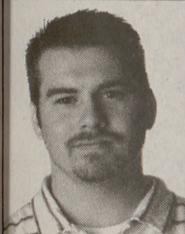


OPINION

THE BATTALION

What they really think

Josh Dwyer proves that America's reputation is not unfavorable



JOSHUA DWYER

With the Olympics just over, America has again demonstrated its ability to aptly prepare athletes by winning the lion's share of hardware at the Athens games with 83 medals in 235 events, more than any other country. In an era of endless hand wringing, pessimism and self-righteous condemnation courtesy of many progressives, liberals and media outlets, the United States has something else of which to be proud: People want to come here.

An intriguing, but seemingly unreported, fact is that more than a few non-American medal winners owe a portion of their success to the United States. Strange as it sounds, it is because many of them trained in America prior to their Olympic escapades. Of the 341 Olympic athletes enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities, a stunning 226 represented countries other than America, winning 15 medals for their homelands. This figure doesn't include competitors who graduated prior to 2004. As for traditional allies that don't currently support the United States, France has at least six U.S. trained Olympians and Germany has no less than five.

The trend holds true for professional sports as well. The occasionally unimpressive "Dream Team" includes 12 members of the NBA, while the same organization provides 14 players for the rest of the world, including China, Argentina and Puerto Rico. In total, America was the training ground for more than 20 medals won by non-Americans.

Not only is America responsible for equipping and employing many competitors, some of the Olympians wouldn't be competing without the aid of current U.S. foreign policy. In addition to liberating 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq in the last three years, America has helped their respective Olympic hopefuls get to Athens. Afghanistan sent five contestants to Greece and three Iraqi Olympians were trained in the United States.

While it's possible that these athletes would have competed in this summer's international games regardless of U.S. facilities or foreign affairs, it is unlikely that they would have received the same standard of training as they did in the United States or the same assurances of safety, equality and freedom.

America is not without its faults. But the Olympic performance of American trained athletes is not a comprehensive measure of the appropriateness or success of our foreign and domestic policies. However, the stale mantra of "Blame it on America!" by certain leftists needs to be countered with an occasional report of what the United States has accomplished benefit the world.

According to some liberal commentators, America isn't supposed to bring terrorists to justice; its citizens are supposed to understand why they hate this country. America isn't allowed to defend its allies

or itself; it should engage in diplomacy and negotiations.

Some university professors, such as Noam Chomsky, have even suggested that we have only received what we deserved, reaped what we sowed. Indeed, it was the liberals' beloved filmmaker Michael Moore who, in an interview in Europe, said that America was responsible for spreading misery around the world.

If the United States is truly a terrorist nation as Chomsky writes in his book *9-11*, why do hundreds of athletes desire to train here rather than their homeland? North Korea and Iran aren't producing Olympic hopefuls for other nations. Why do thousands of international students seek admission to American colleges and universities? There isn't such a waiting list in Libya or Cuba. Why do millions of immigrants seek entrance into America by legal and illegal means? China, Mexico and Syria don't have problems with immigration. If the United States is such a bad country, why are so many people trying to get here while so few are trying to leave?

The answer is so elementary it may seem trite: freedom. Freedom in the form of rights secured by the U.S. government; not granted by our government to be repealed at a later date, but as a gift from God, according to the Declaration of Independence.

These rights and the rule of law — not the rule of men — produce an atmosphere of opportunity. History tells the story of millions of individuals — irrespective of race, nationality, ethnicity, language and gender — who embrace opportunity to improve their lives and the lives of those they love.

Don't expect the 2008 Olympics to have a portion of the opening ceremony dedicated to the United States and its efforts to promote freedom. That doesn't mean that this country hasn't done more than its fair share, often without a word of thanks.

Nicholas Davis is a senior political science major.



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MAIL CALL

TS did not inform students of changed bus routes

Monday morning, I boarded Route 35 from my apartment complex and thought I was starting the first day of my senior year off well. However, when the bus turned left onto Wellborn Rd. rather than going straight down George Bush, I realized that things were not normal. My bus was headed to the MSC which will be the new dropoff on campus.

I'm standing at the MSC waiting on another bus with hopes of making it to my 8:00 at the Vet School on time. I waited and waited: 8:00 came and went.

I then climbed aboard another bus to ask what was going on. I learned that the bus that I was waiting for would not be coming. That route no longer exists on main campus! I was informed that I would have to catch a bus to West Campus and then either walk or take another bus to the Vet School.

There was no e-mail sent to me regarding a very important factor in my ability to attend classes: Transportation! Welcome back to A&M, everyone! Grab a bus route map!

Sarah Wilson
Class of 2005

Solutions presented by TS are no better than before

I have been a member of the student body for more than six years and have never experienced this kind of trouble associated with getting a permit. Since the summer of 1998 I have seen the parking on campus go from bad to worse.

As a graduate student and a past owner of a parking permit I have seen no preferential treatment of anyone by TS. Overselling lots, high prices and forced parking areas have caused nothing but road

rage and the number of tickets given out to go up. I would like to see the faculty and students vote on the parking situation, and Weis and the rest of TS would be run out of town on a rail. We have a large number of talented faculty and brilliant students that could design a plan that would be less stressful and more beneficial to all. Just because someone fixes a problem at another university, doesn't mean that they can fix the problem at any university.

This is a situation that affects us all, student and faculty alike, and for the money involved we should not have to stress over whether parking will be available for us to attend classes.

Tim Shaw
Class of 2002

Aggie graduate omitted from list of 2004 Olympians

In response to an Aug. 25 sports brief:

The article left out at least one Aggie. Vic Wunderle Class of 1998, a graduate of the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, competed in both U.S. team and individual archery.

Although he did not medal in either event this time, Wunderle won team bronze and individual silver at the Sydney Games in 2000.

Kieran Lindsey
Class of 1997

Mike Walters tells the IOC to accept Taiwan



MIKE WALTERS

For the victorious Olympic athlete, the sight of his raised flag along with the sound of his national anthem serves as a proud culmination of years of hard work and training. The moment often brings athletes to tears and, while some may only care about proving themselves as the best, most take pleasure in representing their country.

When the members of the U.S. swim team took off their laurels and put them over their hearts, mouthing the words to The Star Spangled Banner, everyone knew the team's pride in its accomplishments was equaled by its pride for the United States.

Sadly, such a moment was robbed from Taiwanese athletes, who represented another prosperous, democratic nation. Bowing to pressure from the People's Republic of China, the International Olympic Committee forced Taiwan's athletes to compete under the name of Chinese Taipei and prohibited them from displaying their flag or playing their national anthem at any Olympic ceremony. In other words, this act would be analogous to the British forcing Americans to participate as "Colonial England."

The fact that hard-working Taiwanese athletes are denied a joyous part of what they've earned at the games is intolerable. The international community, including the United States, should fight alongside Taiwan in demanding the respect of a sovereign nation.

The source of this hostility comes from China's refusal to recognize the sovereignty of Taiwan. Officially a part of the Republic of China, Taiwan's government and citizens fled to the island in 1949 when they were defeated by the communist movement. Political tension has since remained between the two entities, as China has always wished to unite Taiwan under its red banner and absorb its economic prosperity while shackling its populace under the yoke of communism. While there has been no military pressure to force such a takeover, China has constantly been a thorn in Taiwan's side.

Obviously, competing under the name Chinese Taipei angers many Taiwanese citizens. Rev. William J.K. Lo, the head of Taiwan's largest church, is one of the loudest voices on the issue. "If we acknowledge ourselves to be Chinese Taipei, then we are saying we are

stateless," Lo told the Cybercast News Service. "Other people internationally will look down on us because we've already admitted that we're not a nation."

Not being able to compete as a recognized representative of your nation would undoubtedly sadden any athlete. Sadly, China's antics are the latest in a string of insults to Taiwan. Chinese pressure denied Taiwan the right to host international events at least five times: the 1998 and 2002 Asian Games, the 2001 and 2007 World University Games and the 2009 East Asian Games.

China is being blamed for an incident that occurred earlier this month: According to the BBC, Taiwan spent around \$300,000 on a campaign that placed advertisements, with pictures of Taiwan and slogans encouraging its athletes, in and around Athens International Airport. The Athens Olympic Organizing Committee (ATHOC) had them removed, though it denies that it acted under pressure from China. The committee's explanation was that while it earlier approved the ads, it later decided the material violated regulations that stipulated that only Olympic-related ads are allowed in Athens.

The committee's explanation is hardly believable. The ATHOC had approved the ads, which contained slogans encouraging its athletes, as the regulations called for. Further investigation should take place.

It's anyone's guess whether the same thing will happen in the next summer Olympics, though Taiwan is already making a bid to host the 2016 games. As a prosperous government that values democracy and human rights, the United States should support Taiwan in upholding its rightful place in the world as a sovereign nation. Should China attempt this again, its ridiculous outcry should be laughed off. If it doesn't like the reminder that Taiwan has escaped its tyrannous clutches and prospered as a free nation, then China should consider not participating at the games. Political bullying has no place in the spirit of peaceful competition that is embodied in the Olympic Games.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major.

