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Public Diplomacy in the News: A History of Embassies, an International AI Treaty, & Russia's Election Disinformation [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.

New book explores global embassies. *Outposts of Diplomacy* by G.R. Berridge explores the evolution of embassies as pivotal institutions that bridge nations, even those with conflicting ideologies. Tracing their origins from ancient Greece through the Renaissance and

into modern diplomacy, the book highlights embassies' role in protecting citizens, fostering trade, and engaging in espionage. Despite rich historical details, such as the diplomatic rivalry in Renaissance Italy and the strategic importance of Morocco in the 19th century, the narrative is weighed down by obscure anecdotes, writes Edward Rothstein in a review for *The Wall Street Journal.*

Edward Rothstein / The Wall Street Journal

US, Britain, and EU to sign first international AI treaty. The United States, Britain, and European Union countries are set to sign the first legally binding international treaty on artificial intelligence, known as the AI Convention. This treaty, negotiated by 57 nations, focuses on safeguarding human rights while promoting responsible AI innovation. Adopted in May, it emphasizes the need to protect individuals impacted by AI systems and uphold fundamental values such as the rule of law. While the treaty has been praised as a significant step forward, some experts have criticized its broad principles and exemptions, particularly concerning national security and private sector scrutiny.

Reuters

U.S. charges Russian operatives in $10M election disinformation campaign. The U.S. Department of Justice has charged two Russian nationals with orchestrating a $10 million disinformation campaign aimed at influencing the 2024 U.S. elections by using online platforms to spread propaganda. The campaign, linked to Russian state media outlet *RT*, used fake domains resembling legitimate U.S. news sites to distribute misinformation through American social media influencers. The operation is part of a broader Russian effort, including past attempts in 2016, to sow discord in U.S. politics. In response, the U.S. government has taken actions such as seizing domains, imposing sanctions, and restricting visas for those involved.

Burt Jansen / USA Today

Antony Blinken discusses modernizing U.S. diplomacy. In a Q&A with *Wired* magazine, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed his efforts to modernize U.S. diplomacy for the 21st century, including establishing a Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy to address technological challenges and enhance global alliances, particularly in cybersecurity, AI, and defense. He also spoke about navigating urgent global crises, including the Afghanistan withdrawal, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and tensions with China. Despite numerous challenges, Blinken highlighted the importance of U.S. leadership and partnerships in addressing issues like international conflict and fentanyl trafficking, underscoring a rejuvenation of American diplomatic influence.

Garrett M. Graff / Wired

UK faces diplomatic crossroads in selecting next US ambassador amid political uncertainty. Karen Pierce, the current British ambassador to the United States, has expertly navigated the complexities of U.S. political dynamics, fostering strong ties with both the Trump and Biden-Harris administrations. Pierce's success in employing soft power, hosting cross-party events, and building crucial alliances underscores her role in facilitating collaboration during her tenure. As her term nears its end, the British government faces the challenge of selecting her successor, which will hinge largely on the outcome of the 2024 U.S. presidential

election.