



THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT



434118

FROM: Madeleine K. Albright *MLKA*

SUBJECT: White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy

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Tuesday's White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy resulted in useful guidance for developing our cultural diplomacy. The conference garnered considerable media play, all positive. Reaction among the conference participants to the glittering East Room panel discussion was overwhelmingly positive and enthusiasm generated by the panel spilled over into spirited afternoon workshop sessions. I chaired the final plenary and received reports from the four workshops. We will prepare a formal report, but our preliminary conclusions are:

- The conference was a starting point -- "a true summit," said one participant -- but the effort now must carry forward.
- The USG cannot and should not go it alone. Government must be part of a web of public, business and NGO actions, meshing national and international fundraising with federal seed money and policy guidance.
- Promoting a respect for cultural diversity does not mean tolerance of uncivil behavior fobbed off as "cultural." Democracy and human rights are cultural values the U.S. will support in all of our exchange programs.
- We must do a better job of training our diplomats to recognize cultural and intellectual influences abroad and to keep current about the U.S. cultural scene.
- The Department must develop internal expertise in how the arts are funded and organized in the U.S. and become a recognized player in that network.
- We have hardly begun to tap the Internet's vast possibilities for promoting cultural understanding.
- Participants perceive the benefits to Americans of exposure to other cultures, not to minimize the honor we do our citizens when we send them abroad as cultural ambassadors.

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I closed by stressing that the conference signals a determination to put cultural understanding and exchange at the center of our diplomatic efforts. As you noted, we live in a new, post 20th century era that demands the tools and attitudes that foreign affairs reorganization brought with the USIA-State merger. We have underway some small scale cultural diplomacy experiments with Nigeria, China and Mexico/Canada, but a more forceful, more orchestrated effort is needed. I noted that the Department is ready to work cooperatively with the NGO and business sectors to expand our cultural exchange efforts. Lastly, I acknowledged that we now have to focus on bringing our Department budget for cultural exchanges into line with the priority the issue deserves.

The Department owes special gratitude to Melanne Verveer and her staff, Ellen McCulloch-Lovell and her colleagues, Sharon Kennedy and her team, and, of course -- most of all -- to you and Hillary.

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