



Promoting American Engagement: A Catalog of Recommended Frames and Language

Prepared for the Frameworks Institute
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September 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

Towards a Culture of Engagement

This paper offers a number of practical tools designed to promote a public discourse in which cooperative global engagement is seen as natural and unavoidable, rather than as idealistic and unrealistic. It is aimed at communicating two messages in particular: Americans should *care* about what happens abroad, and they should work *with* other countries more often.

The paper is intended to be read in conjunction with our previous reports on American cultural models of global engagement (Aubrun & Grady 1999, Grady & Aubrun 1999), and with the work of the rest of the FrameWorks research team (Bales 2000, Bostrom 1999, Lakoff 1999). In particular, it suggests a set of frames which complement the Social Norms frame discussed by Lakoff.

A central challenge facing the GII is to create a discourse that seems natural to both policy elites and the general public. These groups bring different assumptions to the table, in both cases some that orient the group towards global engagement and some that act as barriers to engagement.

Because these differences and similarities are the basis of an authentic public discourse, we begin with a brief discussion of several key cognitive models that experts and the public bring to their understanding of global affairs.

Expert and Public Understandings: Similarities and Differences

It is a well-reported fact that experts tend to be more interested in engagement with the rest of the world than is the public. Experts have more sophisticated understandings about international politics, economics, and security issues. However, the types of cognitive models experts use to understand international relations — such as the “rational actor” metaphor — often constitute barriers to cooperative engagement (see Lakoff 1999).

The public, much more than foreign policy elites, is wary of engagements between the United States and other *governments*. This attitude is a consequence of the American emphasis on individual autonomy and non-interference, and of the relative weakness of the engaged neighbor model in American culture (see Aubrun & Grady 1999). At the same time, the public is more inclined toward a cooperative and even nurturant attitude toward other *peoples* (see Grady & Aubrun 1999).

On the positive side of the ledger, both the public and foreign policy elites share a number of values, such as *efficacy*, *education*, and *prevention*, that provide the groundwork for a shared discourse. Any language that seeks to reframe an issue such as international relations must take these basic assumptions of the American perspective into account.

“Country as Person” vs. “Global System”

In addition, both experts and the public toggle back and forth between two basic and unavoidable frames, the “Country as Person” metaphor and the “Global” frame. When a country is referred to as a “neighbor” or an “enemy,” the “Country as Person” metaphor is being invoked. The terms “global markets” or “Earth Day” imply a global system, as does the use of the term “human rights” in an international context. Both frames provide general opportunities (discussed in the following section) as well as specific barriers to the goals of the GII:

The “Country as Person” metaphor introduces barriers both for the public and for policy elites. For the public, it evokes a widespread reluctance to interfere in the lives of one’s neighbors, except in times of crisis. On its face, the neighbor metaphor would seem to be a very natural way of suggesting a cooperative relationship among autonomous states: People universally apply their understandings of social interactions to other domains of experience (see Durkheim & Mauss 1903, Lakoff 1996, Aubrun & Grady 1999, etc.), and the neighbor relationship seems to fit the notion of multilateral cooperation more closely than other social roles such as enemy, boss, parent, child, etc. But this framing is far less effective than we might expect it to be, because of the nature of contemporary American models of neighboring: Most Americans do not want or expect a great deal of contact with their neighbors, except in times of crisis.

On the other hand, most Americans are not *isolationist* as a conscious ideology. American attitudes towards other countries seem to stem more from a lack of awareness of other countries than from a desire to keep them at a distance. Other countries, like neighbors, simply do not figure in an average person’s day to day mental experience. An interesting illustration of the weakness of the neighbor model in American culture is that when people are talking about the deliberative function of the UN, they tend to use the term “kitchen table” (a family-based model), rather than a term like “town hall forum,” rooted in ideas of neighborhood and community. These latter models seem not to be immediately available in the public’s mind.

At the same time, the country as person metaphor often leads to the interpretation that the relationship between the United States (a powerful country) and other (typically weaker countries) is that between parent and child. This particular framing is unproductive both because it works against the spirit of equilateral cooperation and because the public often invokes it as yet another reason to avoid engagement: “we’re not their parents. They need to take care of themselves.”

For experts, the “Country as Person” model leads to a number of unfortunate outcomes — such as “the rational actor” metaphor, the “balance of power” metaphor, the “Faux Darwinism” metaphor” (examples taken from Lakoff 1999). These tend to work against the spirit of equilateral cooperation.

For both the public and policy elites, the “Global” frame becomes problematic when a highly abstract global “system” takes on a concrete reality. The metaphor, “the market is a force of nature,” for example, replaces natural objects (people and the environment) with culturally constructed objects (markets) in the discourse.

Based on this analysis, we suggest two sets of frames designed to promote two separate communication goals, each of which takes us closer to the aims of the GII. The first category promotes a constructive use of the “countries are persons” metaphor, while the second does the same for the “global system” metaphor.

Using this report

This report provides a catalog of frames that effectively promote and reinforce the goals of the GII (some of which are already present in some form in discourse about American foreign policy). An explicit assessment and discussion of these frames will allow more informed discussions and decision-making leading to more coherent communications strategies. It is one thing to be familiar with a given framing, and another to be certain that one’s communications materials consistently reinforce and never undermine that framing. Other frames in the catalog are new, and a number of frames that are in common use have been excluded because they work against the goals of the GII.

We also include discussion of a number of particular issues that will be useful in bridging Americans from domestic concerns to global thinking, as well as a brief discussion of some issues that have less potential to shift public discourse in this direction.

Note that this report does not represent an exhaustive exploration of potential “copy.” While some of the language that follows might be used as-is by the GII and partner organizations, the main purpose of the paper is to point to conceptual frames — i.e. ways of thinking about the world. Many different words could be found to effectively express the same frames. This work should therefore be seen as input both to creative efforts and to research, such as testing with surveys.

The report includes discussion and rationale for all the recommended frames; for the frames and language in a list format, see the Appendix.

II. COUNTRIES AS PEOPLE

This section outlines a number of frames based on the general Countries-As-People model. These include models based on workplace relationships, mentoring relationships, and more general understandings of relating as a “decent person” to those around you.

Workplace Cooperation I – Partnership

The workplace as a touchstone

The idea of the “workplace” is a powerfully motivating frame for many Americans. As part of the business domain, it is typically seen as a social setting in which goals are met efficiently and

effectively (by comparison with government, for example). This frame is especially useful for the GII because of the strong cultural understanding that the efficacy of the workplace depends utterly on cooperation between coworkers.

Two strategic considerations should be taken into account when using this frame:

First, to the extent that GII goals can be tied to understandings and beliefs about business, they will be less subject to criticism from practical-minded experts who tend to think in economic terms, and from conservatives who are skeptical of “do-gooder” idealism.

Second, an important challenge relating to this frame is maintaining the distinction between the frame and the literal case of economic engagement. Business is often seen as a domain where human and social concerns can be overridden, and so language must be chosen carefully to evoke the right aspects of business for GII purposes. The cooperative models discussed here are distinct from frames such as Business as Competition (or War) and Global Capitalism (which emphasizes the efficient mobilization of resources, without regard to human or environmental consequences).

As long as the focus is on cooperative relationships – rather than competition, for instance – the workplace/business frame can effectively communicate and reinforce messages friendly to the GII mission. The goal should be to “co-opt” particular business-related concepts – to borrow them and give them new meanings in the GII context.

Partnership

One effective way of tapping workplace models for GII purposes will be to talk about “partnership.” The term “partner” implies a working relationship, in which two or more parties acknowledge each other and work together, more or less equally, sharing goals and interests. This term has more potential than “neighbor,” for instance, to combat the common American objection that you shouldn’t meddle in other people’s affairs, and the common premise that “cooperation is not a priority” (see Aubrun & Grady 1999): Everyone knows that partnerships require regular, long-term contact. As the old business saying has it, “A partnership is like a marriage, only more so.”

The idea of partnership gets around another serious stumbling block: since Americans place an extremely high premium on efficacy, long-term international commitments can seem to imply that there are problems that are not being solved. But partnerships are lasting by definition.

At the most general level, since Americans tend to acknowledge the need for work-based relationships, the partnership model has the potential to solve the very important problem of average Americans’ lack of awareness of other countries as actors in the world.

Various terms and concepts related to partnership provide perspectives which make GII positions natural and appealing, including:

Joint decision-making

Most members of the public are very happy for the U.S. to share the responsibilities of decision-making on global issues with other countries (Bostrom 1999, Kull & Destler 1999, Aubrun & Grady 1999, etc.). The partnership frame may help bridge from these public attitudes to the kind of practical stance preferred by experts and policymakers.

Burden-sharing

Both experts and the public agree that the U.S. carries too great a share of the burden on international issues (Grady & Aubrun 1999). The partnership frame is a natural solution to this perceived problem.

“Joint ventures”

Framing foreign policy programs as joint ventures ties them to American traditions going back to the owners of the Mayflower itself.

Success depends on effective collaboration with others.

This is a basic workplace understanding which has potential to undercut the individualistic strain in American culture.

When other societies are in good shape they're good partners.

Framing other countries as partners suggests that their social and economic health has an impact on our own interests.

Win-win engagement

This workplace frame applies well to any number of cooperative international projects.

Partnership scenarios outside the domain of the workplace can also be useful for the GII:

International development aid as “barn-raising”

The barn-raising is a classic American scenario involving cooperation and efficacy. Framing a program to help rebuild a developing country's health-care system, for example, as a barn-raising provides a practical complement to arguments based on altruism.

Workplace Cooperation II – “New management”

The Workplace Cooperation frame allows for a degree of hierarchy in workplace interactions, reflected in the idea of “management.” The “management” frame provides a natural alternative to the “parenting” frame in the public’s understanding of relations between the United States and smaller and less industrialized countries. Because it is comfortable for policy elites to think in these terms, this frame provides a natural way to bridge between the two groups.

Because of the shift towards a more egalitarian, cooperative, and diverse model of management in the last 20 years, this frame offers an important opportunity: The goals of the GII could be underwritten by an emerging sense that successful enterprises are those that cooperate rather than those that dictate, or those that depend on isolated individuals.

Good managers listen and use the best ideas of their team.

Successful workplaces these days are less hierarchical and more cooperative. From this perspective, it seems odd the U.S. is not more of an international “team player.”

Good managers take account of the cultural diversity of their coworkers.

Good managers appreciate individual, and ethnic differences. They are used to working with team members from around the world, and are careful not to impose their cultural values on the team.

We don’t know best just because we’re Americans; we know best because we recognize a good idea when we hear one.

Good judgement is at the heart of good management, and good judgement means being open to ideas, and avoiding stereotypes and dismissiveness.

The best managers are good at taking advice.

Good managers pride themselves on not being “out of touch” with their coworkers. Multi-lateral decision-making is natural for them, and from this perspective, for the U.S.

Good leaders win their followers’ respect. One way to do that is to be a good listener.

A natural way for the U.S. to win hearts and minds is to be a “good listener.”

“New management” scenarios outside the domain of business can also be useful for the GII:

Good coaches understand the talents of all the players.

The sports frame provides an important variant of the “new management” frame.

The team captain doesn't hog the ball – he or she knows how to distribute it, and makes sure everyone's talents are being used effectively.

The “team captain” metaphor is better suited to many cases of international cooperation, since the captain is one of the players (with a special status).

Investment

An aspect of business which most people understand (and apply metaphorically to their daily lives) is the importance of investing in the future.

A development dollar now could save an American soldier's life later.

Every country we successfully help (i.e. with development aid) is a war we won't have to fight / a crisis we won't have to intervene in.

Many foreign crises which ultimately require military intervention begin as conflicts over resources, or other types of conflicts arising out of poor conditions in a foreign region. Investment, in the form of development aid, can save American lives in the long run.

Foreign aid is part of our “public relations” budget.

Development aid is the cheapest form of defense – gives the most bang for the buck.

As a way of “winning hearts and minds,” development aid is an investment that can save the U.S. enormous future expenditures of resources. Countries that are well-disposed towards the U.S. are an invaluable asset.

International development as “improving the surrounding property/the neighborhood,” which all responsible homeowners are concerned with

Like homeowners whose quality of life is affected by conditions in the surrounding area, the U.S. has a stake in conditions in the surrounding world, and can not afford to neglect them.

“Mentoring for autonomy”

Americans' tendency to treat the relationship between the U.S. and smaller and less industrialized countries as a relationship between a parent and a child is a barrier to the GII's

goal of promoting equilateral cooperation. This cognitive model is unlikely to disappear, but it can be reframed somewhat, as a relationship between a mentor and a student, a reframing that makes limited and judicious use of the "parenting" metaphor.

In the "mentoring" model, the U.S. is not necessarily a parent but a caring and knowledgeable adult, and the smaller country is not a child but a less knowledgeable adult. Most importantly, the relationship is designed with the student's autonomy in mind. In the American view of parenting, the goal is the independence and autonomy of the child – with an eventual separation (in one common scenario, adult children move to a geographically distant place), and the mentoring model emphasizes this aspect of parenting.

In principle then, "the mentoring" metaphor provides a constructive model of the relationship between the U.S. and developing country. In addition, the mentoring model is good for getting Americans past their fear of long-term engagements.

The "mentoring for autonomy" model works well with several values that are held by both policy elites and the public: that Americans are smart and knowledgeable; that Americans are morally good; that efficacy is a key measure of the value of ventures.

It should also be noted that the "mentoring" model is compatible with a kind of colonialism, though the risk of this sort of regressive attitude is reduced by the idea of "autonomy." In using this general frame, language has to be chosen carefully so as to avoid the implication that other countries are incompetent.

Successful examples of aid, with emphasis on closure/"graduation"

Both the public and policy elites are enthusiastic about the Costa Rica aid example, because it suggests that providing education leads to self-sufficiency, and reinforces the American interest in efficacy. The example perfectly illustrates and reinforces the idea of "mentoring for autonomy." It suggests that an important part of working with this general frame is to inform the public (and elites) about similar successes.

Setting people free

This model plays on the idea is that there are limited obstacles in the way of people's ability to self-determine/prosper. Obstacles in this sense are easily understood as being overcome by knowledge. It also fits well with the American emphasis on freedom (see e.g. Bostrom 1999).

A helping hand/not a handout

This metaphor suggests hands on assistance rather than money. It is natural for Americans to understand a "helping hand" as some sort of training or education.

Helping a country rise to the next level

This metaphor plays on the idea that progress is a series of tangible steps forward, each of which rewards our sense of efficacy, and furthers the smaller country's autonomy. In addition, this metaphor is compatible with the idea that our economy depends on increasing the number of consumers around the world.

Helping a country is leading it to the next milestone.

Leading is a good metaphor because it suggests that the person or country being led is moving under its own power. It also suggests efficacy – actual forward progress.

Developing countries as less experienced adults who could use guidance from more experienced ones

According to this metaphor, developing countries have a lot to gain by receiving input from countries at the height of their “careers.”

America as a “Decent Person”

Most Americans think of themselves as decent people, and they also expect others to act in a morally responsible way. That is to say, they apply a critical, judgmental eye to others' action and to their own behavior. By extension, when they make use of the Country as Person metaphor they assume that the United States is an American writ large, a person who lives up to basic expectations about ways of interacting with others. Americans might be distressed, for example, to see an allegorical depiction of the nations of the world, with the U.S. depicted as the richest and most powerful person in a community, but not the most helpful.

This model is a variant on and complement to the Social Norms model discussed by Lakoff (1999), following Katzenstein (1996). (That model is not treated here because it has been well developed in those studies.) Whereas the Social Norms model is largely about respectability within a community of nations, the Decent Person model is about Americans' image of themselves. That is, the Decent Person model is based on internal motivations to treat others in a certain way, rather than a set of community standards. The model, as we propose it, arises largely from people's own comments about their feelings about United States actions in the world.

Some aspects of the “Decent Person” model include:

Fairness

The golden rule is a basic aspect of decency. By extension, the idea of the United States as a country that takes advantage of other countries would not match most Americans' self-image.

Not inflicting suffering

Many people believe that we should act as good Samaritans when we can. Most Americans feel that we should avoid doing harm to others whenever possible. By extension, the idea of the United States as a country that contributes to other people's suffering is unacceptable to most Americans.

The Kathie Lee Gifford scandal provides an indication of how powerful this norm can be.

Avoiding arrogance

Only arrogant people feel that they're right all the time. It's good to listen to what the other guy has to say. By extension the idea that the United States sometimes deliberates with other countries and makes joint decisions reinforces this aspect of the American image.

Being "onstage"

Individuals are concerned with others' judgements of them. By analogy, the U.S., and individual Americans, are always on the "world stage." People abroad are constantly watching our actions (or inactions) – decisions we make are open to public, worldwide scrutiny.

Making our kids proud

We teach our kids responsibility. Let's make sure we take our global responsibilities seriously, so that they can be proud.

III. GLOBAL SYSTEMS

Members of the public are somewhat more likely to think globally on certain issues, such as human rights and the environment. Thinking globally means understanding that conditions and events in any part of the world may depend on the state of affairs in other parts of the world. This is a perspective that can and should be reinforced through framings in public discourse, since it helps solve the problem of Americans being aware only of themselves.

A natural consequence of global thinking is that it ties international issues to American self-interest, always a powerful motivator. When we are part of a global system – such as the economy or the environment – our best interest dictates that we stay involved.

One natural route to global thinking involves blurring the lines between domestic issues (which people are very concerned with, see Bostrom 1999) and foreign affairs. Most polling research

frames these in terms of two exclusive categories. Part of the goal for the GII is to subvert this distinction.

Your life is already more international than you know. Americans are (uniquely) “connected to the world.” It’s a small world and getting smaller.

Whether people are conscious of it or not day to day, they are living in an international environment. It is easy to demonstrate this principle factually, and as it becomes more deeply entrenched in public discourse, it will inevitably increase people’s interest in events and conditions abroad.

It’s ineffective/inefficient to attack certain problems on a domestic basis (e.g. certain health and environmental problems).

By tying internationalism to efficacy, this framing bridges between the public’s acknowledgment that certain issues truly do transcend national borders and the general expert emphasis on practical approaches.

Humanity as one big engine: All parts must be in good shape for it to run smoothly.

Note: This framing risks suggesting the problematic “WTO” perspective. It should be made explicit that societies and people are among the important parts – not just interest rates, productivity, etc.

Succeeding in a world without borders – less and less distinction between “us” and “them”

This frame moves people past the question of whether borders and national identities should be stronger in any sense, and confronts them with the reality that these familiar elements of the world are growing less and less meaningful. The question is how to be most effective in the new environment.

IV. PROMISING ISSUES

Some issues lend themselves especially well to the GII perspective. These are issues that, often because of a long history of positive framing efforts, are useful in introducing the more general attitude of long-term equilateral cooperation to the public and to policy elites. They work well at reinforcing both the “global” perspective and constructive versions of the “Country as Person” metaphor.

Health/infectious diseases

Cognitive elicitations confirm Bostrom's analysis of public opinion data that infectious disease is an issue that has the power to move Americans to global thinking and action.

Foreign health problems are U.S. health problems.

Americans readily understand that many diseases today “know no borders.” They also find it both unrealistic and un-American to try to seal the borders against foreign disease. It is easy for both the public and policy elites to think of infectious disease in terms of a “global system” perspective. People understand that where the world goes, so too goes America.

The public health endeavor is a source of optimism.

Americans have a positive attitude towards public health agencies, such as the CDC, the WHO, or the NIH. The public health endeavor elicits ideas of efficacy and knowledge; people trust medical practitioners.

Public health is a matter of education.

The public believes that most public health issues are “90% education.” As a result, the public health endeavor lends itself to the model of “mentoring for autonomy.”

Public health is a matter of prevention.

A related American understanding is that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Public health spending is less subject to criticism than other forms of spending.

The common concerns with waste, fraud, welfare queening, or undeserving recipients are less naturally applied to public health spending than to other kinds of aid.

Would you rather let other countries worry about global issues like infectious disease, or make sure that American expertise is being applied?

The American believes that the U.S. knows best, and that most public health problems have solutions, combine in this framing to promote engagement.

Beating infectious disease requires a sustained effort.

This general frame provides a way of working around the public's avoidance of long-term engagement with others. In the American folk understanding, infectious diseases can constitute emergencies, but also require long-term efforts at control. Related terms are *hygiene* and *prevention*.

The public's model of public health largely agrees with the Expert (medical) model.

The scientific consensus about many public health issues (that prevention and education are important, for example) matches the American cultural model, as well as that of policy elites. This makes it easier to forge a public discourse of the issue.

It also raises an important flag: The medical model should not be overused. Overextending the metaphor to issues that are not medical in nature invites the risk of backlash and a weakening of the model's usefulness.

Global environment

In part because of a long history of environmental activism and communications most Americans are environmentalists in some sense. Previous anthropological research has shown that Americans think of the environment in quasi-religious terms (Kempton et al. 1995); one consequence of this attitude is that the environment transcends national borders.

The reality of global warming is widely accepted by both the public and policy elites.

Public opinion data analysis shows that just a few years ago global warming was not considered a major threat by most Americans (Bostrom 1999). More recent cognitive elicitations with members of the public and policy elites suggests that the tide has turned on this issue.

This is important because global warming is an issue which leads naturally to the mindset that the GII is working towards: It requires both a global perspective and long-term engagement with much of the rest of the world.

Global warming blurs the line between domestic and international issues, in the way that the anti-tobacco ads that showed a drifting cloud of smoke showed the irrelevance of the boundaries between "smoking" and "non-smoking" sections in a restaurant.

Protecting the environment depends on educating people.

This issue lends itself to the "mentoring for autonomy" frame.

There is money in protecting the environment.

American technological and commercial knowledge combine in principle to promote an attitude of "self-interested stewardship." One of the features of this model is that American

reluctance to meddle in other people's affairs is countered by the legitimacy of commercial enterprise – if saving environments is our business, then it becomes our business to be engaged in other people's backyards.

Your kids will be even more aware of the world environment than you are.

A concern for the environment has been increasing rather than decreasing over the last several generations, and it is easy for Americans to accept that this trend will continue. It is “old-fashioned” not to care about the environment. A natural implication is that our behavior today will be judged by tomorrow's adults.

The environment is a global system.

While most Americans refuse to fall into the excesses of “Gaia-think,” they do feel that the environment is a “global system,” which is “healthy” or not. It is similar in this sense to the “global economy,” and nearly as real in the minds of most Americans (though not of the policy elites – see Lakoff 1999).

Children

Children are often used as a symbol of need abroad, because we all have natural sympathy for them and are, all things being equal, inclined to want to help. On the other hand, repeated exposure to images of suffering children can lead to “compassion fatigue” (Moeller 1999), and is no magic bullet for insuring American engagement abroad.

We propose here a complementary way of tapping people's empathy with children: using children as a “yardstick” for measuring the impact of any given foreign policy action or inaction. That is, whenever there is public debate over a given policy, one natural question to ask might be,

“How will this affect the children?”

For instance, how will joining or not joining an international effort to improve health care affect children in a given region of the world?

A slogan encapsulating the approach would be:

The U.S. is the best friend the world's children have.

One advantage of this framing is that both conservatives and liberals should find it appealing.

Kids all over the world will be writing the history of how Americans helped/didn't help.

Given that no-one likes to earn children's scorn, this framing places people in a position where they are motivated to take an interest and do their best.

If Americans don't keep an eye on the welfare of the world's kids, who will?

This framing ties the issue of kids to the general American pride in our know-how, efficacy and decency.

V. SOME TEMPTING BUT PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

There are a number of approaches to getting Americans engaged in international issues that have some potential but also some drawbacks. Most of these, in fact, have been effective in generating interest and action, but have also hit a wall in one way or another. Several fall under the heading of "compassion fatigue" (Moeller 1999), which is partly a result of framing chronic problems as short-term crises: people detect the discrepancy and revert to their default skepticism about prolonged, one-way engagement (Aubrun & Grady 1999). Others are problematic for other reasons.

Important note: We do not mean to imply that these issues should be ignored – e.g. that Americans should not be encouraged to help deal with the world hunger problem – only that the issues are unlikely to be effective at moving the public as a whole towards a more regular engagement with international issues.

Most of these issues can be used effectively if reframed. They have typically been framed in ways that easily lead to American disengagement.

Starvation

Images of starving people are aimed at triggering the good neighbor response. But there is a mismatch between the picture and the prototypical good neighbor scenario (which involves engagement only during brief moments of crisis). Famines tend to be long-term, not episodic. Short-term "solutions" also tend to be ineffective, which is a strong red flag for Americans.

War

Most recent wars have arisen from internal or tribal conflicts. Many Americans regard intervention in these conflicts as analogous to becoming involved ("meddling") in a neighbor's home life. More generally, wars can be understood as a complex and troubling form of social entanglement (cf. the old truism that it is easier to get help by yelling "fire" than by telling people you are being mugged). Finally, current wars tend to be based on chronic disputes, which discourages the American public even further.

Suffering Children

Images of suffering children typically provoke strong but not necessarily constructive responses. Besides the fact that many ordinary Americans and most elites find them to be manipulative, and

may experience “compassion fatigue” (see Moeller), these images may evoke the cultural model of incompetent parenting on the part of either literal parents or metaphorical parents – i.e. government. This is an interpretation that works directly against the GII goal of cooperation.

Poverty

The trouble with this issue is that it suggests a problem that is monolithic, chronic, and therefore intractable. The natural interpretation on the part of the American public is that we are unable to “solve” the problem of poverty at home, and it is surely harder (and less of a priority) to solve it abroad, or on a global scale.

“Just 1%”

One possible approach to promoting increased spending on development aid would be to inform Americans that this type of spending currently constitutes less than a tenth of a percent of the national budget – most people think the percentage is at least a hundred times higher. A campaign could be assembled around the idea that we should settle on a number like 1%, which seems very modest.

The trouble with this approach is that it offers no rationale for why spending development aid should be a priority at all. The numerical framing does not evoke efficacy, autonomy, or any of the other models and values that are motivating for Americans. (Imagine asking people to donate “just 1%” of their blood, without a strong rationale.)

Fear-based appeals

Appeals for more international involvement based on threats such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, drug smuggling etc. promote crisis thinking rather than the notion of routine, long-term cooperation. They may even be counterproductive, since they may lead to defensive, isolating postures rather than engaged ones.

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APPENDIX: List of Frames and Language Recommended in the Report

COUNTRIES AS PEOPLE

Workplace Cooperation I – Partnership

- *Joint decision-making*
- *Burden-sharing*
- *“Joint ventures”*
- *Success depends on effective collaboration with others.*
- *When other societies are in good shape they’re good partners;*
- *Win-win engagement*
- *International development aid as “barn-raising”*

Workplace Cooperation II – “New management”

- *Good managers listen and use the best ideas of their team.*
- *Good managers take account of the cultural diversity of their coworkers.*
- *We don’t know best just because we’re Americans; we know best because we recognize a good idea when we hear one.*
- *The best managers are good at taking advice.*
- *Good leaders win their followers’ respect. One way to do that is to be a good listener.*
- *Good coaches understand the talents of all the players.*
- *The team captain doesn’t hog the ball – he or she knows how to distribute it, and makes sure everyone’s talents are being used effectively.*

Investment

- *A development dollar now could save an American soldier’s life later.*
- *Every country we successfully help (i.e. with development aid) is a war we won’t have to fight / a crisis we won’t have to intervene in.*
- *Foreign aid is part of our “public relations” budget.*
- *Development aid is the cheapest form of defense – gives the most bang for the buck.*
- *International development as “improving the surrounding property/the neighborhood,” which all responsible homeowners are concerned with*

“Mentoring for autonomy”

- *Successful examples of aid, with emphasis on closure”/graduation”*
- *Setting people free*
- *A helping hand/not a handout*
- *Helping a country rise to the next level*
- *Helping a country is leading it to the next milestone.*
- *Developing countries as less experienced adults who could use guidance from more experienced ones*

America as a “Decent Person”

- *Fairness*
- *Not inflicting suffering*
- *Avoiding arrogance*
- *Being “onstage”*
- *Making our kids proud*

GLOBAL SYSTEMS

- *Your life is already more international than you know. Americans are (uniquely) “connected to the world.” It’s a small world and getting smaller.*
- *It’s ineffective/inefficient to attack certain problems on a domestic basis (e.g. certain health and environmental problems).*
- *Humanity as one big engine: All parts must be in good shape for it to run smoothly.*
- *Succeeding in a world without borders – less and less distinction between “us” and “them”*

PROMISING ISSUES

Health/infectious diseases

- *Foreign health problems are U.S. health problems.*
- *The public health endeavor is a source of optimism.*
- *Public health is a matter of education.*
- *Public health is a matter of prevention.*
- *Public health spending is less subject to criticism than other forms of spending.*
- *Would you rather let other countries worry about global issues like infectious disease, or make sure that American expertise is being applied?*
- *Beating infectious disease requires a sustained effort.*
- *The public's model of public health largely agrees with the Expert (medical) model.*

Global environment

- *The reality of global warming is widely accepted by both the public and policy elites.*
- *Protecting the environment depends on educating people.*
- *There is money in protecting the environment.*
- *Your kids will be even more aware of the world environment than you are.*
- *The environment is a global system.*

Children

- *"How will this affect the children?"*
- *The U.S. is the best friend the world's children have.*
- *Kids all over the world will be writing the history of how Americans helped/didn't help.*
- *If Americans don't keep an eye on the welfare of the world's kids, who will?*