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Tempest in Tibet

BY ADRIENNE PAPP FOR LA2DAY.COM 18 APR. 2008



American politics have been dominating the headlines recently, but the news from Tibet has been a story that shows how complicated international politics can be.

The Chinese government has been criticized for its attempts to deal with upheaval in Tibet, as the country also prepares for the upcoming Summer Olympic Games. As the Olympic Torch has circled the globe it has drawn scores of protestors, and the continuing events in Tibet threaten the unity of the Summer Games.



Tibetan Buddhism has been repressed by the Chinese government and its leader the Dalai Lama exiled for years, but recent protests in China and the crackdown have caused a worldwide outcry against China's policies. It's a problem that isn't going away anytime soon.

One has only to look to Hollywood to see a history of support for Tibet and the Dalai Lama. Richard Gere has been a practicing Buddhist for years, and met the Dalai Lama in the early 1980s. His enthusiasm for the religion and the cause has also inspired other local celebrities such as Orlando Bloom and Keanu Reeves.



Now, with the Olympic Games on the horizon, the Chinese government faces a problem: How does it handle the protests that will continue to occur in Tibet, while hosting a sporting spectacle that is supposed to embody global goodwill and the sportsmanship inherent in international competition.

As the Olympic Games loom on the horizon, China needs to find a quick solution to the situation in Tibet so the event doesn't overshadow the Olympics. In a world where an incendiary event can be captured on a cellphone and beamed around the globe in a matter of minutes, a tide of unfavorable public opinion to events like this can be generated within hours.



We all hope the potentially inflammatory situation can be quickly solved, but there is already a talk of an Olympic boycott from several nations. In the United States politicians have spoken out on the issue, but it's difficult to boycott or penalize a country we are so economically dependent upon.

As the world readies itself for the global celebration in Beijing this summer, it appears that China needs to be careful in handling both the crisis in Tibet while maintaining the spirit of international sportsmanship at the Olympic Games.

By Adrienne Papp

Photo Credits: Temple and Globe courtesy of Adrienne Papp, Getty Images for Keanu Reeves and Richard Gere.

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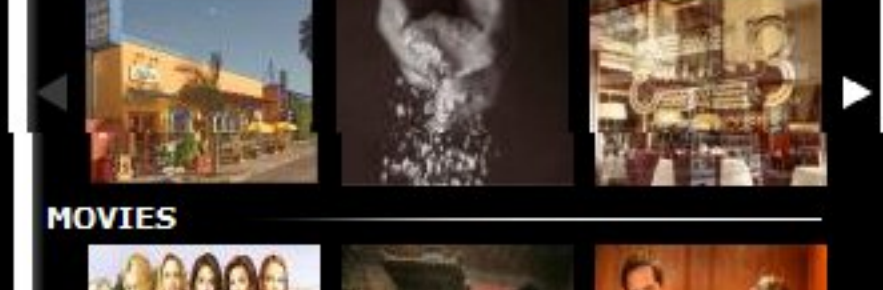
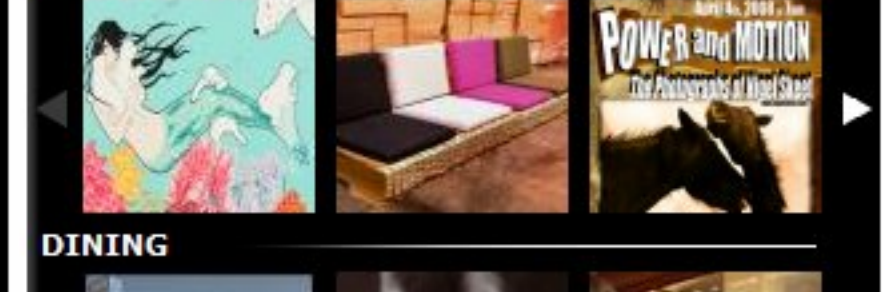
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