

Does foreign policy help or hinder global health?

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In two articles closing out the *PLoS Medicine* series on Global Health Diplomacy, senior diplomats offer their perspectives on how foreign policy can make a difference to global health.

Ambassador Siguren Mogedal, special advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and former Norwegian HIV/AIDS Ambassador to the UN, and Benedikte Louise Alveberg trace the growing awareness of the importance of global health in foreign policy circles, and the growth of global health diplomacy at the WHO and UN levels. The authors describe the seminal work of the WHO [Foreign Policy](#) and Global Health (FPGH) Initiative—launched in 2008 by the foreign ministers of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand—that seeks to build the case for why global health should hold a strategic place on the international agenda.

The US Department of State perspective on global health diplomacy is provided by Dr. Kerri-Ann Jones, assistant to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. She outlines the importance of international diplomatic engagement for building global policies to address the ongoing threats of HIV/AIDS, influenza pandemics, insufficient vaccine supply, maternal and child health problems, and the need for strengthening health systems around the world, as well as for advancing national security objectives. Addressing [global health](#) challenges with diplomacy and development strategies is essential, says Dr. Jones, quoting Secretary Clinton who said a priority is "to elevate and integrate development as a core pillar of American power. ... These efforts also lay the groundwork for greater

global cooperation, by building the capacity of new partners and tackling shared problems from the ground up."

More information: Møgedal S, Alveberg BL (2010) Can Foreign Policy Make a Difference to Health? PLoS Med 7(5):e1000274.

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