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Public Diplomacy in the News: Plastics Diplomacy, U.S. Soccer Stars in Greece, and Olympics Economics ^[1]

“Public Diplomacy in the News” is a CPD Blog series by Andrew Dubbins that spotlights noteworthy stories on public diplomacy topics such as cultural diplomacy, nation branding, exchange programs, international events and conferences, digital diplomacy, and strategic global communications.

Plastics diplomacy reaches pivotal stage. In Ottawa, Canada, delegates convened for international negotiations on a United Nations plastics treaty. The Biden administration, under

scrutiny from both domestic and international actors, is advocating a balanced approach amidst polarized views on plastic pollution. While some nations and coalitions push for stringent production limits, others, like China and Russia, prefer focusing on waste management. U.S. officials stress the need for realistic commitments, considering domestic constraints and the complexities of substituting plastics with sustainable alternatives. The urgency to finalize an impactful treaty by year's end looms, with hopes that the negotiations could yield a significant multilateral success against plastic pollution.

Jordan Wolman / Politico

U.S. soccer stars join sports diplomacy mission in Greece. U.S. soccer stars Carli Lloyd and Cobi Jones participated in a U.S. State Department sports diplomacy mission in Greece, aimed at fostering inclusion and understanding through sports. The program is reflective of a broader effort by the U.S. to incorporate sports into its diplomatic outreach, aiming to reach communities that traditional diplomatic efforts might not. As part of the “Changing the Game: Sports for Inclusion” program, Lloyd and Jones engaged with diverse groups of children, including local Greek youths and refugees, to discuss leadership, teamwork, gender equity, mental health, and nutrition. The program overall seeks to leverage sports as a universal language to transcend cultural and political barriers, promoting American values and fostering connections in strategically significant regions.

Eddie Pells / NBC Philadelphia

The economics of hosting an Olympics. While the Olympics are seen as a prestigious international event and a major opportunity for nation branding, the reality for host cities often includes economic strain and social challenges, according to an analysis by *The Week*. Despite the anticipated global attention and local excitement, the financial burden on the host city is significant, with Paris spending at least \$9.7 billion, a portion of which is taxpayer-funded. Furthermore, according to the analysis, the Games can bring disruptions to local communities, such as displacements and the long-term costs of maintaining Olympic infrastructures that may have limited post-Games use.

Justin Klawans / The Week

Honoring “Greening Diplomacy” initiatives. The U.S. Department of State announced the winners of the 2024 Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI) Award and the GDI-OBO Resilience Innovation Fund, recognizing significant contributions to sustainability within the Department. Secretary Blinken highlighted the innovative and impactful winners, who were awarded for integrating sustainability into their operations and public engagements, aligning with various governmental mandates. U.S. Embassy Islamabad won the award for excellence in team sustainability for their comprehensive efforts to reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint, while U.S. Embassy New Delhi received the People's Choice Award for their effective waste management and resource conservation programs.

U.S. Department of State

A call for peace through multilateralism and diplomacy. To mark the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, Josep Borrell—High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy—issued a statement emphasizing the significance of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace, as well as the urgent need for reform

in the face of increasing global challenges. Borrell highlighted recent successes such as the endorsement of Sustainable Development Goals, advancements in climate justice, and international agreements like the High Seas Treaty. He also pointed the upcoming Summit of the Future (Sept. 22-23) as an opportunity for the EU to revitalize the multilateral system and build a more representative and effective United Nations.

European Union
