If doubt were justified, then such caution would, in fact, be required. But ANT-OAR, as its defenders propose it, warrants no such doubt. It aims to create a cell that, from its first moment, exhibits organic properties biologically incompatible with totipotency. Schindler asserts that a single-celled entity can at once be a human embryo and yet manifestly not be (or ever have been) characterized by an epigenetic state of totipotency.

That requires one to believe that a cell’s epigenetic identity is not a necessary condition for cellular identity—which, in turn, requires a dualistic anthropology inconsistent with the Christian understanding of humanity. It denies that the biological disposition of the organic material is a necessary condition for determining cellular identity. It implicitly holds that a cell can biologically look and behave in ways biologically indicative of a certain cell type, yet in fact be a wholly different kind of cell.

The property distinguishing a liver cell from a cardiac cell, or a retinal cell from a skin cell, is the programming of the genome. Yet no one would argue that a cardiac cell is a liver cell, or that a retinal cell is a skin cell, or that any of them are human embryos. The assumption that epigenetic identity does not determine cellular identity is clearly false—and moralists concerned about human embryos should welcome and support ANT-OAR as it moves to testing with animal cells.

E. Christian Brugger is assistant professor of theology at the Institute for the Psychological Sciences in Arlington, Virginia.

---

**The Diplomacy of Religious Freedom**

*Thomas F. Farr*

Diplomacy may be the art of letting someone else have your way, but, these days, disagreements over what constitutes the American way in foreign affairs are profound. There are several reasons for our divided house, but a major source is the suspicion that religion is driving the United States’ foreign policy. Critics often target President Bush’s evangelical worldview, and the putative influence of the Christian right, as behind the war in Iraq and the push for democracy in the Middle East.

While it is true that the president speaks of freedom in religiously informed terms and that religious conservatives tend to support his policy, much of the critique is misinformed or irrational. For one thing, the neoconservative approach to democratization policy (widely acknowledged to have influenced the administration) does not focus on religion. For another, leftist talk about a clash of jihads—Bush’s red-state fundamentalism against bin Laden’s—is plain fantasy.

In fact, the angst over religion in foreign policy has helped obscure a far more serious problem. America’s national security increasingly depends on our ability to understand and address the faith traditions, motivations, and behaviors of other societies, especially (but not exclusively) those of the Muslim world. And here the United States is failing miserably, not because of red-state evangelicals but in large part because of garden-variety secularism.

This is not a new problem. As Edward Luttwak noted, in the late 1970s American analysts viewed opposition to Iran’s shah in purely secular terms. Religion, if it had a role at all, was seen as marginal. Reports indicated a distinction between “pious” and “modern” Iranians, the former inevitably in decline, the latter moving with the tide of history toward triumph.

History has not been kind to that analysis. But the task is far more than enemy identification. If the United States is to encourage the spread of democracy, it must learn to engage and influence powerful religious communities. Diplomats are too often unprepared when religious groups emerge as power brokers in proto-democratic situations, as they are in Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, and are likely to be in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In Iran we lack the means to influence religious believers disgusted with Khomeinist theocracy and tempted by democracy.

The political scientist Alfred Stepan has noted that successful transitions to democracy in religious cultures have historically been preceded by an internal debate within the dominant religious community: That debate is typically not about separation from politics, or even secularism, but about the compatibility of religious doctrine with political reform.

In other words, there is evidence that liberal democracy in religious cultures will not emerge without a suitable compact that regulates the overlapping authorities of religion and state, a relationship Stepan dubbs the “twin tolerations.” This is one way of looking at the task of American diplomacy in Iraq. The democratic experiment there remains in play not only because of the heroic sacrifices of Americans and Iraqis but also because the dominant cultural force—Iraqi Shiism—remains open to liberal democracy and religious freedom as a political arrangement consistent with its teachings. Should sectarian violence reverse that openness, the prospects for success will be dim.
U.S. diplomacy must help convince all Iraqis, but especially majority Shiites, that a liberal democracy grounded in religious freedom is in their fundamental interests, not simply in economic and political terms, but religiously as well.

This is a critical issue for American national security—but despite its importance, religion remains for the State Department (in Douglas Johnston’s phrase) “the missing dimension of statecraft.” The permanent foreign-policy bureaucracy still views religion as a private matter, properly beyond the bounds of policy analysis and action. Most senior officers have imbibed the secularization thesis: Spiritual longings are throwbacks to man’s infancy and will shrink as modernity replaces superstition with science and reason. Like the scholarly discipline of international relations itself, the schools of diplomacy that dominate at Foggy Bottom—liberal internationalism and classical realism—are securely grounded in secular premises.

Unfortunately, neither the president nor the secretary of state has set out to change the secular myopia that prevails at the State Department. The aversion to religion constitutes a distinctly unrealistic basis on which to engage a world of growing religious fervor—a world in which behavior in nearly every region is influenced by confessional commitments. Todd M. Johnston and David B. Barrett, two experts on religious demography, have recently concluded that “demographic trends coupled with conservative estimates of conversions and defections envision over 80 percent of the world’s population will continue to be affiliated to religions two hundred years into the future.”

In 1998 a remarkable coalition of faith-based and human-rights groups galvanized Congress to pass the International Religious Freedom Act, which requires American foreign policy to “promote religious freedom” around the world. But the act has not persuaded the State Department to advance religious liberty in any political sense. Instead Foggy Bottom treats religious freedom largely as a sequestered, humanitarian problem. The position of ambassador at large, created by the act as “principal adviser to the president and secretary,” is viewed at the State Department as a mere deputy in the human-rights bureau, itself perceived within the building as outside the diplomatic mainstream.

More than seven years into the implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act, the United States’ policy has failed to reduce worldwide religious persecution. The State Department persists in “advancing religious freedom” primarily by reacting to the outrages of persecuting governments with bilateral “human-rights dialogues,” augmented by occasional private demarches or public denunciations that may threaten, but do not deliver, punitive economic sanctions. Sanctions, of course, can never be the sole basis for policy, but crying wolf is no policy at all.

To be sure, important tracks have been laid. The religious freedom office, though isolated at the State Department, is growing. It has negotiated one bilateral agreement on religion and is pursuing others. It issues excellent annual reports that identify the symptoms of persecution, country by country. But while its actions sometimes help move an individual or family out of harm’s way, the State Department does not attack the structures of persecution—let alone promote religious freedom as a centerpiece of democracy and human flourishing.

Congress has failed to address this situation, in part because of competing views of what religious liberty means, and in part because it invests most of its energy and resources in an independent IRF Commission, also created by the act. The commission often makes good recommendations, most of which are ignored by the State Department. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of some commissioners, that body has failed to focus Congress on the real problem: If America’s policy of promoting religious freedom is to be effective, our diplomats must do business in a different way.

The shortcomings of American diplomacy are perhaps best illustrated by our democracy strategy in the greater Middle East. The United States is funding programs on voting, drafting statutes, women’s movements, labor organization, journalist training, and the other secular aspects of a democracy, all of which are necessary and good. But, with few exceptions, we are failing to engage directly the religious communities that will help mold civil society and provide the moral underpinning of any democratic state. The religious freedom office has nearly no input into our broader democracy strategy.

The recent trial of Abdul Rahman for apostasy in Afghanistan drives this point home. Our ongoing programs there pay scant attention to troubling interpretations of sharia law until they burst into the news. Our official agencies (and the nongovernmental agencies we fund) are doing little to foster a sustained appreciation for democratic norms among Islamist political parties, to encourage nonextremist madrassas, or to support Muslim scholars and jurists who seek to develop a democratic public theology. Rule-of-law programs, for example, are often run by strict separationists, who have no sympathy for a religion-state covenant.

Without more attention to such issues, Iraq is unlikely to move beyond a balkanized democratic proceduralism, in which citizens and policymakers act
along sectarian lines to disadvantage those of differing religious traditions. Even if the insurgency is contained, the result is at constant risk of dissolving into civil war or theocracy. In Egypt, the radical Muslim Brotherhood is rapidly positioning itself as the primary political opposition to the Mubarak regime, but the United States has no direct means of influencing it.

The most immediate threat to United States national security is Islamist extremism, especially of the transnational al-Qaeda variety. Religion-based extremism is likely to continue to prosper in a world in which religious beliefs are deemed by governments unconnected to public life, including the public life of a democracy. Gregory Gause has recently argued in Foreign Affairs that the experience of Western Europe suggests that even liberal democracy does not prevent terrorism. Perhaps. But it is equally possible that democracies that accommodate within broad limits the public religious lives of all their citizens can deter religious radicalism. Despite its flaws, the American regime of religious liberty provides evidence for such a hypothesis; the Western European regimes do not. Indeed it is unclear whether Europe has the cultural vigor or confidence to defeat Islamist radicalism.

I recently asked a lawyer at a foreign-affairs agency about the religion deficit in American diplomacy. Why, I asked, do American-funded democracy programs avoid direct engagement with religious communities? His answer might have been taken from Barry Lynn's playbook. The question to be addressed in any such project is "whether there has been a violation of the constitutionally required separation of church and state, whether the funded activity has a secular purpose and, even if it does, whether the funded activity has a primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion."

In other words, our actions in furthering our interests abroad are subject to the Supreme Court's Lemon test for whether a government program is constitutional within the United States. This is doubtless why, according to the New York Times, the Pentagon recently hired contractors to pay Sunni religious scholars covertly for their advice. At least someone at the Pentagon understands the problem, even if they do not know how to solve it.

Skepticism about official involvement with religion also exists among American conservatives, some of whom believe Islam incapable of democracy, and some of whom think Foggy Bottom incompetent to address the issue at all. Responding to my advocacy for more U.S. engagement with Muslim clerics, a veteran religious-freedom activist told me he had "no faith in the U.S. government's ability to do this sort of thing intelligently: Washington will end up subsidizing the Islamic counterparts of Hans Küng."

But that is where we are already heading. An American diplomat's model of a "moderate Muslim" is likely to resemble a Rawlsian liberal, and the dominant worldview driving American diplomacy on this issue is that of the Left. Some liberals fear Muslim perceptions of unilateralism and cultural imperialism. A more effective policy of engagement with Islam could help ally those perceptions, but many liberals have a pinched understanding of the religious quest itself: It merits some protection in law as a privacy right, but it is no more foundational as a public human good than any other human choice. Indeed, for many liberals, religion constitutes a danger to democracy.

Overcoming such obstacles and broadening America's international religious freedom policy will not be easy. The State Department poses a particularly difficult problem, but thanks to the International Religious Freedom Act a dedicated bureaucracy is already in place. American embassies are increasingly staffed by young officers willing to engage in new strategies and less influenced by secularist orthodoxy than are more senior diplomats. Firm decisions by a president and secretary of state could work wonders — particularly by broadening the authority of the religious-freedom ambassador, giving systematic training to diplomats, and establishing a religion track within the political specialties of the foreign service.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently announced a major repositioning of diplomatic resources to promote democracy in key areas of the world. She has also requested $75 million from Congress to energize democratic forces in Iran. These are important initiatives. The secretary's challenge will be to integrate religious freedom into each — and not simply as a humanitarian issue. She should take steps to ensure that American diplomacy is prepared to address religion in every culture where it affects our interests, from Egypt to China. U.S. diplomats should be able to make the case, in language tailored to the interlocutor, for stable liberal democracy that favors the religious lives of citizens and protects religious freedom for all.

Last spring Congress introduced the Advance Democracy Act, which addressed some of the bureaucratic roadblocks at the State Department but did not tie the United States' religious-freedom policy to promotion of democracy. This shortcoming must be remedied. Some in Congress, it is true, will resist a greater U.S. involvement with religious groups as a "faith-based initiative" in foreign policy, and some doubtless will label it unconstitutional. But the law already requires the United States to advance interna-
tional religious freedom. The question is what that means and how it is to be done.

In his second inaugural address, President Bush said that “America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one.” The depth and quality of our belief in religious liberty are today connected to our national security. For our founding generation religious freedom was not a privacy right but an encouragement to public virtue. In his farewell address, President Washington said that religion yields “dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity.”

While that understanding has been under serious challenge in recent decades, its contemporary recovery is vital, not only for America’s domestic well-being but also for its engagement in the world. The religious beliefs and actions of others are not the only factor in protecting America’s interests abroad and its security at home, but they can no longer be treated as epiphenomenal. It’s time for American diplomacy to throw out the secularization thesis and embrace a new religious realism in foreign affairs.


---

**Good Friday**

The whins measure the wind, the wheel-ruts water from the unraveling clouds. The topsoil crust of the garden slowly unrinds itself from frost in unfreezing air, and the Crown Imperials by the field’s edge give out that pungent smell we name as fox. These flowers are descended from *fritillarias threepence apece*

*John Tradescant brought here four centuries ago, and their legend says their haughty heads have bent in shame with unshed tears since they refused to bow and weep as Christ passed by to Calvary.*

Though deer may distance warily, the fox, who quarters all our fields around and has no names for hedge or fen, catches this scent but is not much detained. He alerts, then turns towards lair and vixen in the woods beyond, away from all this world we make with words, the unnamed world of those that cannot pray, promise or betray. These flowers that bow among the dicebox heads and lazars’ bells, are not just here to flag the Spring, remind us of their provenance, or shed our unrepentant tears.

*Oliver Murray*