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Is Michelle Obama Being Pimped by the Obama Administration for Chicago Olympics?

The Substance of Truth

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President Obama can't make the trip to Copenhagen, so his wife would go instead.

In a couple of weeks, First Lady Michelle Obama would be leading a U.S. delegation to the 121st International Olympic Committee Session in Copenhagen, Denmark. Her delegation, which is to also include senior White House advisor Valerie Jarrett, will seek to make a convincing case for the City of Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Of the four cities left in the pool - Chicago, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo - Chicago is reported by some experts to have the better chance. After all, the world's most powerful man hails from that region.

Chicago Sun-Times reporter Lynn Sweet [was first](#) to report this new detail last Friday:

President Obama just phoned Mayor Daley to tell him he may not be able to travel to Copenhagen next month to help make the final pitch for Chicago to win the 2016 Olympic summer games because of his pending fight to pass health care legislation. First Lady Michelle Obama will lead the U.S.

delegation, the Sun-Times has learned.

I'm told the President told the mayor he is very committed, he will continue to press the case and Michelle Obama will lead the U.S. Olympic Committee delegation's bid for the Chicago 2016 games. Obama can't, at this moment, commit to going because he cannot say where the health care issue will be in the first week of October.

This puts pressure on Mrs. Obama to deliver if she indeed ends up filling in for the president.

The pressure's on, and it's unlikely the First Lady will crack. She didn't crack when racist conservatives spent a good deal of time last year trying to recast her as a White-hating-secret-Black-nationalist. So it's safe to assume Ms. Obama would, as always, perform impeccably, and the judges would have a hard time not awarding Chicago the honors.

But just what exactly is to be gained from having a Black woman - and the most visible one at that - headlining an operation which only guarantees more displacement for many of the city's poor Black residents - especially single mothers.

Many of us know that Olympics aren't the flashy and exotic experiences organizers strive hard to present them as. We know that behind the veil of athletic competition lies deep political and racial consequences that go into the making of an Olympics ceremony.

Often, the city's indigent population is swept away to build hotels, build condominiums, build parks, build restaurants, build gardens, build billboards, in place of what they once called home. There's also the rampant police presence that accompanies any such international event with great potential of political cost for the ruling elite. (The [widely reported crackdowns](#) in Beijing last year [yield great proof](#); so do the excessive brutality we [bore witness to](#) at the ['08 Democratic](#) and [Republican National Conventions](#).) And not to forget the crypto-fascist bombardment of commercialism that presents tyranny in a rosy, almost Disney-esque, portrait - putting lipstick on a putrid pig.

Think back to 1984, when L.A. played host to the Olympics. The consequences of the crackdown - unwarranted gang sweeps - are still, to this day, being felt by Black and Brown youth from that region. Atlanta in '96 was no different. Some argue even worse. The event brought with it [unannounced homelessness](#) for many families, [demolition of public housing projects](#), and [rabid misuse of state power](#) to repress minorities and dissidents.

As Bob Quellos, of Chicago Cop Watch writes, "Chicago residents should be certain that the cost of 'security' won't be limited to monetary concerns. If past Games are any indication, residents of Chicago will find their civil rights on the chopping block." Quellos, in a column written last year, "[Civil rights violations ahead, how the Olympics and state repression go hand in hand](#)," wandered if Blackwater, the disgraced private mercenary machine, "would patrol Chicago streets. Having helped prepare security for the Athens Olympics in 2004, Blackwater already has previous Olympic experience on its resume."

In part of its bid for the 2016 slot, Quellos writes:

Chicago 2016 wasted no time touting its similarities with Beijing—as it showed off Chicago’s existing video surveillance system, known as Operation Virtual Shield, to the IOC. The surveillance system, which has 3,000-plus cameras already in place, is currently being integrated with the same IBM S3 surveillance technology installed in China for the 2008 Games.

With so much similarity between the two cities, the International Olympics Committee should find Chicago “equally appealing.”

Awards-winning sportswriter Dave Zirin is [also convinced](#) a Chicago Olympics only spells more disaster, displacement, and destruction for the city’s disposable population. Nothing more:

It's a very familiar script. Political leaders start by saying that a city must be made "presentable for an international audience." Then police and security forces get the green light to round up "undesirables" with extreme prejudice. It's as much a part of the games as that damn torch. When the 1936 Olympics came to Hitler's Berlin, the "unpresentables" were placed in concentration camps for the duration of the games.

The 2010 Winter Olympics, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, has drawn just the same amount of ire from activists who contend [women especially](#) would be affected by the dislocation arrangements currently taking place.

Historically, U.S.-held Olympics preparations have fragmented the lives of Blacks and Women, *disproportionately*. Michelle Obama is both.

While still a student at Princeton, she [wrote](#): “Earlier in my college career, there was no doubt in my mind that as a member of the Black community I was somehow obligated to this community and would use all of my present and future resources to benefit this community first and foremost.” She also lamented the assimilationist ambitions of many Black professionals who’ve “lost touch with the Black culture in their attempts to become adjusted and comfortable in their new culture—the White culture.”

It’s no question the First Lady has ever since evolved and broadened her approach to issues concerning social justice. And for that, she should be commended. But there’s a difference between expansion and exclusion. And if this newfound career path means Ms. Obama (better known as “[The Closer](#)” amongst White House strategists) must abstain from addressing certain issues - for fear of the political repercussions they could return - then what shame it would be to have someone with such unbridled grace and elegance shilling for big businesses and immoral investors.

For what does it profit a woman to gain the whole world but lose her soul?

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