

Ancient people laid down their arms for the duration of the Olympics



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Yasuhiro Yamashita
Gold medalist in Judo, Los Angeles 1984

Mr. Yamashita shook hands with the Iraqi Judo athlete.



Dora Bakoyannis
Mayor of Athens

Through competing in Judo, I made friends all over this world.

Sports should not be used as a surrogate for anything else. The Olympic Games are not an event to see how many medals a country gets. They are a place for making friendships by understanding one another - an understanding that comes through recognizing and accepting each other's differences.

In Athens, where the original Olympics were held, we need to reconsider the genuine spirit of sports. Not to think about only yourself. Not to chase prosperity. We do not want to forget to respect each other. Personal growth doesn't happen in isolation. Recognizing the achievements of others is one important factor that makes us grow.

The Olympics help us to fulfill our dreams and to appreciate the world we live in. I hope that the current conflicts do not interfere, and the Olympics are held in peace.

Japan, Greece and so many other nations have suffered the dreadfulness of war. Too many of our people have already paid the highest price in the name, not of reason, but of our inability to understand and respect each other and talk our way through issues that divide us.

This summer, Athens and Greece hope to bring together people from across the globe in a spirit of friendship and cooperation. We aspire to enhance the contribution of Olympism to humanity for the sake of world peace and solidarity.

This is the message that Athens wants to send to the whole world. Nations do not wish to live under any kind of fear, be it terrorism, the threat of war indeed anything that hinders us from endorsing peaceful competition in an atmosphere of security and serenity.

We All hope that the world will become peaceful.

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