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Public Diplomacy in the News: Film Diplomacy, UN Pact for the Future, & Backlash Against Disinformation Researchers ^[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.

Film diplomacy program bridges Hollywood and African filmmakers. The U.S. State Department is leveraging film diplomacy to expand U.S. foreign policy goals, including economic equity and societal inclusion, through initiatives like the African Creative TV program hosted at USC's School of Cinematic Arts. This program, which pairs African filmmakers with Hollywood professionals, highlights the global relevance of local stories without altering their cultural context. The partnership underscores the power of film to foster international dialogue and understanding, exemplified by USC's involvement in various cultural exchange programs funded by the State Department, aiming to strengthen global creative industries.

Los Angeles Times / Samantha Masunaga

UN adopts global pact to tackle 21st-century challenges. The United Nations General Assembly has adopted the "Pact for the Future," a 42-page blueprint aimed at uniting the world's divided nations to address 21st-century challenges such as climate change, artificial intelligence, escalating conflicts, and increasing inequality. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged world leaders to transform these commitments into concrete actions, emphasizing the need for dialogue, Security Council reform, and the inclusion of young people in decision-making. The pact also includes measures for nuclear disarmament, AI governance, and the removal of barriers to women's rights, highlighting a global commitment to a more equitable and secure future.

Edith M. Lederer / Associated Press

Disinformation researchers face political and tech industry backlash. The field of disinformation research is facing significant challenges as it comes under attack from political forces, particularly from conservative politicians and right-wing media. A *Mother Jones* feature highlighted how disinformation researchers, who have been essential in identifying and combating misleading narratives from both foreign and domestic actors, are now themselves being targeted, leading to reduced funding, layoffs, and increased scrutiny. The parallels between the current situation and the past assaults on climate scientists are evident, with corporate-backed and ideologically motivated attacks seeking to undermine scientific consensus. As the influence of disinformation grows, exacerbated by the indifference or complicity of Big Tech companies, the environment for combating false information has deteriorated, leaving researchers and the public more vulnerable.

Anna Merlan / Mother Jones

Paris celebrates Olympic heroes amid political turmoil. Paris concluded its summer of celebration with a grand parade on the Champs Élysées, honoring 460 Olympic and Paralympic athletes, including 120 medalists from the recent Paris Games. The event, attended by around 70,000 spectators, featured a ring-shaped stage around the Arc de Triomphe and was dubbed the "5th ceremony" for its emotional and surprising elements. President Emmanuel Macron, who decorated 120 Olympians with state honors, used the occasion to promote a sense of national harmony, despite the ongoing political challenges of a hung parliament and societal divisions following the recent legislative elections.

Associated Press

Cai Guo-Qiang's explosive art event ignites cultural exchange in Los Angeles. Cai Guo-Qiang's explosive art event, "WE ARE," kicked off the PST ART initiative in Los Angeles with a spectacular display at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum, blending art and science in a celebration of cultural exchange. The Chinese artist, known for his large-scale pyrotechnic displays, utilized drones, bamboo sparkles, and sustainable pigments to create a vivid and loud experience that left spectators in awe. The event also featured an AI-driven narration, underscoring the integration of technology and tradition. This vibrant show not only marked the beginning of over 70 themed exhibitions across Southern California but also highlighted the dynamic fusion of Chinese cultural elements with contemporary art and innovation.

Michael Juliano / Time Out LA
