

NEW YORK POST

SPANNING THE GLOBE

By KYLE SMITH

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A sober overview of a vital issue? An eagerness for complexity? A correspondent who actually seems to know what he's talking about?

Has my TV been taken over by The Economist?

Hitching itself to the Beijing Olympics, ABC's "**China Inside Out**" gives as much as a one-hour TV documentary can. ABC may long to plant its thumb in the eye of NBC's Olympics coverage, but "Inside Out" doesn't do much China-bashing, despite its mention of China's atrocious role in backing the Khmer Rouge genocide in 1970s Cambodia.

ABC's parent, Disney, like virtually every large corporation, has interests in China. There are far too many Chinas to fit in one documentary.

This one is about the trillion-tentacled global economy. We begin in Angola, where correspondent Bob Woodruff finds a startling example of the growing predominance of China all over Africa.

The Chinese in Angola are tickled to discover a white man speaking to them in their own language, and it's just as amusing for us.

(Woodruff didn't emerge from the Barbizon School of Infomercial Models, Weathergirls and Anchormen. He was teaching law in Beijing in 1989 when ABC hired him as a translator.)

Woodruff is as comfortable as Dan Rather at a dunce convention. Forty-eight of 53 African countries, Woodruff says, have major economic links to China, which sucks away oil and other resources in return for building roads (and happily arming the Sudan slaughter, a fact mentioned too briefly here).

It's colonialism minus the cost of soldiers: the construction jobs in Angola go to expat Chinese, the profits to Chinese firms.

Why can't the US get into this action -cash for us, development for Africa? We demand reforms. China doesn't care.

A visit to Brazil shows rainforests are being chopped down to grow soybeans to feed China, which is eating like a Method actor trying to win an Oscar, and the price of your lunch leaps as a direct result.

In Cambodia, China is rebuilding everything it helped destroy during the Pol Pot years. The kids study Chinese, which is a bit like Israelis taking up German.

Winding up in the US, Woodruff points out what politicians never do - that cheap Chinese imports have saved American consumers \$600 million in the past decade. Our exports to China have tripled in five years. Trade divorce is not an option: This marriage is forever.

The plan is to nudge in the right direction, but this documentary asks: Are we the nudgers or nudgees?

Asked whether China is at all to blame for the Marxist massacres in 1970s Cambodia, an official responds



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with softly infuriating Chinese blandness: "I don't think so." Any American supremo who tried to make such an outrageous claim would get a journalistic beatdown, but that's just proves the point.

ABC News isn't afraid of the White House, but it treads as carefully as a cat in a wolf den when it comes to China.

"China Inside Out:

Bob Woodruff Reports"

Tonight at 10 on Ch. 7

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