



Games of Change? Sport Diplomacy and the Korean Peninsula

**A One-Day Symposium | Wednesday, 17 July, 2019
12:00 – 17:00 | S113, Senate House, SOAS, University of London**

Convenors: Prof David Rowe, CISD Research Associate and Dr J Simon Rofe, Reader in Diplomatic and International Studies.

External Participants: Jung Woo (Jay) Lee Programme Director: MSc Sport Policy, Management and International Development, The University of Edinburgh

The 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics has been widely interpreted as a classic instance of effective sport diplomacy. In the context of an increasingly fractious relationship between North Korea and the U.S., and amid intensified fears of a nuclear conflict, sport has been credited as the ‘ice breaker’ that brought the two Koreas into new dialogue and paved the way for the North Korea-U.S. summits in Singapore (June, 2018) and Hanoi (February, 2019). It follows that PyeongChang 2018 paved the way for the North Korea-Russia summit in Vladivostok (April, 2019). Without sport as a crucial common cultural form bringing together athletic and political opponents, it can be proposed that these developments would never have transpired within such a condensed timeframe.

The Korean case has provided renewed focus on the relationship between sport and diplomacy at a time when scholarly thinking has coalesced around the contested investigation of ‘sport diplomacy’. This is not a minor case of academic pedantry. The relationship between sport and diplomacy is complex and sometimes contradictory, and the use of a singular concept like sport diplomacy may conceal as much as it reveals about the uses and abuses of sport in the sphere of diplomacy.

This symposium will critically explore the deployment of sport and diplomacy discourse concerning the 2018 Winter Olympics. As an arena of intense geopolitics between many parties (including Japan and China) within and beyond the Korean peninsula, analysing this mega sport event will illuminate key issues regarding the cultural dynamics of sport and politics; the consequences for inter-regional relations of using sport as a vehicle for dialogue, and the contested legacies of sport diplomacy initiatives. It is intended both to generate debate within policy circles and the wider public sphere, and to advance academic knowledge through a special issue of a relevant journal.

How to submit

Abstracts for papers should be no more than 250 words, each accompanied by a short (100-word) bio. They should be submitted to Simon Rofe (sr56@soas.ac.uk) and Fadil Elobeid (fe5@soas.ac.uk).

Deadline for proposals: 24 June 2019 | Decisions on proposals will be communicated by 30th June.