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Aug 21, 2024 by [Andrew Dubbins](#)

Public Diplomacy in the News: Global AI Race, Olympic Flag Arrives in L.A., and the Ukrainian Ballet on Tour ^[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.

Nations compete for A.I. dominance amid growing global tensions. The global race to control artificial intelligence (A.I.) has intensified, with nations striving to develop their own A.I. technologies to avoid reliance on foreign innovations. Countries like the U.S., China, France, and Saudi Arabia are pouring resources into A.I., motivated by the potential to reshape economies, scientific research, and even warfare. While the U.S. currently leads with powerful A.I. models and access to key microchips, other nations are rapidly advancing through state funding and strategic partnerships. Amid this race, concerns about privacy, misinformation,

and national interests are driving regulations, particularly in the European Union and China, creating a fragmented global A.I. landscape.

Adam Satariano & Paul Mozur / New York Times

LA welcomes Olympic flag with Hollywood style. The Olympic flag has officially arrived in Los Angeles following a star-studded closing ceremony in Paris, which included performances from artists like Snoop Dogg and Billie Eilish and a stunt by Tom Cruise. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, the first Black woman to receive the Olympic flag, carried it off the plane at LAX, marking the beginning of preparations for the 2028 Summer Games. Plans for the upcoming games include a “no-car” approach, encouraging public transportation, and the use of existing venues like the Memorial Coliseum—home of the USC Trojans—and UCLA dorms for athletes. The flag will be displayed at City Hall until 2028, symbolizing L.A.’s readiness for the game. To make way for the Olympic exhibit, a collection of Japanese and Korean artifacts were removed from City Hall, sparking controversy.

Annie Rupertus / LAist

Ukrainian ballet embarks on historic U.S. tour. The National Ballet of Ukraine is embarking on its first U.S. tour in more than 30 years, showcasing its artistic talent while serving as a powerful act of cultural diplomacy amid the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. The tour will cover 16 cities on the East Coast, including major performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. The ballet troupe will perform excerpts from its classical repertoire, such as "Giselle" and "Don Quixote," enhanced by immersive 3D technology. Joining them will be the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, and proceeds from the tour will support humanitarian aid efforts in Ukraine and other conflict regions. The tour reflects the resilience and cultural pride of Ukraine, highlighting its rich artistic heritage despite the hardships of war.

Peter Crimmins / WHYY

Global collaboration enhances Indonesian cultural diplomacy and artistic exchange. Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is advancing its cultural diplomacy through a residency program that brings together cultural practitioners from around the world to collaborate with Indonesian artists. The program is based in three culturally significant locations—Cirebon, Pekanbaru, and Yogyakarta—where participants engage in traditional art forms such as tari topeng, pantun musicalization, and traditional archery. This initiative aims to foster the preservation and promotion of Indonesian culture globally while enhancing cross-cultural exchange and expanding the international network of Indonesian artists. The program's collaborative outcomes will be showcased at the Fatahillah Museum in Jakarta.

The Jakarta Post

Election officials face rising disinformation and technological threats in 2024. Election officials across the United States are grappling with a surge of disinformation ahead of the 2024 election, further complicating their roles in voter registration and election administration. County clerks and secretaries of state, like Tate Fall in Georgia and Justin Roebuck in Michigan, are increasingly forced to combat conspiracy theories and public distrust fueled by political figures and far-right media outlets. Despite efforts to debunk false claims and protect election integrity, these officials face challenges such as reduced funding, technological

harassment, and the threat of AI-generated disinformation. Many officials, overwhelmed but determined, are implementing new strategies to ensure fair elections while addressing a growing climate of suspicion and misinformation. U.S. intelligence officials have also warned of an increase in foreign disinformation campaigns, primarily from adversaries like Russia, China, and Iran, seeking to influence the 2024 presidential election by undermining public trust and voter confidence, with the growing use of AI deepfakes posing a significant threat.

Tiffany Hsu / New York Times
