues that the PRC leadership has always sought to find 'things in common' when developing *guanxi* with non-Chinese. Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 14.
- 63 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 64 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 65 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 66 Rong, 'African tour', 8. The tour also included the pyramids, sphinx and the Suez Canal.
- 67 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 68 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 69 Quoted in Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 1.
- 70 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 71 'Chinese due on Saturday', 9 May 1962, 11; 'Tennis stars from China', *Daily Graphic*, 11 May 1962, 1.
- 72 'Chinese thrill the fans', *Daily Graphic*, 16 May 1962, 10.
- 73 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 74 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 75 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 76 CFMA 108-00251-07: Guanyu Jiana zuqiudui he pingpangqiudui fanghua shi

- [Concerning the visit of Ghana's soccer team and ping-pong team to China], 1–24 March 1961. Not all requests were fulfilled. A request to see the blueprints for the Beijing workers' stadium, built for the first National Games held in 1959, was denied; the Foreign Ministry noted they were 'classified' (*jimi*).
- 77 From this, Huang concluded that the Chinese national soccer team was only as good as those in Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria; in other words, soccer in the UAR was better than in China.
- 78 CFMA 108-00816-01: Zhongguo pingpangqiu dui fangwen Feizhou baogao.
- 79 This post-visit report was produced a few weeks before the opening of the 1962 Fourth Asian Games held in Jakarta, which themselves turned into a fiasco and eventually led to the creation of the Games of the New Emerging Forces. Stefan Hübner, 'The Fourth Asian Games (Jakarta 1962) in a transnational perspective: Japanese and Indian reactions to Indonesia's political instrumentalisation of the Games', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29:9 (2012), 1295–1310; Shuman, 'Elite competitive sport in the People's Republic of China 1958–1966', 265–6.
- 80 CFMA 108-00723-07: Guanyu zengsong Jineiya yaoqiu yuanzhu tiyu yongpin qikai shi [Concerning presenting as a gift Guinea's request for sports goods and equipment]. Sent from the State Sports Commission to the International Cultural Affairs Committee, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1961. China sent about 21,000 RMB worth of sports goods. The original request was from the Guinean government for over 180,000 RMB worth of equipment, but the Sports Commission suggested sending a much smaller amount, fearing that other countries might also make similar requests.
- 81 'Mali and Olympism', *Olympic Review*, 134 (December 1978), 695–9, 698; 'Minutes of the Biennial General Meeting, Prague, April 9th and 14th 1963', 2, ITTF Archive, available at [www.ittf.com/museum/archives/](http://www.ittf.com/museum/archives/) (accessed 31 March 2016).
- 82 'Chinese are here', *Daily Graphic*, 14 May 1962, 10; '39. Results: Swaythling A' in '1961 – Peking', ITTF Archive, available at [www.ittf.com/museum/archives/index.html](http://www.ittf.com/museum/archives/index.html) (accessed 19 April 2016).
- 83 'Daxie dui wo guo pingpangqiudui de reqing jiedai, guojia tiwei zhaodai Feizhou guojia shijie, Chen Yi fu zongli chuxi zhaodaihui bing zai hui shang jiangle hua' [Thanks for the warm reception of China's ping-pong team, State Sports Commission entertains envoys from African countries, Vice-Premier Chen Yi attended the reception and spoke at the meeting], *People's Daily*, 28 June 1962.
- 84 'Daxie dui wo guo pingpangqiudui de reqing jiedai, guojia tiwei zhaodai Feizhou guojia shijie, Chen Yi fu zongli chuxi zhaodaihui bing zai hui shang jiangle hua'.
- 85 Red Guards were youth groups of Mao supporters who heeded his call to 'rebel against the system' in 1966. Initially, these were primarily students in Beijing, but grew to include rebels of various backgrounds and ages. 'Living Revolution: Red Guards' on Long Bow Group, Inc., *Morning Sun: A Film and Website About Cultural Revolution*, available at [www.morningsun.org/living/redguards/redguards.html](http://www.morningsun.org/living/redguards/redguards.html) (accessed 16 May 2016). The most detailed account of the Cultural Revolution, which includes the rise of the Red Guards, can be found in R. MacFarquhar and M. Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
- 86 Shuman, 'The politics of socialist athletics', 386–8.
- 87 Wang Youqin, 'Chinese Holocaust memorial: China's national ping pong team', available at [hum.uchicago.edu/faculty/ywang/history/bj\\_pp\\_qd.htm](http://hum.uchicago.edu/faculty/ywang/history/bj_pp_qd.htm) (accessed 13 May 2016).

- 88 Wei Jingyu, 'Youyi di yi, bisai di er' [Friendship first, competition second], *People's Daily*, 2 April 1971.
- 89 'Afro-Asian Table Tennis Friendship Invitation Tournament: gala opening in Peking', *Peking Review*, 45 (5 November 1971), 10-12.
- 90 Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *Future of Power: Its Changing Nature and Use in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 89.
- 91 Nye, *Future of Power*, 93.
- 92 Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 23.
- 93 'Premier Chou En-lai's Speech at the State Banquet given by President Kwame Nkrumah (January 13, 1964)' and 'Premier Chou En-lai's Speech at the State Banquet Given by President Ibrahim Abboud (January 27, 1964)', in *Afro-Asian Solidarity Against Imperialism: A Collection of Documents, Speeches, and Press Interviews from the Visits of Chinese Leaders to Thirteen African and Asian Countries* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), 137, 227-8.
- 94 Strauss, 'The past in the present', 784.
- 95 One example is Mali, which apparently received Chinese coaches before its heyday in the sport in the 1970s and 1980s. 'Revival of table tennis in West Africa, Kaka Lawson visits Mali', 10 December 2014, available at ([www.ittf.com/\\_front\\_page/ittf\\_full\\_story1.asp?ID=38020&Category](http://www.ittf.com/_front_page/ittf_full_story1.asp?ID=38020&Category)) (accessed 19 April 2016).