

Re: Aspirational Diplomacy

From: Doug Hattaway [redacted]

RELEASE IN PART
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To: hdr22@clintonemail.com

CC: doug [redacted]

Subject: Re: Aspirational Diplomacy

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I'm really glad it was useful. I'd be happy to get together and discuss it further. We used this approach in developing a message for the government in Lebanon, and it helped to find a unifying message that appealed to all the factions in the country - not an easy thing to do! It would be very useful in both public diplomacy and democracy work. Look forward to seeing you, Doug

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From: "H"

Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2009 02:45:57 +0000

To: Doug Hattaway

Subject: Re: Aspirational Diplomacy

Doug, So good to hear from you and this was very useful. I'd love to talk about it further. I'll contact you about setting up a time to get together. Thanks so much. All the best, H

From: Doug Hattaway

Date: Sat, 24 Jan 2009 14:58:37 -0500

To: Hillary Clinton

Subject: Aspirational Diplomacy

Congratulations on a great start at State. You were greeted like a liberator! My friends in the Foreign Service are very excited.

As you get started, I wanted to pass on an idea that might be a simple but powerful organizing principle for your message to the world.

In the chapter on South Asia in Madeleine Albright's latest book, she suggests that the smart approach to Pakistan, where the U.S. has lost a measure of trust, is to ask three basic questions:

'What do Pakistanis want their country to look like five or ten years from now? What do they see as the obstacles to their aspirations? How can we best help them to achieve their goals...?'

This is exactly the approach we take in crafting an aspirational message. We try to understand the audience's highest hopes for themselves, identify obstacles that stand in their way, and show how our policies/programs help overcome them.

As we discussed during the campaign, much research and experience shows that aspirational messaging is the most persuasive and inspiring. And it works across cultures.

It speaks to people's hopes, which is a universal motivator. It allows people to see how our policy benefits their own future. It demonstrates that we understand others' interests, not just our own.

In their recent book, Scowcroft and Brzezinski say the most common aspiration of people around the world today is "dignity" (in a chapter entitled, The Politics of Cultural Dignity.) That rings true to me.

Dignity is the emotional benefit that people derive from a sense of control over their own lives, when their basic needs are met. We offer people dignity through democratic governance, human rights, economic development – and by listening to them.

As you know, allowing people to save face is an important tactic in negotiation. That's dignity at work in diplomacy.

It works the same way at the grassroots level, which is important in a world that is more politicized and interconnected than ever. With anger at the U.S. so widespread, we need to give people face-saving reasons to change their attitudes.

We can start by appealing to their values, not just "promoting" our own. Scowcroft and Brzezinski recommend that we talk about "human dignity" rather than "freedom" as a core value of our policy, because it's more easily understood and universally embraced.

As Albright says, understanding the psychology of a country is critical to effective diplomacy. That's why this is important. Aspirational diplomacy can be a powerful and strategic way to appeal to foreign publics and leaders.

So, to sum up the simple principle: Strive to see that our messages and policies speak to the aspirations and dignity of the people we aim to persuade.

Sorry if this was long for Blackberry reading! Hope it was useful, and that you're enjoying the new challenge.

Doug

New Image