

## **Memo**

Date: February 8, 2017

From: John Ferri

To: Dr. Kubis; Student Peers in Writing for the Public

Subject: "Promote Culture, Promote Peace" Cultural Diplomacy Project Proposal

### **Introduction**

Cultural diplomacy means using culture and the arts to promote mutual understanding between groups of people. I have chosen this topic because, as a student of languages and someone with a musical background, I appreciate and understand the positive impact of art and culture on global society.

Cultural diplomacy is a recognized and valuable aspect of diplomacy, under the umbrella of public diplomacy. It is appreciated for its flexible, positive, and inclusive nature. In the US Department of State, there is an entire Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. However, cultural diplomacy is also pursued and promoted by private organizations, like the DeVos Institute of Arts Management in Washington DC and the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin. This is a very open field to which even individuals can make meaningful contributions. One can support, advocate for, volunteer with, work for, or donate to organizations that promote cultural diplomacy.

### **Why Cultural Diplomacy is Important**

Cultural diplomacy is important for one main reason with three sub-benefits: It promotes mutual understanding between groups of people. First, this means that it can help prevent and reduce tensions, and it can foster mutually beneficial connections between groups of people. Second, mutual understanding and positive exchanges have become vital in a globalized age, especially for economies. Nations worldwide have become interdependent, so none can afford the devastation that would accompany wars, trade wars, and uneasy relations. Third, in this environment of political and economic uncertainty for 2017, cultural diplomacy is an effective tool to promote international openness and cooperation from all levels. This counteracts the insulation and isolation now advocated for by certain national governments through, for example, protectionist agendas pushing back against global free trade and policies designed to limit and discourage immigration.

### **Audience and Take-Away**

There is more than one audience for this project, because there are many levels at which cultural diplomacy operates, in both official and unofficial capacities. There are official, formal cultural diplomacy initiatives pursued at national and international levels by governments, like the performances and cultural exchanges promoted by the US State Department. However, there are also initiatives at the levels of organizations and individuals that promote cultural diplomacy, whether or not they are officially sponsored by the US State Department. These initiatives are just as important as the governmental programs. Governments can only act in limited official

capacities, and can be influenced by restrictions, the climate of international relations, and public funding and support. Organizations and individuals, however, can act in a more flexible manner, sometimes filling niches that governments cannot. Therefore, I am appealing to the State Department, but also to private organizations, and to individuals who appreciate and would like to support art and culture.

The take-away from this project should be that to promote culture is to promote peace, understanding, and better relations. The audiences for this project should see that cultural diplomacy is an important and recognized field, with a track record of positive results. For example, Dizzie Gillespie toured the allied nations in the World War II and post-war era, playing American jazz. This program successfully promoted international cooperation and positively enhanced the American image abroad. When America has a positive image internationally, often due to the appeal of American culture – especially of movies, or of Coca-Cola drinks – it makes global populations more likely to support us. This happens even when their governments are skeptical or antagonistic, creating the potential for improved relations and cooperation in the future. The audiences should also see that cultural diplomacy deserves to be actively supported at all levels. Organizations can promote initiatives and programs, as can government agencies, but individuals can also contribute in ways both large and small. These contributions range from learning about global cultures, languages, and art, or hosting international exchange students, to donating to, volunteering with, or working for groups that promote cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange.

### **Appealing to My Potential Audiences**

I will engage my potential audiences by creating an appealing, well-written project that combines evidence and examples obtained through research and interviews with compelling images and design elements. I will conduct interviews of State Department officials, arts managers, and/or artists to lend my project credibility and to have intriguing stories and examples for readers. There will be images and infographics throughout the project showing artistic performances, cultural exchanges, and culture-related facts and statistics. I will attempt to prove the positive impact of cultural diplomacy by drawing upon these elements and weaving them together into a coherent argument, clarifying the reasons why this field must continue to be supported.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this project is to promote all forms of cultural diplomacy. I will start by defining cultural diplomacy and stating why it is important. I will then attempt to use research, interviews, examples, images, and an appealing design to convince my potential audiences that this field must continue to be supported in the future. Lastly, I will show what actions can be taken by anyone at any level to promote cultural diplomacy.

## References

US Department of State – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website:

<https://eca.state.gov/>

‘Digital Diplomacy’ Initiative website - US government and Italian Embassy in DC partnership:

<http://www.twiplomacy.it/dds.html>

Diplomacy section of the French government website network:

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/cultural-diplomacy/france-s-overseas-cultural-and-cooperation-network/>

Cultural diplomacy website with academic research on the economic and political impact of culture: [http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2012-03-biec/On\\_the\\_Cultural\\_Economy-\\_Yuwen\\_Dai.pdf](http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2012-03-biec/On_the_Cultural_Economy-_Yuwen_Dai.pdf)

Russian cultural diplomacy article, The Washington Post newspaper:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-deploys-cultural-diplomacy-in-france/2016/10/22/6645d870-97c2-11e6-9cae-2a3574e296a6\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.733d2aa4c0bc](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-deploys-cultural-diplomacy-in-france/2016/10/22/6645d870-97c2-11e6-9cae-2a3574e296a6_story.html?utm_term=.733d2aa4c0bc)

Information on cultural diplomacy from the website of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin, Germany: [http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en\\_culturaldiplomacy](http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_culturaldiplomacy)

A magazine publication about Public Diplomacy, which includes cultural diplomacy:

<http://www.publicdiplomacymagazine.com/soft-power-and-cultural-diplomacy/>

The Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy, helping with US foreign policy objectives:

<http://www.meridian.org/staff/mccd/>

The website of the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland, College Park: <http://www.devosinstitute.umd.edu/>