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Mar 09, 2026 by [Andrew Dubbins](#)

Public Diplomacy in the News: House Hearing on Public Diplomacy, Gulf Warner Bros. Investment, & More ^[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.

Advancing National Security through Public Diplomacy. At a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, lawmakers examined how U.S. public diplomacy tools—ranging from international broadcasting to cultural and educational exchanges—can strengthen national security and counter global disinformation. Testifying before the committee, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy Sarah B. Rogers discussed the role of strategic communication,

partnerships, and digital engagement in promoting U.S. interests and values abroad amid intensifying geopolitical competition.

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Arab Sovereign Wealth Funds Enter Hollywood Power Play. A proposed \$110 billion merger between Paramount Skydance and Warner Bros. Discovery—supported by \$24 billion from sovereign wealth funds in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi—is fueling debate over foreign influence and soft power in global media. While the Gulf investors are not expected to receive formal governance rights, analysts question whether such a massive financial stake can remain truly passive in a company that owns major cultural and news platforms like CNN and HBO, especially as Middle Eastern states expand investments in entertainment to diversify their economies, enhance global prestige, and project influence through media and intellectual property.

Nick Vivarelli / Variety

Escalating Propaganda as War Fatigue Grows in Russia. As public frustration over the long war in Ukraine mounts, the Kremlin is amplifying increasingly dramatic propaganda narratives to maintain domestic support. Russian state media has circulated implausible claims that Britain and France plan to supply Ukraine with nuclear weapons—an allegation widely dismissed abroad but aimed primarily at a domestic audience—as economic pressures, declining growth, and quiet public desire for negotiations signal growing war weariness, even as Vladimir Putin appears uncertain how to end the conflict while preserving the appearance of victory.

Mark Galeotti / The Times

Airstrikes Damage Tehran's Historic Golestan Palace. U.S.–Israeli missile strikes near Tehran have damaged the four-hundred-year-old Golestan Palace, Iran's only UNESCO World Heritage site in the capital, shattering windows and scattering debris after a strike in a nearby square. The palace—built in the Safavid era and later expanded under the Qajar dynasty, where Iranian shahs were crowned—holds major historical and cultural significance, prompting concern from UNESCO and renewed attention to international laws protecting cultural heritage sites during armed conflict.

Art Forum / UNESCO

Mounting Uncertainty Ahead of the 2026 World Cup. With only 100 days before kickoff, the expanded 2026 FIFA World Cup—set to span the United States, Canada, and Mexico—is facing a series of political, economic, and logistical challenges that threaten to overshadow preparations. Concerns range from the possibility that Iran could withdraw amid escalating conflict with the United States and Israel, to security worries in Mexico, delayed federal funding for U.S. host-city security, record-high ticket prices, and the potential impact of U.S. immigration policies and geopolitical tensions on international fan attendance.

Rafael Nam / NPR
