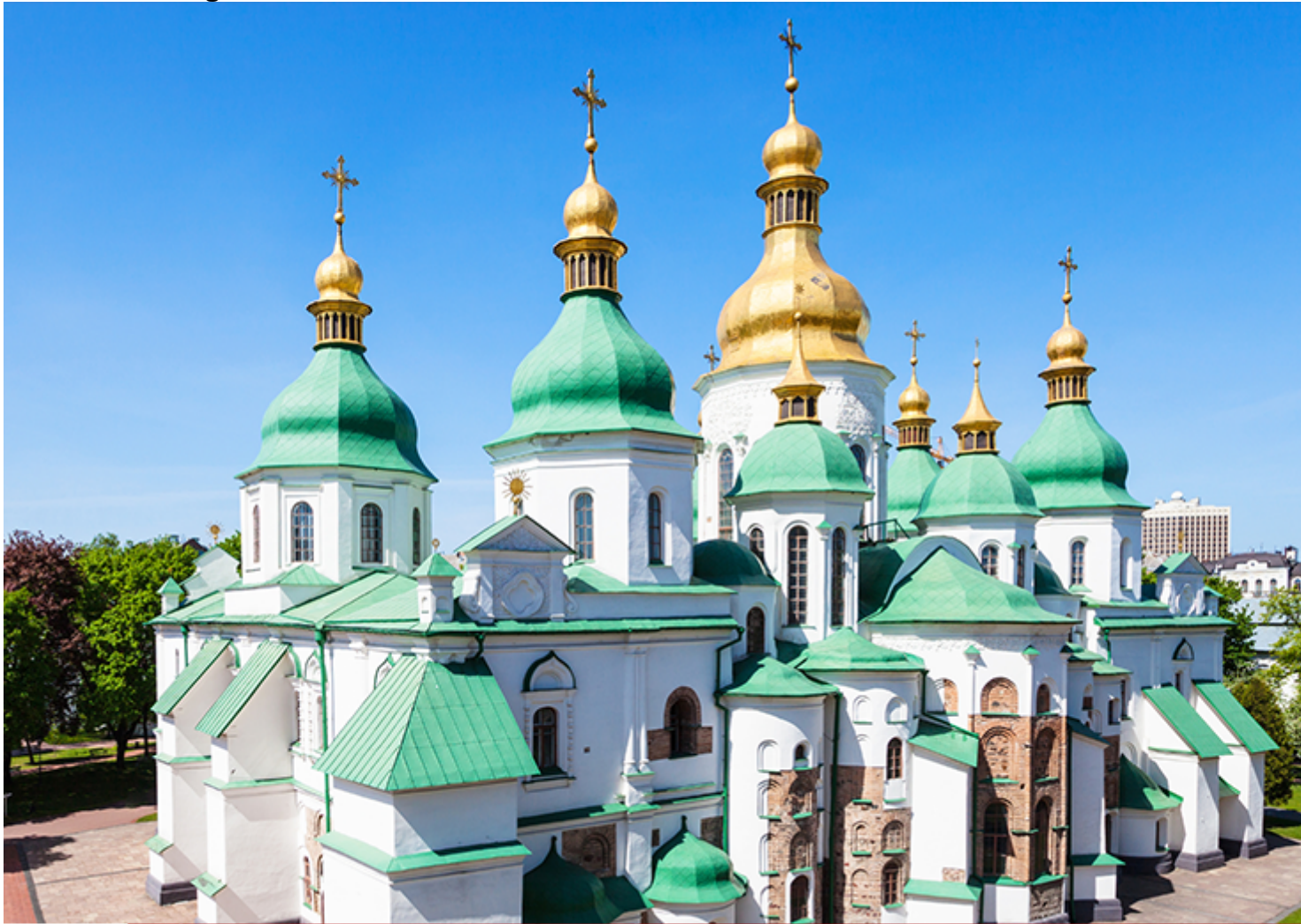


**Thumbnail Image:**



Jun 16, 2025 by [Andrew Dubbins](#)

## **Public Diplomacy in the News: Kyiv’s Endangered World Heritage Site, Disinformation in L.A., Fulbright Resignations, & More** <sup>[1]</sup>

*“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.*

**UNESCO sounds alarm over damage to Kyiv’s World Heritage site. UNESCO has**

expressed grave concern over the damage to Kyiv's World Heritage site, including Saint-Sophia Cathedral (pictured above) and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, following a June 10 Russian attack amid broader strikes across Ukraine. The eastern façade of the 11th-century cathedral—an icon of Eastern Christian architecture—was damaged, prompting UNESCO to call for emergency conservation and structural analysis. Citing violations of international conventions protecting cultural heritage, UNESCO condemned such assaults and reaffirmed its commitment to preserving Ukrainian sites, three of which—Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa—are now listed as World Heritage in Danger.

## UNESCO

**Fulbright board resigns over alleged political interference.** Eleven of the twelve members of the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board resigned in protest over what they allege is political interference by the Trump administration, which they say overrode award decisions and imposed ideological litmus tests on the prestigious international exchange program. In their resignation letter, the former members accused the administration of violating the 1961 Fulbright–Hays Act by usurping the board's final authority over scholarship approvals and undermining academic freedom. The State Department dismissed their claims as partisan and aligned with Trump's executive orders. Critics warn the mass resignation could politicize Fulbright's mission and jeopardize U.S. academic credibility abroad.

Rachel Treisman / NPR

**Disinformation fuels conspiracies amid L.A. protest unrest.** As protests erupted in Los Angeles over immigration raids, a wave of disinformation flooded social media, fueling conspiracy theories, reviving false narratives, and distorting the scale of unrest to serve political agendas. Misleading posts, doctored images, and repurposed videos—some shared by right-wing influencers and Russian-linked accounts—painted the demonstrations as staged or orchestrated by figures like George Soros or Democratic officials. Amid this digital chaos, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth mobilized Marines to secure federal buildings without state authorization, escalating tensions further. Experts warn this information warfare seeks to delegitimize protest, polarize the public, and erode trust in democratic dissent.

Steven Lee Myers / New York Times

**Countdown to 2026 World Cup brings expansion, stars, and uncertainty.** With one year until kickoff, the 2026 FIFA World Cup promises to be the biggest tournament in history, featuring 48 teams, 104 matches, and co-hosting duties split across the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. FIFA projects a record \$13 billion in revenue, leveraging North America's infrastructure and rising soccer popularity. Yet political entanglements—from Trump travel bans to Saudi Arabia's unopposed 2034 bid—raise concerns. Star power abounds, with Messi and Ronaldo eyeing final appearances and teenage sensation Lamine Yamal poised to shine. While global anticipation builds, the struggling U.S. team faces pressure to perform amid rising doubts about its readiness.

Phil Hay / The Athletic

**Kamayan feast celebrates Filipino heritage and Hawaii-Philippines ties.** Ahead of Philippine Independence Day, Philippine Consul General Arman Talbo outlined his mission in Hawaii: to strengthen cultural ties, amplify the Filipino American voice, and foster collaboration

in education, healthcare, business, and disaster preparedness. In a symbolic gesture of food diplomacy, Talbo joined a kamayan feast—a traditional communal Filipino meal eaten by hand—hosted by Chef Randy Bangloy at Eating House 1849 in Waikiki. The event highlights efforts to reconnect younger generations with their Filipino heritage and promote Filipino cuisine as part of Hawaii's diverse cultural tapestry.

Annalisa Burgos / Hawaii News Now

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