



A Symposium on



Sports, Media and Wars

Organized by: The Athens Institute

Place: 5th Floor, 9 Chalkokondili Street, Athens.

Date: Monday, 12 May 2026

Time: 13:30-14:30

P R O G R A M

Moderator: **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

Speakers:

1. **Brian Massey**, Professor, East Carolina University, USA. **Title:** *Trivializing War: Performance Politics and U.S.-Iran Football Spat.*
2. **John V. Pavlik**, Professor, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, School of Communication & Information, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, USA. **Title:** *From Prediction Markets to Artificial Intelligence: How Emerging Technology Is Reshaping the Landscape of Sports, Media and War.* ([summary](#))
3. **Corina Barbaros**, Associate Professor, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Romania. **Title:** *Sport as a Strategic Communication Arena in Times of War.*
4. **Amani Ismail**, Associate Dean, Mass Communications Program Lead, University of Hertfordshire, Egypt. **Title:** *Media Narratives on Warring Nations and Access to Global Sports.*

Discussion

Note: The working language of the symposium will be English. If you are interested in participating, please contact Celia Sakka at info@atiner.gr or by phone at +30 210 3634210.

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Summaries

John Pavlik: Sports media enterprises increasingly construct their entire programming around the intersection of betting and sports outcomes. With the rise of prediction markets and the role that artificial intelligence (AI) plays in those markets, the \$70 billion U.S. online gambling market is poised for exponential growth. Via prediction markets, gamblers bet on everything from sports to war. But the consequences may be dire. In March 2026, a user of Polymarket, one of the most popular prediction markets, sent death threats to an Israeli journalist who reported on an Iranian missile strike, as the exact nature of the strike could affect a Polymarket outcome valued at \$17 million. As AI trading bots and other smart tools reshape and refine betting on the prediction markets, the stakes could become staggering for media and society.

