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Public Diplomacy in the News: Trump's Olympic Task Force, Art Basel in Qatar, & 1987's Pan Am Games ^[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 launches Olympic task force. President Trump is set to establish a White House task force to oversee security and logistics for the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, despite strained relations with local Democratic officials. With the Games designated a

National Special Security Event, the task force will coordinate federal efforts alongside the FBI, Secret Service, and Homeland Security. The move comes amid ongoing disputes over immigration enforcement in Southern California and as Los Angeles grapples with a budget crisis following devastating wildfires. While city leaders remain wary, Olympic organizers welcomed the administration's support for the upcoming international event.

Jesus Jiménez / The New York Times

Qatar's cultural power play at Art Basel. Doha's addition as a host city for Art Basel reflects Qatar's strategic use of elite art events to expand its soft power and global prestige, despite its controversial human rights record. With vast investments in high-value art and cultural institutions, the Gulf State seeks influence among the global elite, leveraging the fair's prestige to burnish its image and deepen ties with powerful stakeholders. Critics argue that such cultural diplomacy masks labor abuses and political scandals, while others note the art world's growing entanglement with finance, status, and geopolitics in a shifting, post-globalized era.

Carlo Martuscelli / Politico

U.S. imposes visa bonds for high-risk travelers. The State Department, under Secretary Marco Rubio, is launching a 12-month pilot program requiring travelers from countries with high visa overstay rates to pay a bond—typically \$10,000 per adult and \$5,000 per child—as a condition for receiving U.S. business or tourism visas. Aimed at deterring overstays, the refundable bonds will be collected by the Treasury and returned only if travelers leave within their visa window using designated ports of entry. The policy, reviving a plan first floated in 2020, underscores the Trump administration's hardline stance on immigration enforcement and national security.

Eric Bazail-Eimil and Nahal Toosi / Politico

Remembering the 1987 Pan Am Games. When political instability forced other nations to withdraw, Indianapolis stepped in to host the 1987 Pan American Games, marking a turning point in the city's international profile. The event drew over 4,300 athletes from 38 countries and served as a showcase of diplomacy—particularly with Cuba—as well as Latino community leadership, cultural celebration, and civic pride. With events spanning the state and support from tens of thousands of volunteers, the games transformed Indianapolis into a recognized hub for amateur sports and cross-cultural cooperation.

Nicole Martinez-LeGrand / Mirror Indy

Moroccan flag football team connects with Green Bay Packers in cultural exchange. A Moroccan women's flag football team is spending a week in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as part of a cultural exchange hosted by the Green Bay Packers, combining sports, leadership training, and cross-cultural dialogue. Organized by Fouzia Madhouni, founder of "We Can Morocco," the visit includes scrimmages, a girls' football camp, and attendance at a preseason game, with the goal of empowering women through American football and fostering gender equality. The initiative builds on Madhouni's 2022 connection with the Packers through the Global Sports Mentoring Program supported by the U.S. State Department and ESPNW.

Latifa Babas / Yabiladi
