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Sep 02, 2025 by [Andrew Dubbins](#)

## **Public Diplomacy in the News: Russian Media Influence, U.S. Soft Power Redesign, & Ukraine's Artistic Resistance** <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.*

**Russia expands media influence across the Global South** — As Western nations restrict RT and Sputnik for spreading disinformation about Ukraine, Russia has redirected its state-backed media toward Africa, Latin America, the Balkans, the Middle East, and Southeast

Asia. These outlets exploit gaps left by budget cuts at Western broadcasters, offering free or locally tailored programming while training journalists and reframing narratives on issues like NATO expansion and the Ukraine war. By presenting itself as a defender of the Global South against Western imperialism, Russia has gained traction in regions with strong anti-colonial sentiment, though analysts warn its “careful manipulation” normalizes aggression, distorts facts about war crimes, and undermines liberal democracies.

Juliana Gragnani and Maria Korenyuk / BBC

**American soft power needs a redesign, not reform** — Writing in *The Hill*, Ambassador Mark Green, former USAID administrator under President Trump and U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, argues that dismantling USAID offers an opportunity to build a new model for American global engagement rooted in private enterprise, innovation, and a stronger overseas presence.

Amb. Mark Green / The Hill

**Ukrainian artists turn survival into resistance** — On Ukrainian Independence Day, Washington’s Miracle Theater hosted a documentary following Kyiv dancers confronting the guilt of creating art during wartime and ultimately embracing it as an act of defiance. Co-hosted by Razom for Ukraine, PEN America, and The Pulitzer Center, the screening was followed by a panel where filmmakers and poets emphasized that continuing to live, move, and create resists Russia’s campaign to erase Ukrainian culture. By highlighting humanity beyond headlines, the film and discussion framed art as both a shield against dehumanization and a physical declaration of freedom, underscoring that in Ukraine, creativity itself is resistance.

Alex Raufoglu / Kyiv Post

**U.S. expands cultural diplomacy through art partnership** — The State Department’s Office of Art in Embassies has partnered with the American Arts Conservancy to broaden the global reach of American art, showcasing U.S. creativity as a tool of diplomacy. The collaboration will support exhibitions in embassies and ambassadorial residences, develop educational programs, launch youth art initiatives, promote artist exchanges, and build a permanent digital archive of featured works. By combining public and private resources, the initiative seeks to strengthen cultural connections worldwide and highlight the role of American visual art in fostering dialogue and understanding.

U.S. Department of State

**Trump administration targets student, exchange, and media visas** — The Trump administration unveiled a proposed rule to limit the duration of F, J, and I visas, affecting international students, cultural exchange visitors, and foreign journalists. Instead of visas lasting for the duration of study or employment, the rule would impose fixed time limits—up to four years for students and exchange workers, 240 days for journalists, and just 90 days for Chinese reporters—requiring extensions for longer stays. Officials argue the change is needed to enhance monitoring, while critics, including international education groups and China’s foreign ministry, denounce it as discriminatory and harmful. The proposal mirrors a 2020 measure withdrawn under Biden and comes amid broader efforts by Trump to tighten legal immigration, including ideological screening of students and neighborhood checks on

citizenship applicants.

Ted Hesson / Reuters

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