

**THE CNA CORPORATION'S
CHINA STUDIES CENTER**

**SOCIAL CHANGE, POPULAR OPINION, AND THE
BEIJING OLYMPICS: THE VIEWS OF A VETERAN
TELEVISION JOURNALIST**

WELCOME AND MODERATOR:
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SPEAKER:
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DAVE M. FINKELSTEIN: (In progress) – everybody for coming this morning. Christian (sp) is going to be distributing some handouts that our guest prepared to help you follow the talk. Let me see if I can get these doors – (off mike) – Finkelstein, the director of the China Studies Center. And welcome to the City Club of Washington, which is our downtown venue for our public events.

As you know by now, the mission of our China Studies Center is to provide the public, business leaders, and government officials with the best possible insights into the dynamics and implications of an ever changing and rapidly changing China. And today, we have a very special treat for those of you who have come out in the middle of the day to be here with us because we have as our speaker, Ms. Li Xiaoping, one of China's preeminent television news journalists, and a keen and informed observer of the domestic scene in China, and of Chinese domestic affairs.

Ms. Li is currently a senior producer at China Central Television, CCTV, and she is a research associate at Tsinghua University for their Center for International Communications. She received her master's in television research at Leeds University in the United Kingdom. And she is a graduate – her B.A. coming in Chinese literature from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. And from 2000 to 2001, she is also an old friend to many of us here in Washington. She was a visiting fellow at Brookings Institution at the Center for Northeast Asia Policy Studies, where she wrote and lectured on the evolution of television and television news in the PRC and its impact on policymaking in China.

And of course I would be remiss if I didn't also add that Ms. Li is one of the pioneers of investigative TV journalism in China and is internationally renowned for her role in producing two path-breaking investigative TV news shows in the 1990s, "Focus," and "Oriental Horizon," which are often talked about in Chinese circles and among media savants here in the West as the "60 Minutes" of China. Widely published, well-traveled, and on a personal note, permit me to add a very good friend of mine and of the CNA corporation's China Study Center. Would you please help me in welcoming to the podium, Ms. Li Xiaoping.

LI XIAOPING: Thank you for this opportunity to talk to you, but I got a little bit nervous because my English, oral English, it's not so good. So perhaps some time I need my friend, Rose, to help me to translate a little bit.

Today I would like to focus on what I have learned about the impact happening to the Chinese media and society and policymakers, as well as some main discussion and the debate involved (?) in. The views in this talk are mine and should not be construed as reflecting position of any Chinese organization. So I will be responsible for what I am saying here.

So now I just go through very quickly about general information of traditional media in China. Television network in China reach about 96 percent of total Chinese population, representing a potential audience of no less than 1.23 billion by the end of last year. About 94 percent of total Chinese population had access to radio, representing 411 million by the end of 2005. And there was 2,137 kind of newspaper, and a 9,029 kind of magazine published in 2006.

I would like to point to – I would like to point out – one, over 99 percent of media in China have become almost totally dependent on commercial revenues. For example, last year, CCTV was able to raise about 12 billion renminbi, yuan from private source while the government contribution was – (unintelligible) – 30 billion yuan. So it's less than 1 percent. However, all top directors of mainstream media have been appointed by the central government. This means that the media is caught between two systems, government and the market, and must be navigated between the two systems. I would talk this point again later.

And for the general information of new media in China, the total number of Internet users in China is 162 million by June this year, which is about 12 percent of the total population. There are about 70 percent of Internet users are under 30 years old. So now, I would like to turn to the impact of Olympics on media policy.

First, where does Chinese government that honors its permits to be open and transparent to international media and the issues relevant measures? China now, allow media reporters to travel and report more freely across most of the country in the run-up to the Games next August. Unfortunately, many local officials remain bureaucratic and old-fashioned in their thinking and occasional instance of unreasonable intervention and control by local authority against foreign media activities does happen.

Second, to guarantee the legitimate right of the media to report on any sudden and serious incidents, new laws are being established. This was August 30th this year. So now, I would talk impact on Chinese media. First, within the media, a broad discussion is taking place on how to cover the Olympics taking into account of weakenings and the lessons from the history because Chinese media has a lot of lessons to take into account. And last year, we had a football match between Italian team and Australian team and our commentator in our sports channel was very biased just to support Italian team and say very bad word to Australia team.

And several years ago, a CCTV commentator commented on the also World Cup football match between Chinese team and South Korea team. So that he said also bad words toward South Korea team. So that made South Korea people very angry so their embassy came to Chinese foreign affairs ministry to protest that. And so, we have several of these kinds of things. Because China became very – the market force become very strong so in 2005, there was kidnap – hostage events in Russian. We called them Beslan events.

At that time, one of our channels put – (in Chinese) – so they put question there. How many people died in this event: 100, 225? So if you get the right number, you will win to get the number – to get the money from that. So the Russian people and also for the Chinese public got very angry with the media saying, you only want money. So that make the Russian president office get protest to the China. So all these kinds of lessons were discussed in the inside media we discussed, how can we take account of these lessons to cover the Olympics?

So firstly, people point out we should not use some kind of a highly belligerent language to cover the contests. Like sometimes, Chinese team failed and lost, and what kind of language when we cover this kind of contest? We should try to give it just a very calm, just cover the event, not use that kind of language. That kind of language will fill up radical segments in the public. This is one thing.

And another thing, in the media, we discussed about any kind of competition are bound to have winners and the lost. The Chinese media needs to have a less national and more international view and scope. This is an opportunity provided by the Olympics, which, although taking place in China, is fundamentally a worldwide event. Media should be professional and fairly view the results. If Chinese media blatantly protested with revenge when we lost in the contests, our media would be parading to the world that they were far from professional and lacking in impartiality and independent thinking.

So it's natural for the Chinese media to intensively cover the Chinese team and hail their achievements throughout the Olympics. Nonetheless, they should also be aware of the fact that the 2008 Beijing Olympics is an international event and they should entertain, award, working to appreciate the excellency of players and teams from all other countries of the world. In fact, the ability to find a new story from foreign teams and to objectively capture the limelight of the – (unintelligible) – regardless of where the competition are from would be invaluable to give our national audience a full and real panorama of our Beijing Olympic Games. In Beijing now, there is much discussion inside the media talking about how to cover the Games.

Second, foster dynamic into action and mutual influence among the government, media, and the market. However, the Chinese media are now confronted with the challenge to satisfying government demand on the one hand and they also need to steer a middle course between political and economic pressures. We have a saying inside CCTV saying, we have to satisfy two older. One is older – (in Chinese) – that means the government. The other one we call the older – (in Chinese) – that means to the public.

And for the newspapers, they say we have to do something first front-page. And second page is to serve to the party. And the other pages to serve the public. So the front page and the second page, you will see a lot of new policies come out and the leaders' activities and something there. And from the third page, you will see the new star, new singer star and for the stock information and how to invest your money and how to spend your money, this kind of information.

So and also, the ratings have become the dominant factors in TV program decisions. CCTV regularly reviews the ratings of each channel and program. If any program transmitted in premier time fails to reach a certain rating, it will be suspended and rescheduled to the midnight, to some other places.

And so, in this case, so people feel, all producers feel very nervous. So I saw – I was working for the “Focus” and our – “Oriental Horizon.” So I saw the producers there. They said, oh, I may be fired by CCTV because the rating of my program has not reached a certain level for about two months. But if that lasts three months, I will be fired. So people are very nervous about that.

China is in the middle of major transition between a command economy and top-down decisionmaking and a market-driven and consumer-oriented society. There may be a gross imbalance of society as the whole situation is rather complicated. There are some institutes and individuals, officials being more open-minded and others are very conservative. Similarly, there are areas more open to the world and some areas remaining closed.

Media, I have to admit, is a relatively conservative area in China. Currently, it's still dominated by traditional thinking and institutions. In recent years, the Chinese authorities have undertaken some change and advancement. For instance, a spokesperson system is being set up to be staffed by trained communications officials for all ministries and commissions at the central level and the provincial governments.

Generally speaking, the professionalism of officials is improving. There are normal discussions on government and media relations. Media also ran feature stories on the government-media relations in other developed countries as well as contemporary professional media management skills demonstrated in overseas experience. For example, a state council news office has invited many international media relations experts to give lectures in China. In May last year, we had invited the former White House spokesperson called Jake Siewert come to China to give a lecture. Over 300 central military – no, central minister officials come to listen that lecture and they raised a lot of questions to them.

Additionally, media are learning to be more smart than in the past. We would now learn to play with – (unintelligible) – tour the margins, test the limits, and there are various other skills to communicate with the government authorities where we would know now how to make use of the existing system and space to push forward gradually. Sometimes, we would take one step forward and two steps back. But sometimes, we would take two steps forward and one step back. So it's quite complicated.

As many scholars point out, China has taken 30 years to go through the road and changes which other countries have taken an entire century to go through. Both starting point and subsequent development in China is simply different from that in the West. We recognize we could not simply transplant the development model of any Western country as we had attempted one and a half centuries ago in late Qing and May 4th (?) period.

But what is the China model? I could say we do not know yet. China is still in the course of searching, testing, and quest. There are some aspects of development which can be quickly done, such as building a highway, building a high, fancy building like we – CCTV will have a new building next year which only take about two years. But in – however there are some other aspects which simply cannot change so quickly and effectively. In particular, one is come to change the way of thinking, the way a concept and the values as much as some well-established institutions and the norms of people.

For example, the Beijing government tried very hard to pursue ways to people not buy their own car, do not drive their own car because the pollution, a big part of the pollution in Beijing comes from the vehicles from the cars. But the people got very angry with that saying, we have been poor for many, many years. I never thought I could have my own car in my lifetime. But now, I got it. Who can stop me? So they got very angry. They have their feeling for so many years.

For one of my boss, he came from a remote mountain area. And he told me he had never had his own shoes before he got into high school. He bare his foot for over about 14 years. So now, he has become a very important person. So he has his feeling. It's not the same as my feeling. I was born in Beijing. I grew up in Beijing. And they're from a very poor peasant family. Now, he has got his own car. He was so proud of himself and he paid his parents come to Beijing. He bought a house for his parents and he take his parents to sit into his car; he was so proud. He said, nobody can stop me; I have money! I can buy everything.

So this kind of feeling, concept, it's not been easy to change. So the government said, this is not going to be easy to change. So the government say, because of pollution, he say, that pollution is not my business. So I have my car; that's my life – so this kind of thing. So generally speaking, I would say we are good with the modernized hardware, but it will take a long, long time to transfer the software, the software. So we often say in China, some hardware is okay, is modern, but the software, the concept, people's mindset, is still very backwards.

Taking a more explanation examples of media freedom, the policy to authority open to China to foreign media stuff, the reporting is a top-down decision and directive. Many middle-to-low ranking officials and provincial – (unintelligible) – cannot appreciate the need and do not find it comfortable. They do not wish to excuse his central policies. In China, one has to understand that it is unrealistic to think the board is transformed. As long as legislative procedure is accomplished, it's easy to get sensible law passed. But it will be very difficult to ensure that it can be implemented accordingly. I would see many conceptual and institutional developments and change, interactive, and dynamic. I would never adverse (?) an over-simple lens to look at China.

For example, our ministry of foreign affairs is generally more open to media. But there are also very difficult views and opinions within government. So within government authorities there are also some debate and discussion. I can give you an

example: several years – we had six-party talk in – (in Chinese) – and that was the first time to open to the media to get into the negotiation conference room to make a film. And they only gave the media about 10 minutes. And they told us, this is the first time to open to the media. You must leave after 10 minutes.

And one of the Chinese journalists, when they said the time is over; you should go out, and he put his reporters ID to his pocket and he sat to align with North Korean delegation. So after about 10 minutes, North Korea's delegation found someone – who are you? (Laughter.) They asked. And he did say, he didn't tell them where he'd come from. So this thing makes the foreign affairs ministry very, very angry with him. The official said to me, I was under great pressure inside. Many people said, do not trust Chinese media; do not let them to come to cover this negotiation. But I think we should open. So I did a lot, I made great effort to open to the media. But you have done this? How can I open to the media?

So this is a interaction. So sometimes, this depends. So I think this time, for the Olympic Games coverage, it's also a big event to push this into active – I will move to the third point. Hosting an Olympic catalyst become – sorry, becomes a catalyst for integration of traditional and new media. So now, they have a lot of – in March this year, that was a 500-day countdown of Olympic Games. The national Olympic league of media was founded formerly with agreement, a signing ceremony in Beijing. Fourteen mainstream from the press, from the print press, were celebrating, were cooperate with sponsor of official web host. And also record Beijing Olympics soho.com. So and also CCTV joined that.

So the newspaper and the TV and the websites, they got together to cover the Olympics. So that means the traditional – at this period, at this stage, traditional media with new media, they got together. They are cooperation much more than they are competition. They get together. The force to permit – no, to promote into actions between Chinese and the foreign media and to provide more opportunities to make comparison between coverage by Chinese and foreigners, seeing how foreign media cover the Games. In the past, I heard from one correspondent from American media. He said, in fact, because for recent years, there are more and more investigative coverage in Chinese media.

Over 70 percent of clues of the coverage, of clues for foreign media, they get them from the Chinese media coverage. When they got that clue, they do their own investigation and they write their story. Usually, the analysis is different. The Chinese media says that is because rich government officials too careless or because the pollution or something. But the same story, the same event, same clue, when the Western media writes that is the analysis is because companies assist them or something like that. But also, the Chinese media pay close attention to how Western media covers the Games, how Western media covers China and covers Beijing.

For example, the Chinese media thinks that is a very good angle for Chinese media to think about. In Canton, this very poor, Canton, but the Canton government

build up a very fancy building for their authority working site. And a British correspondent write a paper say, that is unfair to taxpayers in that county. And the Chinese media say it's corruption. But the Chinese media is not, still not get used to thinking about taxpayer. That's angle, so they learn a lot from angle, from everything; they learn a lot from Western media.

And so, I think this is a good opportunity for Chinese media to learn from the west. Now, I'm talking about a media role. The media role for this Olympic Games through extensive and continuous introduction and publicity of history, basic knowledge, and the spirit of the Olympics in media, in schools and by the government, the Chinese society becomes highly conscious of mission to host the 2008 games and the knowledge of Olympics.

As a person of friends, of my friends it is, he has later interest in sports and Olympics generally speaking. But he also had some strong impression that a Polish gold medalist in the pre-World War II games become an anti-Nazi hero in the war. He said, I got fed up, too many publicity about Olympics. But I still remember something, something I was very impressed. So this is one road. A second road is the new idea and the concept have been introduced – many contemporary, foreign, modern concepts are strength, they are introduced, they are included – volunteer, emergency response code and mechanism, crisis management, extra.

Some Chinese people began to, they are no longer citizens of Chinese nations, but also a member and a citizen of the international community. As such, they began to feel obligated to have a modern mind, global conscientiousness be applied and civilized as well as obey rulers and law. In the past, in China, we do not have a volunteer – this word, no volunteer concept. We have – while I was very young, we have a saying, learning from – (in Chinese, laughter) – that is doing something to serve other people. So they do not have a volunteer concept. This time, the media stressed and introduced this concept. So at the beginning, many people want to get the ticket for Olympic opening ceremony. But only every 21st people, only one person from 21st people can get one ticket. It's very difficult to get the ticket. So many student, university student, okay, I can be a volunteer so I can watch competition free.

So people try to find, some student try to find to be a volunteer. And later, in the media, they have a lot of discussion, also in my TV program say, what is volunteer? And they give old – (in Chinese) – spokesman, spokeswoman? When they have been experienced Atlanta Olympics and they give a lot to the stories, say one volunteer is near late 70s, he served, he was a volunteer for that Olympic Games. So he served many, many people there. He did not watch any competition, not one time, not at all. So they try to explain, volunteer is not to get free ticket to see that contest. (Laughter.) If you do want to be a volunteer, you should serve other people not to get – so this kind, what is a volunteer? People get to know the concept.

The third one is – the third one is a discussion because when the Olympic Games will be over 30,000 foreign correspondents come to China. Only about 1,000 – 10,000

correspondents will be registered. Other 20,000 correspondents, they will cover something in the Beijing – (in Chinese) – or about China's pollution, about Great Wall, about people's daily life. So this is a – we have a discussion how to show off China, how to show China to the world and how to deal with criticize and comments from foreign media, from foreigners. So someone says, we should show our best; we should build up a fancy hotel and we should let all migration workers going home, not be in the city and this kind of things.

And also, in the media, we have a lot of papers and peoples talking in the chatting room, in the website saying, we should show the real China. We have a fancy hotel; we have a fancy building; and we also have many very poor migration workers. They bare their – (in Chinese) – they bare their chest; they have a beer in the street. So this kind of debate is very keen. And some officials, they want to show only the good side, the best side of China. So this is still in the debate.

The fourth one is how to deal with Japanese team at the Olympic Games. Half a month ago, there was a women's football match in Guangzhou (?) where one side is Japanese, the other side is German. All outings supported German side very much. No one support Japanese side. And Japanese side was doing very well, but finally, they failed. They lost and the people just were very happy because Japanese side lost. And in the end, Japanese team, they show a big, big toast with the Chinese and English, in fact, and said, thank you, China. So that made the audience very embarrassed and later they put out – (in Chinese). So this one also caused a lot of discussion in the media. There are some paper in the media: how to deal with Japanese team? Should we do that just to support one side? Should we be biased? And if Chinese team faced Japanese team, what we should do? Should we be polite? Should we be fair? So we have this kind of discussion in the media.

So media becomes a forum, provides a forum to many different voices. Now, I'm talking about impact on elite and policymakers. This time, I was actually at a conference. So I started doing some research and I had interviewed all different people. I interviewed my colleagues in CCTV and also, I interviewed some policymakers. Hosting the Olympics games significantly enhances China's integration into the world. In the course of bidding organization, the Olympics Games, China has experienced extensive and celebrated interactions such as with other countries which have gradually driven many elite in the government and intelligence – and institutes to come to recognize how close and interactive China and the rest of the world are nowadays.

And the people told me five years ago, 10 years ago, I never thought China could be so close to the world community. I just see, I have my way. In my country, I'm doing my own things. I do think what I have done will have any reaction from our side. In moving from increased participation in international activities to making inroads, engagement and exchange with international society and subsequently, to active attempts to integrate with the world, Chinese officials and elites have undergone remarkable change in the main site. Chinese people, in general, are used to have a clear sense between domestic and foreign issues. In Chinese, we say – (in Chinese). I have my own

land, so what I am doing in my land, that's my own business. No one can touch me; no one should comment what I am doing. They realize this is interactive.

Now, this becomes a very clear aversion in policymaking. But this is only a part of policymaker, they realize. Not everybody realize that. In the past 20 or 30 years, opening of China concerned – sorry – concerned with economy fears, opening now becomes more comprehensive and in-depth, extending to social life as well as thinking and values. Some intellectual people and the government elite appreciate that development of China would inevitably affect and even sent short waves to international political and economic audience (?). It will be also changed the statute core of relations between China and the world with raising possibilities of – (unintelligible) – and clash of interest in certain areas. It's an issue for China, as a first step, to capture and become more sensitive to external implications for home, internal issues and policies in the future.

And so, some more importantly – do I have time? Okay, it's also, it's also significant for elite and general public to understand that how the world reads China depends largely on how China actually is and behaves. For historical reasons, many Chinese can interpret all comments and criticizes from the world as hostile against China. Nevertheless, with this new version of interdependence, China would be able to realize that reaction and the policies of international society to raise China, determined to a certain extent by the situation and actions of China herself, as well as China's impacts and spillover to the others in the world. I think this is a new consciousness.

Therefore, China needs to be more responsible, considerate, and sensitive to how to coexist with other members of world community and to take into account perceptions and views of other countries in our own decisionmaking process. In other words, China will also treat other countries fairly and honor the common values and the spirit of the humanity.

Now, I am talking about impact on the Beijing public mindset and lifestyle. Furthermore, hosting Olympic Games do have a positive impact on the formation and the development of civil society in China. From bidding to the subsequent preparation, reform, and organization of the Games, thinking and discussion and debate arise in various sectors of the Chinese society.

First, a large number of taxi drivers are changing their old habit so all people that go to China, you will see the taxi driver. We can find a small note posted in front of the driver's seat saying, brush your teeth; wash your face; change your clothes frequently; tidy up your car; no smoke in car; avoid strong food; do not sleep in car overnight or this kind of thing. Because many cab drivers, taxi drivers, they come from the remote countryside. They are working inside city; their habit is a peasant habit. So because of Olympic Games, they have to tidy up. They have seat covers in white color and they change it every two or three days. It's very clean. So when I asked them, do you think it's okay? He said, oh, it's a lot of trouble to wash them. I do have a habit to wash so frequently, but now, I have to wash my clothes very often otherwise my clothes is not

match with the seat cover. And I have to change myself. I was not very clean, to have very clean clothes. But now, I gradually got used to very clean environment, very clean seat covers. And now, if some passenger wants to get my taxi, I will see whether he is clean enough. (Laughter.)

So if he is not clean enough, I do not want him to get in my taxi because I think he is too dirty; he will make my seat cover dirty. So he becomes, he was, he said, I change myself to be a city insider, not outsider. So now – (in Chinese) – so they have changed. And I asked him whether or not you can learn English because a lot of foreigners will come. You should learn English. Oh, that is too difficult for us. So many taxi drivers refuse to learn English, but they are set to change to make their cab very clean. So their concept has been changed a bit. So just one more example?

Okay, and from 11 March this year, in Beijing, when people come to Beijing, you'll feel everywhere it's chaos; people do not obey the regulations. So they start to have a day called self-disciplinary curing day. So when they come to get a bus, they have to cure not just – get out of the bus. And the second month, every month on the 11th will be a special day for people must be to cure to get on bus to try to make the people to be disciplined.

One day, I crossed Chang'an Avenue, I heard some people saying – (in Chinese) – so, see the Beijing people here. When they cross the road, they have to see the green light it's on, they can get across. But in Xian, nobody follows any kind of lights. So they say, ah, Beijing is good. Xian people should learn from this; they should, whether or not they can cross the road is to obey the light. So this kind of thing, I think it's good for the society to get more polite and more civilized.

And also, now, the – (in Chinese) – infrastructure has been improved a lot. So my colleague tells me before, they had only one road, one – (in Chinese) – one pass their home. But now, they have three different passes from their home. And from the first January this year, the city government pays about 1.3 billion yuan to the public transportation. So if you have a card like here, like Smartcard, you have that card, you can take bus. Most of bus you can take that for .4 yuan. So that's very cheap. So that's made many retired people come out every day by bus because it's so cheap.

So my colleague told me her parents retired. They used to stay at home. But now, everyday, they take the bus to the – (in Chinese) – it's a big building; it's a bookstore. So they went there; they read the whole morning then they go home in the noon. So every evening, they told their children what I have read this morning. And everyday, because he said the transportation, if they transportation fee is very expensive. But now it's only for return only less than – (in Chinese) – eighty cents yinminbi. So it's so cheap I can afford it. So that makes my life better, much better.

So my colleague told me, now, my parents have a very colorful life. So I think that they thought, I like Olympic Games because my life changed. Okay, I stop here and I can answer some questions. (Applause.)

MR. FINKELSTEIN: You have just been treated to one of the most informed and frank discussions about Chinese media issues that you're going to get anywhere, anytime soon again. We started a little bit late; we're going to keep going here. We are going to take about 10 or 12 minutes of questions. I think we have a mike, you'll take the mike around. Please identify yourself, your name, and your affiliation. And I'm sure Xiaoping will do her very best. And let me say, it takes a – I would never attempt to do in Chinese what you just did in English. We all appreciate that.

LI XIAOPING: I'm so sorry. My English is awful.

Q: Hi, I'm Stephanie Ho with Voice of America – (in Chinese). I just wanted to ask a question about – I mean, you were saying that the debate in Chinese media is between the law by Xing – I mean, whether they should serve the law by Xing or they should serve the law Ogambu (?). And I was curious. You mentioned that commercial interests are becoming more important. And I was wondering how that factored into Chinese media coverage or so? Thank you.

LI XIAOPING: This is a very complex – it's quite complicated situation. And basically, as I thought, the media survived between government political aid direction and marketing pressure. So it depends. The basic situation is this, but it depends on which issue and which event to cover. I can talk that over three hours I think; we have so many cases. It's amazing. It's not easy to say in 10 sentences, not even. Please.

Q: I'm Julia Chang Bloch from the U.S. China Education Trust. I'm a real fan of your Oriental Horizons Program, deng phon xiaokeng (ph). I wondered, it started in the '90s. I believe it was one of the first programs that dealt really with investigative reporting. And as I think David introduced you, you are a pioneer of China's investigative reporting field. I wonder, how did you get the idea? How did you get the courage to start this when there were no other models and how did you get permission?

LI XIAOPING: That's a long time ago. That's about 1993. That social atmosphere was very relaxed and there was some Chinese journalists, they would like to do something new. They would like to do something new. If the social atmosphere was not very good, very relaxed and also for the government, who were really quite open. So that social condition was very good. For media want to try something new, but because China was not – did not have that kind of investigative reporters, so they did not to make them into the premier time. So they started in the morning because the receiving rating in the morning is very little. So they do that as a test whether or not the government could accept that and so whether or not the public would like it.

So they tried one year. They tried one year in the early morning about eight o'clock, seven o'clock, something. And later, they find all reaction was a favorably. They said, oh, good. And even some officials said, you should put that program in the evening. So after one year's test, we started a focus program in the evening. And then, just directly putting the premier time, just after network news and weather forecast. It

started at nine, seven-thirty, eight, every evening. So that was a big success. So we have to test a year in the morning. So that is a way for Chinese media to do something gradually, gradually push and push, not directly go to premier time. (Chuckles.)

I think after this, all Chinese media, including newspapers and the local TV stations and provincial TV station, they all have their own investigative report. That's why many foreign correspondents get a clue from Chinese coverage. But now, sometimes the social conditions not so relaxed. And also, people, this is another thing. In China, people try very hard.

There was an old saying. In the CCTV gate (?), there was two cue there. One cue said, there are some bad things, some corruption in my home town. Could you please come? Could you please send a TV crew to my hometown to cover this, to do some investigative report on this corruption? And the other cue said, oh, your cue has already shot my village as something bad. I am the leader of that village. Could you please stop putting that on the air? I will, I promise I will not do it again. (Laughter.) So many people ask me whether or not there were really two cues in CCTV reception room. No, actually no, but many people send us some reviews and DVD and some video cassettes or some papers. They have provided lots of clues to ask us to go to make investigative report there. So now, we have to have a special small room, small office, special for Oriental Horizon and that focus because too many people come. So they have people looking there from morning until night.

Now, usually, we have four charts – (in Chinese) – four cards daily on the – (inaudible) – letters and video cassettes we see everyday from the public.

Q: Mark Mohr from the Wilson Center –

LI XIAOPING: I've been to your center.

Q: Oh, thank you. We know that air pollution is a problem for the Olympics. And I've talked to one of our specialists on the environment, on China and the environment at the center. And she said that the Olympic committee is rethinking having the endurance events, like the marathon, the marathon, the Olympic marathon, the long running. They are thinking of moving it or postponing or canceling. What's the latest news on that? And as a follow-up, do you think it's doable or reasonable for the Chinese government to say, okay, one million cars in Beijing, you can't drive them during the Olympics?

LI XIAOPING: Yeah, this is also a different opinion. We have in August, we have four days – (in Chinese) – but that four days was very effective on improving environment –

Q: Was or was not?

LI XIAOPING: Was. It was very effective. So people start to discuss. One side say it's not good to change ordinary people's lives. You have no right to stop cars to come to the street. The other side says, oh, it's good because if the environment is improving, it's also good for everybody, not only for people who come from abroad, so we should do that. So there is still a lot of debate on that. I'm not sure whether or not our Olympic committee would do whatever they want to do; I'm not expert on that.

Q: Don't you think it would be more logical to have something like the marathon in a provincial city where the air pollution is not so bad? Why did the Beijing Olympic Committee want these events in Beijing – (inaudible)?

LI XIAOPING: Sorry, I have no idea. (In Chinese) – too proud, no good. (Laughter.)

Q: (Off mike, inaudible.)

LI XIAOPING: (In Chinese.)

Q: Chingdao (ph).

LI XIAOPING: Chingdao (ph), oh, okay.

Q: Enormous changes in the country in a very short time. What, in your view, played the biggest role in the change? I'll give you four things: the Internet, China, commercial media, external world opinion, external media around and their influence there or something as simple as mobility that cars brought to the population?

LI XIAOPING: Which was more influential?

Q: Which one was the most influential?

LI XIAOPING: Internet, commercial –

Q: Media, Chinese media, external non-Chinese media, or something as simple as just mobility?

LI XIAOPING: You mean Internet, commercial Chinese media and business?

Q: Chinese media, non-Chinese media –

LI XIAOPING: Oh, yeah.

Q: Or something as simple as mobility.

LI XIAOPING: I think it's interactive, at least the Chinese media and the foreign media. Internet – there is a saying; I have not done any research myself. Internet users

are most – 60 or 70 – I have number on my sheet. Over 60 percent of Internet users are under 30, very young. But now, the government officials and top leaders, they also come to the Internet to see what are people talking there. And there is also a debate saying the policymaker should not make their policy depend on Internet chatting room because they are too young, not very – (in Chinese) – not very rational. And also, there are big numbers of the people, they are very quiet on the Internet. And these people are much more mature. So I do think, at the moment, that they would like to get to know how young people think about it, but not have a very big influential, not very influential on policymaking.

I have not compared – (chuckles, inaudible).

MR. FINKELSTEIN: We've got time for about two more questions – (inaudible).

Q: Thank you. Alan Romberg at the Stimson Center – there are a lot of debates within China about very sensitive topics that do not make it into the mainland media. One of those topics right now that you hear a lot of Chinese friends talking about is the U.N. referendum issue in Taiwan. But the debate in the mainland does actually appear in the Hong Kong media, where you have mainland people arguing in articles in Hong Kong. My question is whether those kinds of debates in the Hong Kong media, in the Tai Kung Pao, in the Wen Wei Po, make their way back into the mainland and whether they get picked up by media or whether it's informal. Or how does that, does such a debate get carried back to the mainland and if so, how does that happen?

LI XIAOPING: At least I have not heard about that. Yeah, I have not paid a lot of attention to that. Maybe something, but I have not heard about that. I'm sorry.

Q: Masun Wishi (ph) from the Embassy of Japan – thank you very much indeed for a very enjoyable talk; I really enjoyed it. Just a comment – let me give you a sort of a small tip in relation to your question of how to deal with the Japanese team. (Laughter.)

LI XIAOPING: I didn't know you were Japanese!

Q: Don't worry, don't worry, this is a serious one. You know, in every Olympics, you have a star from a foreign country, you have a few stars or, you know, big-shots which are identified after Olympics starts. We do have that kind of experience in Tokyo, in Sapporo. So create stars. Pick up four or five people and try to make one of them a Japanese. Once you identify a very nice star from among the Japanese team, I think you are okay. And let them follow the star from the Japanese team and that will take care of the problem.

LI XIAOPING: (In Chinese, chuckles.)

MR. FINKELSTEIN: Will you – you've had a successful turnout, Xiaoping. You should know that today you had the two-three program here. You had two generals

and three ambassadors, the two-three program. So I'd like to recognize Major General O'Connor for coming, Major General John Fugh, Ambassador Francis Cook, Ambassador Joseph DeTrani, and Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch. So this is, you know, I think you won the prize for bringing out the most dignitaries to our center. Would you all please help me in thanking Xiaoping for a great talk. (Applause.) Thank you all very much for coming. That ends the public portion of our program today. And there are some of you I know who are staying to meet Xiaoping. I think those of you know who they are, we'll be moving to which room, the Chesapeake room? Fantastic, thank you.

(END)