



ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

The Sixty-ninth Morrison Lecture

Reporting the Olympic Year

Jane Macartney
The Times correspondent, Beijing

Wednesday 22 October 2008 at 7.00 pm
Hedley Bull Lecture Theatre 1, on the corner of Liversidge and
Garran Road, ANU

The Olympics were always going to be a pivotal moment for China's leaders: a moment in the international spotlight for sporting might and communist efficiency. But an almost trivial incident revealed another scenario. With just a year to go, police detained foreign reporters at a news conference by Reporters Without Borders. The response was revelatory. The Olympics would see no such nonsense. Behind the spectacle, China would revive the 1980s when lemons were unobtainable and State Security stealthily photographed affairs between Chinese and foreigners. While Beijing raced to complete its spectacular stadiums, more intangible aspects of life were retreating to a more authoritarian age.

China has been a feature of Jane Macartney's life since she was born. Her father learnt Hakka in Japanese internment and one of his closest friends was a Hong Kong property developer who gave her a traditional Chinese gold medallion for her christening. Infused with fervour for Mao's revolution, she read Chinese at university and then went to Taiwan to immerse herself in a culture whose language she could read but speak only haltingly. She fell into journalism and by 1986 was working for American news agency UPI in Beijing. She remained until mid-1989, covering several of the most transformational years since the end of the Cultural Revolution. After joining Reuters, she covered Pakistan and Afghanistan before returning to Beijing in the mid-90s as bureau chief, in time for the death of Deng Xiaoping and China's ever-accelerating race to embrace capitalist style economic reforms. That was followed by postings in London, Japan and Singapore before The Times of London offered her the China correspondent role in 2005.

This lecture is free and interested members of the public are invited to attend.

The annual Morrison Lecture was founded by Chinese residents of Australia and others to commemorate the work of Dr George Ernest Morrison of Geelong who lived in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and to stimulate interest in Australia in Chinese art, literature and culture.

Bookings are not necessary
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