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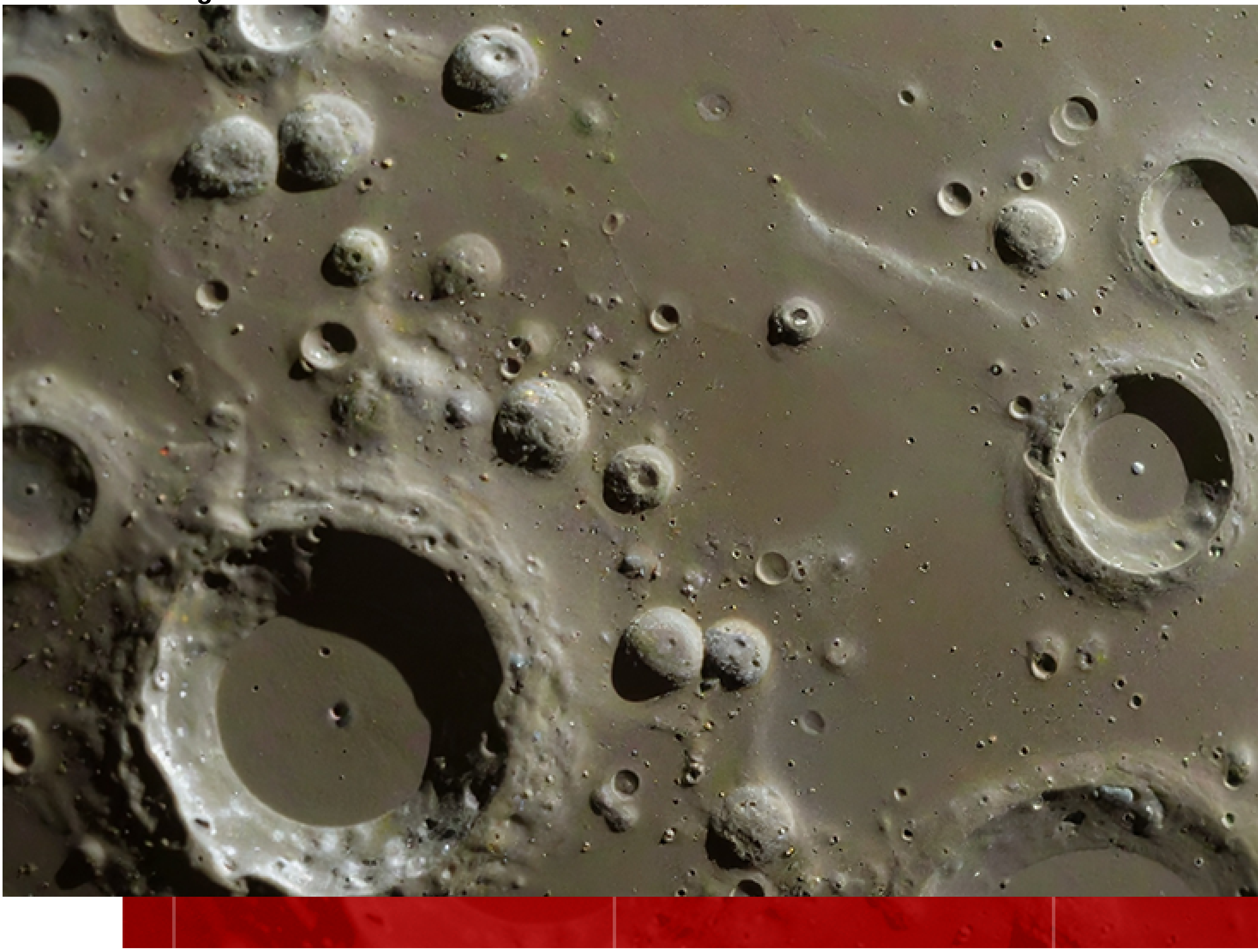

Aug 17, 2026 by Andrew Dubbins

Public Diplomacy in the News: China's Moon Map, JPMorgan's Olympic 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.

Mapping China’s space ambitions. China’s newly updated geological map of the moon reflects a broader push to translate its growing scientific capabilities into influence over the standards that could govern future space exploration. Drawing partly on discoveries from the Chang'e 5 and Chang'e 6 sample-return missions, researchers refined the moon's geological history and introduced a proprietary mapping standard that China plans to extend to future planetary exploration. The effort highlights an emerging dimension of U.S.-China competition in space, where leadership may depend not only on missions and technological achievements but also on whose scientific and technical standards gain international acceptance.

Andrew Jones / Space

Betting big on LA28. JPMorgan is making a major investment in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, becoming the Games' first global banking partner in a sponsorship estimated to be worth more than $200 million per four-year cycle. The partnership reflects both confidence in the Olympics' revamped sponsorship model and a broader strategy to use LA28's global reach to strengthen JPMorgan's brand, attract customers and expand its Southern California business, including plans to hire more than 100 additional business bankers. For Olympic organizers, the deal also demonstrates how new commercial opportunities—from nationwide torch-relay activations to venue naming rights—could attract major corporate partners while generating revenue for the Games.

Leslie Picker & Ritika Shah / CNBC

Cultural exchange as a business advantage. International business leaders who develop a deeper understanding of local cultures can build trust, avoid costly misunderstandings and gain a competitive edge in emerging markets. Drawing on his experiences between Iraq and the United States, Midhat Zwayen argues that exposure to another country's popular culture can create misleading assumptions, while differences in communication, hierarchy and social relationships continue to shape how business gets done. Companies entering unfamiliar markets should therefore invest in cultural education, local partnerships and sustained engagement rather than assuming surface-level familiarity translates into genuine understanding.

Midhat Zwayen / Forbes

Tourism as soft power, not economic salvation. China's surge in foreign tourism is strengthening its global image but doing little to solve its deeper economic problems, writes Allen Wan for *Bloomberg*. Easier visa policies, affordable travel and social media fascination with China's food, technology and futuristic cities helped drive foreign arrivals up 20% in the first half of 2026, giving Beijing a soft-power boost as favorable views of China rise in several countries. Yet international tourism remains less than 0.5% of GDP, and foreign visitors spend far less in China than in the United States. With weak consumer demand and persistent deflationary pressures weighing on growth, the influx of tourists may improve perceptions of China abroad but is unlikely to provide the economic stimulus Beijing needs.

Allen Wan / Bloomberg News

Soft power through economic partnership. Tanzanian business leader Ben Kazora argues that America's global influence has long rested not only on military and diplomatic power, but on its ability to build trust through investment, education, innovation and opportunity. As China, India, the UAE and Turkey deepen their economic ties across Africa, he contends that the United States must compete more aggressively for influence by expanding trade, technology partnerships and direct investment in emerging markets such as Tanzania. Stronger U.S.-Tanzania commercial ties, particularly in critical minerals, agriculture, apparel and clean energy, could strengthen American supply chains and create jobs in both countries while reinforcing the United States as a preferred global partner.

Ben Kazora / The Dallas Morning News