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Public Diplomacy in the News: PGA Dealmaking, Online Linguistic Diversity, & Disinformation in South Korea ^[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.

Trump brokers PGA-LIV golf merger amid conflict concerns. Former President Trump is actively mediating a potential merger between the PGA Tour and Saudi-backed LIV Golf, leveraging his influence to resolve a long-standing rift in professional golf. In meetings with key figures, including PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan, LIV Chairman Yasir al-Rumayyan, and Tiger Woods, Trump is working to broker a deal that could benefit his family’s golf properties financially and restore their status as premier tournament venues. While his role raises ethical concerns about conflicts of interest, Trump’s involvement could expedite an agreement potentially subject to U.S. antitrust review, impacting the future of global golf.

Lauren Hirsch, Alan Blinder, Kate Kelly and Sharon LaFraniere / New York Times

UNESCO and ICANN unite to break language barriers online. UNESCO and ICANN have partnered to enhance linguistic diversity online by supporting the secure use of additional scripts and languages in the Internet’s domain name system (DNS), ensuring that domain names and email addresses function seamlessly across all digital platforms. With only around 400 languages fully accessible online out of the world’s 7,000 spoken languages, this collaboration aims to drive Universal Acceptance (UA) of all domain names and email addresses, allowing users to navigate the Internet in their preferred language and script. The initiative will expand Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), encourage stakeholders to update systems for UA-readiness, and support multilingual domain names, ultimately fostering global Internet inclusivity and accessibility.

UNESCO

China’s alleged election disinformation sparks concern amid South Korea’s political crisis. Growing concerns in Washington and Seoul center around China’s alleged disinformation campaign, which South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol claims is undermining his country’s democracy amid his impeachment trial. The U.S. State Department has acknowledged Beijing’s global efforts to manipulate information, while China’s ambassador to Seoul has warned against criticism of Beijing’s involvement in South Korean politics. Yoon’s attorneys argue that China and North Korea interfered in elections to destabilize South Korea, a claim echoed by conservative analysts in the U.S. As Yoon awaits the Constitutional Court’s impeachment ruling, fears persist that foreign influence could impact South Korea’s political future and regional security.

Christy Lee / Voice of America

State Department's mixed messaging stirs confusion in international student recruitment. State Department employees at EducationUSA, a program promoting U.S. higher education abroad, are struggling with unclear communication guidelines following an executive order from President Trump restricting language related to diversity. Initially instructed to avoid terms like "diversity," "women," and "minority" under an "America First" messaging directive, staffers later saw this guidance rescinded, leaving them uncertain about how to communicate with international students. The confusion could hinder student recruitment, potentially affecting both classroom diversity and the billions of dollars international students contribute to the U.S. economy. Similar language restrictions across federal agencies have also impacted research, intelligence, and education policies, raising concerns about broader consequences.

Jenna McLaughlin / NPR

Newsom leverages diplomacy to secure Trump's support. Governor Gavin Newsom's strategic embrace of diplomacy is evident in his pragmatic approach to working with President Trump despite their political differences. Prioritizing California's needs, particularly for wildfire relief, Newsom has opted for a conciliatory stance, engaging in positive dialogue and public praise to maintain federal support. This diplomatic maneuvering reflects a shift from his previous resistance to Trump, demonstrating how diplomacy can be leveraged to navigate partisan tensions for practical gains.

Mark Barabak / LA Times
