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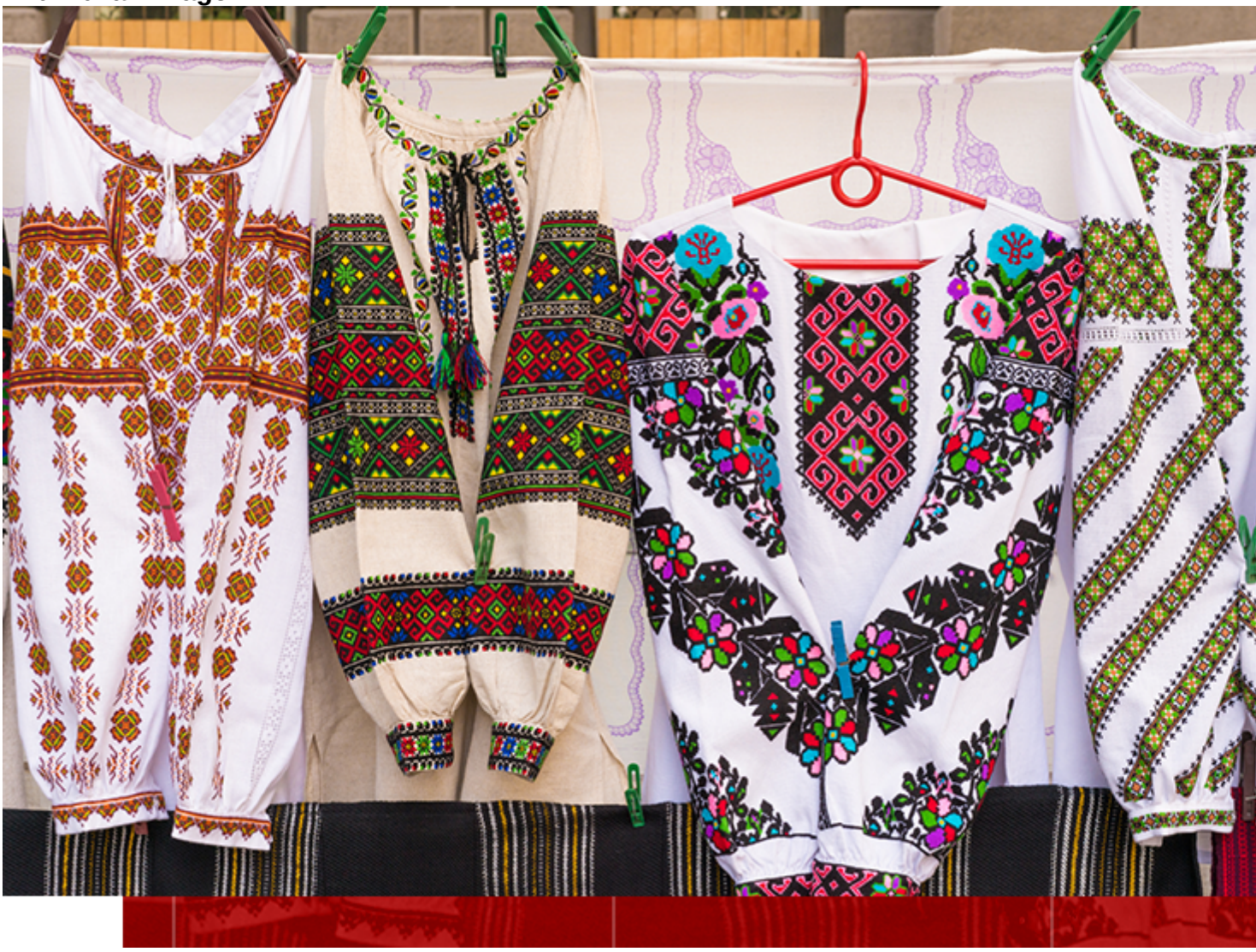

Jul 22, 2024 by Andrew Dubbins

Public Diplomacy in the News: Ukrainian Cultural Advocacy, Olympic Cyber Threats, and Remembering a Leader in US-Cuba Diplomacy [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.

Ukrainian activists reshape global perception through cultural advocacy. Ukrainian activists are making great strides in enhancing Ukraine's global presence and international

image through creative and impactful initiatives. Lesia Voroniuk, the founder of World Vyshyvanka Day, is working to elevate traditional Ukrainian clothing into a worldwide symbol of unity and resistance. Her efforts have engaged participants from over 100 countries, turning the vyshyvanka (pictured above) into a powerful political statement. Another key figure, Oksana Semenik, has dedicated her work to reclaiming Ukrainian art from mistaken Russian attribution in international museums, greatly influencing the global art scene's recognition of Ukrainian heritage. These individuals, among other talented Ukrainians supported by the KSE Foundation's Talents for Ukraine grant program, have proven pivotal in promoting Ukrainian culture, history, and values across the globe.

Forbes Ukraine & KSE Foundation

Global defense rallies to protect Paris Olympics from cyber threats. The Biden administration is supporting French authorities to defend against potential cyberattacks and disinformation threats targeting the upcoming Summer Olympic Games in Paris, amid concerns over Russian interference. This assistance includes intelligence sharing, direct cyber support, and collaboration between U.S. and French agencies. Other nations, like Estonia, are also contributing to these efforts. French cybersecurity agency ANSSI has been preparing for two years, identifying and protecting companies involved in hosting the games. Despite past incidents of Russian interference in global sporting events, French officials are vigilant and focused on countering any disinformation campaigns leading up to the Olympics.

Maggie Miller / Politico

Wayne Smith's lifelong pursuit of US-Cuba diplomacy. Former Foreign Service officer Wayne Smith, who passed away last month at age 91, dedicated his career to fostering dialogue and diplomacy between the United States and Cuba. According to *The Nation*, Smith began his work as a young diplomat in Havana just before Fidel Castro's revolution. Despite setbacks, including the Reagan administration's hostile policies and the Trump administration's reversal of Obama's efforts to normalize relations, Smith tirelessly advocated for rational U.S. policy towards Cuba. His efforts included proposing steps to lift embargoes and promote cultural exchanges, like exhibition baseball games, which eventually saw partial success.

Peter Kornbluh and William M. Leogrande / The Nation

The cultural significance and rituals of the Olympics. University of Chicago anthropologist John J. MacAloon has dedicated nearly five decades to studying the Olympic Games, attending 16 events and pioneering the multidisciplinary field of Olympic studies. In a Q&A, MacAloon reflected on the unique value of the Olympics for anthropological analysis, highlighting its cultural rituals and global significance. He discusses the intersection of sports and politics, his experiences with the International Olympic Committee, and the evolution of Olympic studies. MacAloon remains captivated by the rituals of the Games, emphasizing their importance and expressing interest in the upcoming Paris Olympics' innovative opening ceremony.

University of Chicago

Revitalizing NYC's post-pandemic cultural scene. In a Q&A, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo highlighted the essential role of cultural

institutions in revitalizing post-pandemic life and tourism in New York City, underscoring the importance of continued support from state and federal partners to maintain New York's status as a global cultural hub. Despite the severe impact of the pandemic on cultural organizations, federal aid and ongoing city investments, including a $22 million budget restoration, have supported recovery efforts. Cumbo emphasized the intrinsic link between cultural activities and public safety, noting that vibrant cultural programming fosters safer communities, and praised the Adams administration's commitment to funding arts and culture across the city's five boroughs.

City & State New York