

SUPER SHINZO. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe appears as the Nintendo game character Super Mario during the closing ceremony of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Abe's brief but show-stopping appearance as Super Mario offered a tantalizing glimpse of Tokyo's plans for the 2020 games. (Yu Nakajima/Kyodo News via AP)

Japanese prime minister Abe wows Rio finale as Super Mario

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's brief but show-stopping gig at the Olympic closing ceremony as the Nintendo game character Super Mario offered a tantalizing glimpse at Tokyo's plans for the 2020 games.

The organizers of the Tokyo games crammed the works into a brief two-minute film montage before Abe's appearance: Athletes performed more than a dozen sports as landmarks like the Tokyo Tower, cherry blossoms, a bullet train, the Tokyo Bay Bridge, and the famous "scramble" intersection in Shibuya whizzed by.

Anime and video-game icons like Pac-Man and Hello Kitty featured, along with the beloved blue Doraemon cat, who pulled from his pocket of magic gadgets a green warp pipe whisking Abe from his limousine in Tokyo straight to Rio.

Abe pretty much upstaged, at least on Twitter, other highlights of the Olympic finale.

Even China's Communist Party newspaper, the *People's Daily*, not generally a fan of the hawkish Japanese politician, put out a tweet, though without any comment: "#Japanese PM Shinzo Abe appears from imaginary tunnel, disguised as #SuperMario."

Abe, who emerged from his Super Mario outfit in his usual get-up of a smartly tailored suit and tie, received mostly favorable commentary on his impersonation of the game character.

In that, the organizers gearing up in Tokyo for the 2020 games appeared to have achieved what they were striving for: "Cool!" "OMG!" "I want to go to Tokyo!"

China's launch of quantum satellite major step in space race

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possible to send quickly encrypted messages in an instant around the world and open the door to other possible uses of the technology.

Cybersecurity has been a major focus in recent years for China, which has pushed regulations aimed at limiting technology imported from the U.S. in the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations of widespread surveillance by the U.S. through the use of American hardware.

China has in turn been repeatedly accused by the U.S. of hacking into computer systems to steal commercial secrets and information that could harm American national security. China has rejected claims that it runs a state-sponsored hacking program and says it is among the leading victims of cybercrime.

Quantum messaging could become a major defense against hackers and have applications ranging from military and government communications to online shopping.

The biggest challenge, Ling said, is being able to orient the satellite with pinpoint accuracy to a location on earth where it can send and receive data without being affected by any disturbances in the atmosphere of the earth. The results of China's tests will be closely watched by other research teams, he said.

"It's very difficult to point the satellite accurately," Ling said. "You're trying to send a beam of light from a satellite that's 500 kilometers (310 miles) above you."

Hoi Fung Chau, a professor and quantum communications researcher at Hong Kong University, said it was too soon to say if the tests would succeed, but added



SPACE RACE. A Long March 2D rocket carrying the world's first quantum satellite lifts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Jiuquan, in northwestern China's Gansu province. Experts say China's launch of the first quantum satellite will push forward the worldwide effort to develop the ability to send communications that are impenetrable by hackers. (Jin Liwang/Xinhua via AP)

that he expected quantum messages by satellite to become the global standard eventually.

"The theory is already there, the technology is almost there," he said. "It's just a matter of time."

The launch is a major triumph for China, which has spent years researching quantum technology and developing the satellite and other uses for it. China has previously announced the construction of a quantum link between Beijing and Shanghai that would be used by government agencies and banks.

Pan Jianwei, chief scientist on the satellite project, was quoted by the official Xinhua News Agency as saying the launch proved China was no longer a follower in information technology, but "one of the leaders guiding future IT achievements."

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