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Public Diplomacy in the News: Climate Contingency Plans, A Car-Free Olympics, and a Hip Hop-Anime Collab ^[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.

Global climate diplomats prepare for potential U.S. withdrawal under Trump. Global climate diplomats are preparing contingency plans to maintain international cooperation on climate change should Donald Trump win another term and withdraw the U.S. from the Paris

Agreement again. These preparations include crisis simulations and forming new channels of diplomacy that do not rely on federal leadership, aiming to insulate global climate efforts from U.S. political shifts. State and local entities, such as California and Maryland, have engaged in talks to continue cooperation with international partners like China. This strategic planning seeks to counteract potential setbacks from a U.S. withdrawal by encouraging subnational and non-governmental actors to uphold commitments to climate action.

Jennifer A Dlouhy / Bloomberg

Los Angeles scrambles to deliver car-free 2028 Olympics. Los Angeles faces significant challenges in fulfilling Mayor Karen Bass' promise of a "car-free" 2028 Olympics due to insufficient funding and unresolved transportation planning. With only four years remaining, the city has managed to secure just 5.2% of the necessary \$3.3 billion for transportation improvements, including enhancing Metro stations and adding charging stations near Olympic venues. Despite the pressure to accommodate the expected influx of tourists, equivalent to seven Super Bowls daily, local officials and Metro planners are struggling to create a viable transportation strategy that addresses the logistical demands and federal security requirements, with many critical projects at risk of being scrapped if additional funding isn't secured soon.

The Los Angeles Times / Rachel Uranga

Atlanta's Trap Sushi merges hip-hop and anime in cultural celebration. Trap Sushi in Atlanta offers a unique cultural experience where hip-hop and anime fans can connect over fresh sushi, saké, and live performances. Founded by music artist Tolden "Troop" Williams, this concept originated from his time at an anime convention and has evolved into a multifaceted lifestyle brand with global aspirations. Trap Sushi hosts events worldwide, including official afterparties for anime conventions and events in Tokyo, showcasing merchandise inspired by popular anime series. Troop's vision extends beyond just anime fandom, aiming to create memorable experiences for all attendees, reflecting his broader goals of promoting and expanding black-owned businesses and cultural integration.

Alex Cates / The Atlanta Voice

Gulf states leverage AI in economic shift amid US-China rivalry. As Saudi Arabia and the UAE intensify their focus on artificial intelligence to diversify from oil-based economies, they view AI as a strategic asset to transform their economies. At the recent AI summit in Riyadh, Saudi officials, alongside U.S. and Chinese tech companies, showcased their AI advancements, with discussions about the critical role of U.S. computing power in maintaining an edge over China. Despite these technological advances and international collaborations, real challenges persist, including U.S. export controls and geopolitical risks. The Gulf states' complex relationships with China and their broader international activities suggest a cautious approach by the U.S., emphasizing cooperation without expecting a significant strategic shift in the region.

Sam Winter-Levy / Foreign Affairs

Russian disinformation targets U.S. election with false claims against Tim Walz. U.S. intelligence officials reveal that Russia has engaged in an influence campaign aimed at spreading false claims about Democratic vice-presidential candidate Tim Walz, using

manipulated videos and staged content to undermine his reputation. These disinformation tactics, part of a broader Russian strategy known as "Storm-1516," aim to sway the election by creating and amplifying baseless narratives on social media. Intelligence agencies warn that, alongside Russia, other foreign actors, including Iran and China, are prepared to exploit divisive issues to erode public confidence in the democratic process and incite tensions, especially in the aftermath of Election Day.

Shannon Bond / NPR
