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pollution threat. Buses and cars are no longer permitted in the immediate vicinity, and fuels with a sulfur content greater than 1 percent are banned near the site. Scientists have converted gypsum back into marble in the laboratory. But an estimated 100 tons of industrial soot falls back on each square mile of Athens every month, posing a greater threat to the Parthenon and its neighbors atop the Acropolis than did all the barbarians of the past.

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Syria's Troubles

"Syria: Fin de Regime?" by Stanley Reed, in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1980) P.O. Box 984, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

Before Syria's President Hafez al-Assad seized power in November 1970, the nation had suffered through 20 military coups in 24 years. Since then, Syria's once stagnant economy has grown by nearly 8 percent annually (though per capita national output is only \$800), in a decade of unprecedented political stability. But growing resentment against Assad at home and Syria's failures abroad may doom the regime, reports Reed, a Cairo-based journalist.

Most of the 7.8 million Syrians are Sunnis, the majority sect in the Muslim world. They view their creed as the purest form of Islam. However, Assad, his powerful brother Rifaat, and much of the armed forces are Alawites, who revere the Prophet Muhammed's cousin Ali, and who are considered heretics by the Sunnis.

Sunnis historically dominated Syrian society. But during the 1940s and '50s, lower-class rural Alawites like Assad flocked to the Army and to the avowedly socialist Ba'ath party, the only open avenues of self-advancement. Today, they control the military and the burgeoning intelligence agencies. Sunnis, who still run socialist Syria's remaining private businesses, bitterly resent the Alawites' power.

Foreign policy setbacks have further eroded Assad's popularity. Twenty-four thousand Syrian troops have been bogged down in a "peace-keeping" mission in Lebanon for four years. The 1978 Camp David accords destroyed Assad's post-1973 rapprochement with the United States. Accusing Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat of signing a separate peace with Israel, Assad has, for the moment, ended any willingness to consider a negotiated Middle East settlement.

Political dissent is not tolerated in Syria and corruption is rampant. The sporadic terrorism conducted by the mysterious anti-Assad forces known as the Muslim Brotherhood (who seem to draw support from all classes in Syria) escalated into full-fledged guerrilla war in June 1979. Political killings by the Brotherhood may have reached 400 in the past year. In April 1980, Assad sent elite troops and tanks into the cities of

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Aleppo and Hamah to hunt terrorists. Reed contends that Assad's indiscriminate repression will only strengthen the opposition in the long-run. And if Syria returns to its pre-Assad chaos, he warns, the chances of a negotiated Middle East peace will decline even further.

The First World Series

"Baseball and the Quest for National Dignity in Meiji Japan" by Donald Roden, in *American Historical Review* (Summer 1980), 400 A St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

With an intimidating show of force, Commodore Matthew C. Perry opened Japan to trade with the West in 1853. The jolt he dealt to Japanese national pride did not wear off until the 1890s. Helping to ease the loss of face, writes Roden, a Rutgers historian, was Japan's military victory over China (in 1895), the development of a strong Western-style constitutional government, the growth of an internationally competitive textile industry—and baseball.

Since the 1850s, athletic-minded Western businessmen and soldiers had been conspicuous inhabitants of port cities in Japan. These men viewed the "feebleness" of Japanese males "who carried fans, and manifested other effeminate customs" as proof of Western superiority. Japanese schools contributed to the stereotype. Hell-bent on spreading the West's technical and scientific know-how to their students, Japanese teachers ignored physical education.

American educators hired as advisers in Japanese schools were the first to recommend exercise in Japanese curricula, hoping to infuse young Japanese with "fire, energy, and manly independence." By 1889, Minister of Education Mori Arinori was promoting "military calisthenics" as a way of drilling the virtues of patriotism into grade schoolers. Meanwhile, Japanese university students searched for a "national game" that would emphasize teamwork and cultivate the nation's fighting spirit. Baseball—touted by American teachers eager to see the sport "follow the flag"—seemed to reflect traditional Japanese values of harmony, loyalty, and finesse over brute strength. Some Japanese compared the skilled batter to a samurai swordsman.

In 1891, Japan's best schoolboy team challenged the American businessmen and soldiers at the Yokohama Athletic Club to a game. The Westerners' refusal to take the proposal of the "little Japanese" seriously turned the contest into a struggle for national honor. They finally met on the diamond on May 23, 1896. The jeers and howls from the American crowd that greeted the arriving Tokyo Higher School team turned to stunned silence as the visitors pummeled the home team 29 to 4. The Japanese won most of the rematches—hastily requested by the Americans—between 1896 and 1904, outscoring their rivals 230 to 64.

These victories, reported widely in the press, filled Japanese with pride. Crowded one student writer: "The aggressive character of our national spirit is a well-established fact, demonstrated first in the Sino-Japanese War, and now by our great victories in baseball."