
November 3, 2009

A project of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University

Supported by the Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion and International Affairs
Thomas F. Farr, a former American diplomat, is a Visiting Associate Professor of Religion and International Affairs in the School of Foreign Service and Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, where he directs the Religion and US Foreign Policy program. Farr served as the first director of the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom from 1999–2003. He is widely published, including “Diplomacy in an Age of Faith,” in Foreign Affairs (March/April 2008), and World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty is Vital to American National Security (Oxford University Press, 2008).

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, created within the Office of the President in March 2006, is a part of a university-wide effort to build knowledge about religion’s role in world affairs and promote interreligious understanding in the service of peace. The Center explores the intersection of religion with contemporary global challenges. Through research, teaching, and outreach activities, the Berkley Center builds knowledge, promotes dialogue, and supports action in the service of peace. Thomas Banchoff, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service, is the Center’s founding director.

PROGRAM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
José Maria Aznar, Former Spanish Prime Minister

THE “TWIN TOLERATIONS” AS A MODEL FOR FOREIGN POLICY THINKING
Alfred Stepan, Columbia University
Jean Bethke Elshtain, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
Timothy Samuel Shah, Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs, Boston University
Moderator: Thomas Farr, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs

NEW TRENDS IN THE DATA ON RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY
Brian J. Grim, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life
Harris Mylonas, George Washington University
Daniel Philpott, University of Notre Dame
Moderator: Allen Herztke, University of Oklahoma and Guest Scholar, Brookings Institution

RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION
Gerald Hyman, Center for Strategic and International Studies
Thomas Melia, Freedom House
Daniel Brumberg, Georgetown University
Eric Patterson, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
Moderator: Jennifer Marshall, The Heritage Foundation

THINKING ABOUT ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY
Hassan Abbas, Harvard University
Emile Nakhleh, Former Senior Intelligence Officer
Jennifer Bryson, Witherspoon Institute

MODERATOR AND DISCUSSANT
Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
Introduction

Among the critical foreign policy issues facing the Obama administration, few are more important than the questions surrounding democracy promotion. To what extent, and how, should the United States attempt to encourage the emergence of democratic institutions and habits around the world? Can democracies alleviate problems of conflict, nuclear proliferation, poverty and terrorism in a way that authoritarian regimes cannot?

US policy makers have long answered that question in the affirmative. Indeed, President Obama promised the UN General Assembly in 2009, “I pledge that America will always stand with those who stand up for their dignity and their rights—for the student who seeks to learn; the voter who demands to be heard, the innocent who longs to be free; the oppressed who yearns to be equal…”

In short, American diplomacy has for decades been in the business of promoting democracy and has had some success, including the encouragement of trends already underway. During the final decades of the twentieth century, for example, democratic forms of governance seemed to be taking hold in most regions of the world, often with the assistance of US policy and funding. Unfortunately, that trend appears to have stalled.

One obstacle to American influence, especially in the Middle East, has been the inaccurate but widespread perception that the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were designed to undermine Islam. Another complicating factor has been the growing importance of religious actors and ideas in political life—not only in the Middle East but internationally. Observers of US diplomacy have noted that, for all its strengths, our foreign policy has not been adept at dealing with religion in the international sphere.

On November 3, 2009, the Berkley Center gathered scholars, activists and officials from across the American political and religious spectrum to explore some of these issues. What can be said about the relationship between religion and democracy? How should US democracy promotion take into account the worldwide resurgence of religion? What are the challenges to the emergence of democratic institutions and habits in Muslim-majority countries? What are the challenges to American diplomacy with respect to democracy and religion?
The “Twin Tolerations” as a Model for Foreign Policy Thinking

How does the concept of the “twin tolerations” help us understand and address the religion-state problem in transitions to democracy and the consolidation of democracy.

Alfred Stepan

Democracy is a system of conflict regulation that allows open competition over values and goals that citizens want to advance. In a strict democratic sense, this means that as long as groups do not use violence, do not violate the rights of other citizens, and advance their interests within the rules of the democratic game, all groups, including religious groups, are granted the right to advance their interests both in civil society and in political society. This is the minimal institutional statement of what democratic politics entails and does not entail.

Building on this core threshold approach to democracy, what does this imply about religion, politics, and democracy in “the twin tolerations”? Specifically, what are the necessary rough boundaries of freedom for elected governments from religious groups and for religious individuals and groups from the government? The key area of autonomy that must be established for democratic institutions is that the institutions that emanate from democratic procedures be able, within the bounds of the constitution and human rights, to generate policies. Religious institutions should not have constitutionally privileged prerogatives which allow them authoritatively to mandate public policy to democratically elected governments. The key area of autonomy, the other part of “the twin tolerations,” from the government or even other religions that must be established for religious freedom is that individuals and religious communities, consistent with our core institutional definition of democracy, must have complete freedom to worship privately.

But of course it means more than this. As individuals and groups, they should also be able to publicly advance their values in the civil society and to sponsor organizations and movements in political society, as long as their public advancement of these beliefs does not impinge negatively on the liberties of other citizens or violate democracy and the law by violence…

Within this broad framework of the minimal freedom for the democratic state and the minimal religious freedom for, of citizens and religions, it would appear that from a purely theoretical perspective that there can be an extraordinarily broad range of concrete patterns of religious-state relations and political systems that would meet our minimal definitions of a democracy. Note: the core institutional definition I’ve just given of democracy and the role of religion in it says nothing about any imperative that religion be confined to the private sphere or prohibited from entering the public sphere.
Jean Bethke Elshtain

How well do his “twin tolerations” work out as conceptual schema and as a way to evaluate what is going on “on the ground”, so to speak? Let’s be clear about those tolerations first. Stepan condenses the tolerations as follows: “…what are the necessary boundaries of freedom for elected governments from religious groups, and for religious individuals and groups from government?” How this works out very much depends on how freedom is defined and whether the “from”—protecting government from religion and religion from government—presupposes hermetically sealed off categories that never bleed into one another or whether, instead, one understands “from” to mean the disestablishment of an official state religion without assuming government is never to be influenced by religion or shaped by it, and so on. As well, if “from” requires from the side of religion that it essentially “privatize” itself and be largely invisible to the public square, that is a harrowing requirement that is impossible to work out in practice, surely. If “from” means that government cannot move in on a religion, so to speak, and try to change its creed, or dictate its personnel, or determine what it can and cannot say—that, of course, is a rock-bottom necessity for any vision of freedom and democracy in practice. Here Stepan is often quite astute and reassuring, for example, when he notes that the Western European lesson lies not in the need for a “wall of separation” but, instead, for “the constant political construction and reconstruction of the ‘twin tolerations’” Separation of church and state as juridical entities does not create those hermetically sealed off categories I noted above.

Timothy Samuel Shah

Stepan’s notion of the “twin tolerations” is a two-for-one bargain for democracy promoters. Because it requires as a minimum, essential condition of democracy that governments not trespass on the right of religious actors to organize and express their views in civil society, it empowers religious actors to create more vibrant civil societies and more vigorous political debate. By thus strengthening religious actors as autonomous and robust social and political actors, the “twin tolerations” principle makes it more possible for them to push non-electoral, authoritarian, or quasi-authoritarian regimes to undertake genuine democratic transitions.

The other side of the bargain is that Stepan’s principle requires at the same time that religious actors not be given standing constitutional, statutory, or political prerogatives that trump democratic deliberation—that, for example, the fatwas of imams or the rulings of a church synod or the conclusions of a rabbinical court not be permitted to determine who is a citizen and who isn’t, who has religious freedom and who doesn’t, or who is a true Muslim, or true Christian, or true Jew and who isn’t. This side of the “twin tolerations” requires that electoral autocracies or semi-democratic regimes, in which members of minority groups frequently fail to enjoy the full rights and liberties of citizens, complete and consolidate their transitions to full liberal democracies.
Evaluate the critique that the “twin tolerations” as culturally relativistic.

Timothy Samuel Shah

Larry Harrison, in what is less a “critique” than an off-hand and undeveloped aside, charges Al Stepan’s “twin tolerations” article with “relativism.” The charge is not leveled against Stepan’s “twin tolerations” principle per se but against what Harrison considers Stepan’s relativist insistence that all the major world religious systems are “multivocal” concerning democracy, i.e. they all contain pro-democratic and anti-democratic elements, and they all therefore have roughly equal or comparable potential to promote or undermine democracy.

Al Stepan makes crystal-clear that his “twin tolerations” belong to the core minimum of democratic standards, and he makes equally crystal-clear in his book *Arguing Comparative Politics* that “we must not be relativists” [italics added]. Stepan continues, “Any country, in any culture, must meet certain institutional and behavioral requirements...to qualify as a democracy” (231). Second, on the basis of these universal and unbending standards, he does not shrink from observing that the Muslim world has been unusually democracy-resistant; that the Orthodox Church’s “caesaropapist” structure has made it a much weaker ally of pro-democracy struggle in recent years than Catholic and Protestant churches; and that the “state Confucianism” (as opposed to the textual Confucianism of the *Analects*) promoted by Singapore’s Lee Kwan Yew and elements of the Chinese communist state are incompatible with democracy.

In fact, Stepan’s entire multivocal approach presupposes the non-relativist judgment that every major religious tradition contains elements that have potentially and historically served to hinder full democracy, and, furthermore, it invites careful empirical investigation of where the balance of forces lies in any given tradition in any particular place and time. Stepan recognizes explicitly that the existence of multivocality should not make one naïve that all religious systems are equally democratic—a statement that I cannot find in his writings—or make one naïve that at any particular historical moment the preponderance of voices in a tradition will necessarily be democratic, or, even if they are, that those voices will enjoy enough social and political power to carry the day.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

Harrison’s critique is a cultural approach by contrast to Stepan’s institutional approach. Harrison states his basic thesis up front: there is no doubt, he tells us, that “some religions do better than others in promoting the goals of democratic politics, social justice, and prosperity.” This would be difficult to gainsay in any systematic way. It is surely no accident that democracies emerged in the West; that constitutions protecting freedom became a norm rather than an exception in the West; and that human rights in our time flow directly from presuppositions of God’s law and natural law that predominated in medieval Europe. That the part of the globe in which this happened was the heart of what was then called ‘Christendom’ is surely no accident. Within this broad category of ‘Christendom’ he also insists that
Protestantism was more “congenial to democracy than Catholicism”, although by the time Tocqueville toured the fledgling American Republic in the Jacksonian era, Catholicism had “signed on” with the American project...There is also no doubt that there is a “democratic deficit” if we look at Muslim-majority societies, especially in the Arab Middle East. Is this a necessary or coincident fact? How does one make the case for democratic reform in light of the fact. (Wasting one's time disputing the data is not helpful: the question is what is to be done)...What Harrison provides is a helpful reminder of the centrality of culture, of which religion is a powerful constitutive feature. His essay is not so much a point by point rejoinder of Stepan as an elaboration that one can place side-by-side with that essay, learning essential things from each.

Alfred Stepan

[My co-authors and I recently completed] a 31,000 person census-based survey, one of the largest surveys in the world that’s ever been census-based. What are some of the findings...[on] this pattern of religious freedom...how does it work and what are the attitudes? The result is that there's virtually no statistical difference between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians in support for democracy, and in all cases in both surveys it's way higher than in any country in the history of Latin America’s ever been, except for Uruguay and Costa Rica.

Many people worry about religious intensity working against support for democracy. So we created an index of religious intensity—low, medium, high—and an index of support for democracy or support for non-democratic solutions. Our findings: for Hindus, the greater the intensity of religious practice, the greater the support for democracy. The results for Muslims are virtually the same. And for Sikhs, and for Christians—all of them go the greater the intensity of religious practice, the greater the intensity of support for democracy. The finding is the opposite among Buddhists in Sri Lanka.

What is the likelihood and source of resistance to and/or acceptance of the twin tolerations by majority religious communities in Muslim-majority countries (e.g. Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran); Orthodox-majority countries (e.g. Russia) and Hindu-majority countries (e.g. India)?

Timothy Samuel Shah

There is serious opposition to the “twin tolerations” across a range of religious traditions. Hindu activists in India not only seek but do in fact impose de jure and de facto pressures on minority religious groups that make it difficult for them to express themselves in civil society, particularly in states such as Gujarat. Some Muslim groups have established or seek to establish states in which Muslim clerics dominate political deliberation, either by limiting it within certain confines through clerical veto (Iran) or by in effect establishing the direct rule of a religious hierarchy (the Taliban in Afghanistan). In addition, as Stepan rightly emphasizes, some secularist and authoritarian regimes impose severe
restrictions and/or controls on majority or minority religious actors, making it impossible for them to organize political parties, for example.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

In a short response it simply is not possible to address systematically the “potential sources of resistance to the twin tolerations in practice by majority religious communities…” There is no monolithic ‘voice’ within these complex communities that settles the matter definitively. A robust response to the question cries out for detailed historical, institutional, and cultural analysis of the sort that is richly descriptive, analytically acute, and empirically solid. One cannot answer the question abstractly. For now this much can be said: for the faithful, democracy will always remain a suspect category unless they find internal to their faith a repertoire of possibilities that can help to buttress and to sustain democratic hopes and claims. Needless to say, one must add yet another complexity to this already daunting set of requirements, namely, how democracy itself is understood; is it a minimalist or maximalist definition; is it a robust or rather thinner or more anemic version of democracy, and so on. One cannot expect democratic cultures in the full Tocquevillian sense to develop in places which have no traditions that can be “filled out” in that direction. That said, inhibiting factors of the cultural sort can be mitigated in practice given how one constructs institutions and institutional requirements. People learn democracy in the doing of it. Were we to wait until cultures were fully democratic, that is, until we could identify a robust democratic civil society, we would be waiting until the cows come home. If, however, we assume that “habits of the heart” develop out of engaging in certain practices over time, the creation of democratic institutions and practices, like competitive elections, a pluralist press, and so on, makes it possible to generate minimalist democratic polities.

Alfred Stepan

Are there other models of the twin tolerations that work in countries with large Muslim populations and avoid this hard, religiously-controlling secularism and still are compatible with democracy? …What’s interesting about all of these countries [Indonesia, India, Senegal, Albania] … is that these democracies with large Muslim populations have a totally different approach towards religion. Theirs… is a regime of political freedom and a regime of religious freedom—that’s the most important thing, the combination that gives some room for play within the system, for people to learn. No democracy in the world was ever invented with a majority of democrats. People learn democracy; they have to negotiate it.

India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, 150 million Muslims. The pattern they chose was recognize all religions in the public sphere, financially support all religions, but maintain, as Rajeev Bhargava says, a “principled distance.” Not equi-distance, because if some religion is violating human rights like at independence, that many of the Hindu temples would not allow untouchables in; Gandhi said you’re going to have to close that temple until they clean up their act. That’s what democracy is vis-à-vis religion.
Now all of these countries publicly recognize and celebrate [religious holidays]: India has five for the major religion, Hindus, but ten for the other religion [Islam]. These are compulsory, paid holidays, where the president participates in a celebration. Indonesia has six for the Muslim majority, seven for the other. Senegal has seven for the Muslim religion but six for the very small Christian population, and Albania is going to follow this model. [These countries] financially support all religions. That means schooling, charitable organizations, etc. This co-participation in many things allows a discussion with religion and democratic officials.

To what extent might U.S. foreign policy draw on the “twin tolerations,” particularly in democracy promotion strategies in highly religious states and in international religious freedom policy?

Timothy Samuel Shah

Al Stepan’s concept of the “twin tolerations” is of direct relevance to US foreign policy in at least two ways. Building on Stepan’s concept, Dan Philpott, Monica Toft, and I are arguing in a forthcoming book that a particular kind of religious freedom—“structural autonomy” or the institutional independence of religious institutions vis-à-vis political institutions—is a crucial determinant of whether religious actors are constructive or destructive players in politics. Specifically, based on dozens of international cases, it is clear that the more governments afford religious actors institutional space in society, the more they are likely to become a force for democracy and human rights. In other words, the more these actors enjoy at least a modicum of religious freedom, the more they enjoy both the desire and capacity to advance an ever widening circle of more general social and political freedoms.

This argument strongly suggests the strategic importance of a certain kind of religious freedom agenda—though an agenda not focused exclusively on specific cases of religious persecution of individuals or on “freedom of worship,” but focused also on advancing the structural and institutional independence of religious actors from state restrictions. In other words, the US may have far more interest than has been appreciated in a very specific kind of “religion agenda” as a first step towards a realizable “democracy agenda”—one that is not focused exclusively on elections but that is focused first on encouraging governments in (especially) the Arab Muslim world to adopt policies that permit their religious institutions and actors to enjoy a somewhat greater measure of independence from state control and state privilege. As a matter of prudent public diplomacy, and sound democratization strategy, the US would have much to gain from being firmly on the side of liberating the mosque from sultanic oppression and regulation throughout the Muslim world.

Second, the more governments close down religious freedom through hegemonic forms of secularism or hegemonic forms of theocracy, the more they run the risk of radicalizing religious actors and preventing even incremental political reform of society as a whole. When you close down religious freedom, you not only directly
undermine the “twin tolerations” and the basic features of democracy, you also indirectly inspire radicalism, extremism, and, along with these, terrorism and civil war.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

There is much that is attractive about Stepan’s “twin tolerations”. But there is a [potential] problem: is privatization a precondition for these tolerations in practice? Because I am not entirely clear what Stepan means by “private”, I cannot answer this question in a fully sure-footed manner. This much I do know: there is no way that faiths challenged by democratic urgencies, like Islam, will accept tolerations that characterize faith as a private form of worship. Islam is a strong religion with a public presence. That does not mean it need dominate over a polity or that the forms of theocracy that historically characterized much of the Islamic world should be reinstated. Of course not. But it does mean that a strong “secularism” of the sort that some see as a sine qua non of democracy is unacceptable to the vast majority of the faithful…This must suffice for now: to accept that we live in a secular world and that democracy requires a secular government—defined as a government that is not entangled with an official, established state religion—is one thing. We call this ‘separation of church and state’. But this does not require driving a wedge between democracy and religion in practice “on the ground”. You simply cannot do that. Too much of the same territory is claimed by each. In a debate a few years back with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, I was concerned but not surprised that she framed the matter concerning religion and politics more or less in this way: “What sort of religion and what religious practices can the state tolerate?” Religion came as a kind of supplicant to the state and it was the state’s job to say what was or was not acceptable to it and there was no appeal beyond what the state determined. This is not the stuff out of which robust toleration is derived.

To the extent, therefore, that the “twin tolerations” help to guide American foreign policy, it must be with careful elaborations in order to make it clear that Muslim citizens need not choose between an all encompassing secularism or an all encompassing faith; that separation of church and state institutionally does not require the separation of religion and politics culturally.
New Trends In the Data on Religion And Democracy

Daniel Philpott has written about the “form of politics” that religious actors take on, “peaceful or belligerent, democratic or authoritarian.” This is conditioned by their political theology and their environment of differentiation they exist in. What do your studies tell us about Philpott’s argument? Do your studies tend to confirm the value of consensual differentiation? What does your work reveal about his concept of “liberal political theologies” and how such theologies might affect the longevity and stability of democracy?

Daniel Philpott

Two large factors, I am convinced, explain a great deal about why religious actors take on the form of politics that they do—peaceful or belligerent, democratic or authoritarian. They are political theology and differentiation. Political theology is the set of doctrines through which the core claims of a faith are translated into political conclusions. Such theologies often call for certain regime types and, because they generally also have a conception of justice, they oftentimes fundamentally shape the agendas of those regimes...Differentiation, a term that I borrow from sociology, I construe to mean the degree of legal, constitutional separation between religion and state. It combines elements of what Americans call “separation of church and state” with elements of religious freedom. In a given state, differentiation can be high or low as well as consensual or conflictual, yielding four different varieties, as the chart below shows.

The upper left hand corner of the chart [below]—consensual differentiation—is the kind of arrangement that a religious freedom policy aims for. The twin tolerations are achieved and the arrangement is stable: both religion and state are relatively happy with it.

### TABLE 1: POLITICAL THEOLOGY AND DIFFERENTIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Consensual</th>
<th>Conflictual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Communist Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Chile under Pinochet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>States with “Engaged Buddhism”</td>
<td>Kemalist Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postcolonial Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Communist Bulgaria, Romania, Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>Colonial Latin America</td>
<td>Postcolonial Arab nationalist regimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medieval Christendom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

restrictions on religion than in countries with high restrictions. For instance, among the world’s 25 most populous countries, six of the eight countries with lowest government restrictions on religion have had democracies present for some time (e.g., the U.S., Brazil). The ratio works in the exact opposite direction among the ten countries with highest government restrictions on religion—seven of the ten either do not have a democracy now or only have recent and limited democratic practices (e.g., Iran).

Daniel Philpott

Must human rights and security always be competitors? Might religious freedom, and more broadly democratic regimes based on religious freedom, turn out to be not a goal that competes with and usually loses out to fighting terrorism, but instead an integral strategy in that very struggle? That is the proposal that I wish to explore. But it depends on the theoretical and empirical validity of four propositions.

The first proposition is that authoritarian regimes who suppress religious freedom—that is, undifferentiated, or integralist regimes—encourage terrorism. Their control of religious actors prevents the political participation and competition that fosters compromise and moderation. Several studies, including two of my own analyses, show a strong correlation between authoritarianism and the incubation and operation of terrorists. The pattern is strongest in the Islamic world, from where 91% of religious terrorists originate. There, the authoritarianism that denies religious freedom sometimes takes the

Brian Grim

Findings from the Global Restrictions on Religion study by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life somewhat relate to Philpott’s consensual differentiation argument. The Pew study compares the level of government restrictions on religion with the level of religious hostilities involving religion in 198 countries and self-administering territories. In Philpott’s terms, higher levels of government restrictions on religion is an indication of less differentiation, in that higher restrictions reflect a less laissez-faire relationship between religion and state, i.e., a less consensually differentiated relationship. The study finds that higher levels of government restrictions on the free practice and expression of religion in society (i.e., government impingement upon consensual differentiation) generally coincide with higher levels of social hostilities involving religion. Looked at the other way around, the level to which there is consensual differentiation between religious communities and government (i.e., governments place low restrictions on free religious practice) tends to coincide with lower levels of religious hostilities in society. Also, though social hostilities involving religion is not a direct indicator of limited “liberal political theologies”, it is an indication of the extent to which societies, including religious groups in societies, attempt to shut out other religions.

In my own previously published research with Penn State Professor Roger Finke, we noted that democracy tends to have been consolidated over time to a greater degree in countries with lower levels of government restrictions on religion than in countries with high restrictions. For instance, among the world’s 25 most populous countries, six of the eight countries with lowest government restrictions on religion have had democracies present for some time (e.g., the U.S., Brazil). The ratio works in the exact opposite direction among the ten countries with highest government restrictions on religion—seven of the ten either do not have a democracy now or only have recent and limited democratic practices (e.g., Iran).
This chart shows how the world’s 198 countries and self-administering territories score in terms of both government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion. Correlation = .586 (p<.001, two-tailed): r-square = .34

Note: The Pew Forum categorized the levels of government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion on percentiles. Countries with scores in the top 5% on each index were categorized as “very high.” The next highest 15% of scores were categorized as “high,” and the following 20% were categorized as “moderate.” The bottom 60% of scores were categorized as “low.”
form of radical Islamic regimes (the Iranian Revolution) but far more commonly of secularist regimes (the French Revolution).

The second proposition is that democratic regimes who allow religious freedoms moderate terrorism, or at least the sort of anti-systemic extremism with which terrorism is associated. Evidence for this thesis can be found in several Muslim-majority countries—most of them still semi-authoritarian, to be sure—in which openings towards democracy have begotten the electoral participation of parties with strong Islamic identities: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, and to some extent, Egypt.

The third proposition is that religious actors who were once undemocratic can over time become more democratic. The great historical example is the Catholic Church and its evolution towards an embrace of religious freedom and human rights more broadly at the Second Vatican Council. Today, Turkey’s Justice and Development Party and Indonesia’s Nahdlatul Ulama have trod a good ways down a similar path in the Islamic world.

The fourth proposition is that the same actors can even help to bring about democratic regimes. In the Catholic case, once churches in Poland, Brazil, and the Philippines embraced human rights and religious freedom they became motors of democratization. Similarly, the two parties just mentioned have not only evolved internally but have pressured their countries to become more democratic.

Together, these propositions suggest that a policy of great pressure towards democratization, the inclusion of religious freedom in democratization, and the “constructive engagement” of religious actors might well promote democracy, stability, and the reduction of terrorism better than an unreflective presumption for alliances with authoritarian regimes who suppress their religious citizens.

Harris Mylonas

What is the relationship between religion and political violence? Are religious communities more likely to rebel against “integrationist” rather than “differentiated” states (Philpott 2007)? These are important questions in the study of politics but, more importantly, the answers we give have important implications for policy.

Existing statistical analyses do not allow us to make any strong causal statements about the relationship between differentiation and political theologies, on the one hand, and political violence, on the other…I will present some of the main findings from the quantitative literature on religion and political violence.

Fearon and Laitin test for the effect of religion on civil war onset and they find no effect. They conclude (2003) that the spread of democracy and tolerance for ethnic and religious minorities should be major foreign policy goals for their own sake, but not with the expectation that they will bring peace… Nordas (2004) studies the relationship between religious heterogeneity, religious, regulations, and civil wars from 1990 to 2002 and
Islam does not seem to be associated with bloodier conflicts. Toft, however, looking at all civil wars in the second half of the 20th century shows that more than 80 percent of religious civil wars involve Islam and explains this over-representation by the fact that “Whereas the largely Christian West has rejected the idea that violence in the name of religion has a positive utility and that the Church and the state should be the same, Islam and its adherents have not rejected such notions.” (2006: 4). Toft’s argument is echoing Philpott’s (2007) emphasis on illiberal political theologies.

What do your studies tell us about the effects of democratic institutions on the health of societies in general, including social harmony, the health of citizens, economic growth and the like?

Brian Grim

Recent research suggests that the longevity of democracy in a country is correlated with things such as lower levels of government restrictions on religion and religion-related violence. For instance, a study of 101 countries conducted by the Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom found that wherever restrictions on free religious practice are low, there tend to be fewer incidents of armed conflict, better health outcomes, higher levels of earned income, prolonged democracy, and better educational opportunities for women. Of course, since that study only looked at correlations, it could offer no

2. A similar pattern emerges in the State Failure dataset (Political Instability Task Force) where after 1965 conflict involving religious minorities becomes more violent than conflict that involves other type of groups.

also finds that religious cleavages do not by themselves explain civil war. However, he does find support for a more nuanced hypothesis that takes into account the institutional setting and the state regulation of religious minorities. Nordas finds that in countries that have a religious cleavage along world religions, the probability of conflict increases when the state has an official state religion and the state persecutes religious minorities. These findings corroborate Philpott’s findings that “Communal violence is advanced by groups with integrationist political theologies, sometimes secular in character, who capture the state and impose integrationist institutions upon minority faiths who then rebel, and by integrationist religious groups who take up opposition to states.” (2007: 521). There is also evidence that the religious cleavage seems to be increasingly more salient in the last four decades. Toft (2006) has shown that the number of religious civil wars has increased as a proportion of all civil wars. Fox (2004) finds that religious minorities that pursued national self-determination goals produced more violence after 1995. However, Fox’s study finds no effect for religious minorities that fought conflicts for religious ends.

Studies have also been conducted to see whether the intensity of violence in religious vis-à-vis non-religious conflicts is higher. Nordas (2007) conducts an analysis of the effect of a conflict having a religious dimension on the number of fatalities in conflicts active since 1989 (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflicts Dataset) and finds that religious conflicts are not bloodier overall. Interestingly, Islam does not seem to be associated with bloodier conflicts. Toft, however, looking at all civil wars in the second half of the 20th century shows that more than 80 percent of religious civil wars involve Islam and explains this over-representation by the fact that “Whereas the largely Christian West has rejected the idea that violence in the name of religion has a positive utility and that the Church and the state should be the same, Islam and its adherents have not rejected such notions.” (2006: 4). Toft’s argument is echoing Philpott’s (2007) emphasis on illiberal political theologies.

What do your studies tell us about the effects of democratic institutions on the health of societies in general, including social harmony, the health of citizens, economic growth and the like?

Brian Grim

Recent research suggests that the longevity of democracy in a country is correlated with things such as lower levels of government restrictions on religion and religion-related violence. For instance, a study of 101 countries conducted by the Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom found that wherever restrictions on free religious practice are low, there tend to be fewer incidents of armed conflict, better health outcomes, higher levels of earned income, prolonged democracy, and better educational opportunities for women. Of course, since that study only looked at correlations, it could offer no

2. A similar pattern emerges in the State Failure dataset (Political Instability Task Force) where after 1965 conflict involving religious minorities becomes more violent than conflict that involves other type of groups.
causal claims. Thus, the relationship of democracy with religious freedom with other civil liberties and social outcomes is in need of further theoretical and empirical study before any conclusions can be drawn.

Harris Mylonas

There are billions of Muslims and Christians, millions of Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews but what is most important for our purposes is that the believers are not neatly arranged across various states. In other words, religious unmixing has only partially taken place and this has usually been a consequence of nationalist self-determination movements. Nevertheless, religious identities have not always coincided with national identities. A German can be Protestant or Catholic, an Indian can be Muslim or Hindu, an American can be Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish, and so forth. Of course, prominent cases do exist where religion and national identity are coterminous. Poland, Greece, Israel, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are just a few states that come to mind. However, most people in the world live in religiously diverse countries. Taking this fact into account the importance of the regulation of religion becomes apparent both for social harmony and the quality of democracy...

Grievances and discrimination are necessary but not sufficient conditions for political violence to occur. The size of the religious minority, its spatial distribution, the history of past conflict, as well as its capacity to mobilize or receive important external support are crucial conditions that render the necessary conditions sufficient. In this endeavor we should not neglect the importance of crosscutting cleavages in the study of the effects of religion. Religious groups which are internally divided along national, ethnic, class, or any other lines are less likely to mobilize than internally cohesive groups.

What are the policy implications of your studies for the question of engaging religious actors, ideas and communities in American democracy promotion strategies?

Brian Grim

While I cannot speak to policy issues, I can make one observation from a study I published with Roger Finke in the American Sociological Review in 2007. In the study we used multivariate analysis and structural equa-

---

**THE RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE CYCLE**

Structural Equation Model, 143 countries, populations > 2 million

- Social Restriction of Religious Freedom (incl. restricted competition)
- Government Restriction of Religious Freedom (incl. restricted competition)
- Violence related to Religion


---

**Berkley Center | Georgetown University**
rendering the cleavage an intense one. Other societies have crosscutting cleavages, where people who share the same religion identify with different ethnic groups or regions of a country. The latter type of a configuration dampens the salience of the religious cleavage.

But how can a country move from a reality of overlapping to one of crosscutting cleavages? There are several paths [in the scholarly literature]: modernization, political engineering by the government, development of civil society, or the creation of a new identity by mass schooling of the population of a (largely illiterate) country (Darden 2009).

**What recommendations do you have for future scholarship in this area?**

**Brian Grim**

To more reliably and instructively unpack the relationship between democracy, freedoms and social outcomes in today’s world requires improvements in theory as well as better inter-disciplinary empirical studies that utilize both qualitative (interpretive) and quantitative (statistical) data. However, the divide between qualitative and quantitative social science methodologies is so dramatic that Andrew Abbott chose *Chaos of Disciplines* as the title for his 2001 book on the evolution of this chasm among scholars. Rather than see the traditions as an inseparable divide, Abbott instead argues that they are intertwined and represent swings of the same pendulum rather than separate research paradigms. Indeed, Thomas Kuhn pointed to the close relationship between qualitative and quantitative understanding noting that since “Galileo, [quantitative] laws have often been correctly guessed with the aid of a [qualitative] paradigm years before apparatus could be designed for their experimental determination.” Such quantitative studies might explore, for instance, connections between whether limits on freedom to express religious beliefs relate to limits on free expression in other areas such as freedom of the press (and vice versa). Quantitative data are available on both, but careful analysis is absent.

**Harris Mylonas**

Religion has been one of the most important cleavage dimensions in Europe for centuries. The rise of nationalism and communism, however, has pushed the study of the religious cleavage to the side. Following the end of the cold war, Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations,” and the September 11 attack, the study of religion and its effects on political violence has experienced resurgence. Many of the problems in the study of the impact of religion on the onset of political violence have to do with problems of conceptualization and operationalization. Future research should look at other cleavages in each society and how they interact with the religious cleavage. What is the link between the national constitutive story of a country and religion is crucial for our purposes. Equally, an understanding of the conditions under which religious identities become primary and trump other identifications is crucial here.
It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address this symposium of democracy and religion for many reasons. First, because as a former politician I always believed and still believe in freedom and democracy. Furthermore, I always defend that the values enshrined in our nations were not just for the benefit of the West—liberal democracies—but also for all humankind. Second, because as an individual I am a believer and as such I always defend freedom of worship and tolerance here and everywhere. And third, because any conversation on religion, far from being marginal in our public sphere, is becoming one of the driving forces in shaping our world and our future. But, bearing in mind the materialistic and secularized political realm in which we are living, bringing back the religious factor to the floor is a real novelty. Whether we, politicians or former politicians, take the right lessons from that is to be seen.

Anyway, as I said it is a great pleasure for me to be here today. In a few days, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of a historic victory—the fall of the Berlin wall, a symbol of European division and Soviet domination over half of the European continent. 1989 marked the beginning of the end of the terrible forces of communism that brought so much desolation and death to the world. The defeat of Nazism in 1945 followed by that of communism 40 years later are two landmarks in the history of freedom as well as in the defense and promotion of democracy. Because, at the end of the day, it was the triumph of freedom over oppression, of individual dignity over social tyranny, that was really at stake in both conflicts. If I’m pointing this out to you now, it is not for the pleasure of literary digression. It is because I want to underline one fact: the victory of the forces of good over these evils was only made possible thanks to the sacrifice, perseverance, and will of America, its people, and its leaders. Without the U.S. intervention I am not sure what the outcome would have been, but I am convinced that Europe and the entire world would be very different today…

I believe in freedom and extending freedom throughout the world, and I believe so for at least three main reasons. First, because I believe that it is with an acclaim out of freedom that the dignity of the individual is best promoted. Being free from fear is the only way to realize freedom of expression, freedom of beliefs, and freedom of social and political engagement. There is a second powerful reason why I believe in democracy. I am convinced it is the best political system when it comes to promoting development and fighting against inequality and poverty. Though many argue that development and liberty are two different things, it is not less true that 90% of the worst performing economies, over the last four decades, have belonged to non-democratic governments. Practically the same percentage applies in the case of humanitarian crises, refugees, and famines.
The third reason that underlies my conviction concerning the benefits of democracy, has to do with a decision to guarantee a world that is more secure. There is a close link between the nature of a political system and its inclination toward violence and the use of force. In 1795 the German philosopher Immanuel Kant expanded his hypothesis that political freedom with a republic—the equivalent of a democracy in modern terms—was an essential factor in eliminating war from our lives. His thesis is entitled “Perpetual Peace.” … According to this view, closer and more active relations mean that nations are less likely to resort to force when it comes to resolving disputes. Simply put, democracies are not inclined to fight amongst themselves…Finally, there is a fourth reason why I believe in democracy. Only under democratic and tolerant regimes religious freedom can flourish. We have too many examples of the countries, from China to Saudi Arabia, just to mention two cases, so I don’t think I need to elaborate more on this.

Why religion is important today, whether you are a believer or not, is that religion has exploded in front of our faces in its most radical and dramatic expression on September 11 and thereafter. I am very aware that not all Muslims are jihadists, but all jihadists are Muslims. Let me be clear, because this is something very sensitive, I am not saying or implying that we are confronted by Islam or that we are at war with Islam. What I am trying to say is that there is a struggle within the Islamic world between moderates and radicals, to use a familiar expression to us, where the radicals and extremists are using or abusing the Quran's teachings in justification of their activities…

Victory over the terrorists may not be enough to guarantee a peaceful world. I am convinced that freedom, tolerance, and democracy in all societies are not only possible but mandatory if we really want to avoid future setbacks. The international community has been attacking the issue of supporting democracy at high costs, in Iraq for instance, during the last years, and is now facing the mounting problem of nation and democracy building at the same time in Afghanistan…We don’t need to adopt a defeatist attitude. I declare myself an optimist. 40 years ago, for instance, when we were talking about the future of Spain after General Franco, many were weary and sometimes even fearful of democratic freedom. Spain was a nation without individualism, they said, incapable of action without some authority from above imposing a sense of respect for order with a firm hand. They were wrong. All those who fought to make democracy a reality were right. 25 years ago, very few entertained the possibility of forcing a democratic transformation of what at the time was the Soviet Union. And then, just when the West was most intent on achieving an entente cordiale, in resigning itself to peaceful coexistence with Moscow, President Ronald Reagan inspired a change of attitude that contributed to the process that led to the collapse of the entire Soviet system.

Now is the moment to overcome resistance and to look to the challenges of today and tomorrow with new eyes, free from the blinkers of the past. The main challenge that lies before us consists of transforming the Middle East. And this is a challenge we must attack successfully. We have no other choice if we really wish to put an end to the case of accumulated hate and violence against our values… Now here is where religious freedom comes into the picture stronger than ever, as a fundamental right for every citizen. But, let us be serious. Religious freedom as an individual right to profess his or her own beliefs is one thing, and an important one. But what is even more important, given the current political environment, is the freedom to talk publicly about religion. It is totally unacceptable, for instance, that after fighting and dying for freedom in places like the Balkans, or Iraq, or Afghanistan, we put [shariah]... like the death penalty for those converts to other religions different from Islam.

Thus, if we are really serious in transforming the Middle East and Muslim world we should start thinking about how to put religious freedom back into the strategic and diplomatic agenda. There cannot be religious freedom without democracy and we cannot accept any system called democratic that does not promote religious freedom—as simple as that. Furthermore, I think it is time to start asking some of our traditional allies and friends in the region for some reciprocity. It is appropriate that I have to accept large investments in mosques and Islamic teachings in my own country but I cannot attend mass on their soil or build a church? Religious freedom cannot work in one direction, and we must accept the practice. It has become very difficult for a former politician, even for an active politician, to talk about religion in the public sphere. It is time to say enough of this. In war, if you do not take the hill, your enemy will. There is no reason why we must surrender our beliefs to leave others to impose theirs. Thank you very much for your attention.
Religion and Democracy Promotion in the Obama Administration

Should the United States seek to encourage the development of stable democracy in particular countries abroad? If so, why?

Daniel Brumberg

We have to think somewhat deductively about how the process of political change works in different regions, and based on those assumptions, come up with certain kinds of practical prescriptions for US policy. And for this purpose, I like to make a crucial, I think, elementary distinction between two different things, one of which is political liberalization and the other is democratization. Regimes are extremely adept at providing political space…for various political groups to express political space…for various political groups to express themselves with the proviso that they do not challenge the regime’s hegemony. And that sort of system allows these groups to let off steam, it allows for a certain degree of contestation, competition, and of course ultimately what it allows these regimes to do is play one group off against the other. And that is why every self-respecting autocrat in the Arab world prefers several thousand civil society organizations over two or three really effective ones. The idea is that if you can keep everybody busy liberalizing each other and their societies they won’t focus their attention on the issue of democratization. And that sort of game is an elaborate, for want of a better word, protection racket. One consequence of US policy is to abet this sort of protection racket through strategies which focus not so much on democratization but political reform, a term that has been hijacked repeatedly by leaders in the region and liberalization, at the expense of democratization. And that way we can have our cake and eat it too. We say, “We’re promoting freedom of discussion or this and that,” and at the same time, we can maintain our strategic links with regimes. Egypt is a classic case of this. Morocco is another one…We have to get states to create real reforms…strategic reforms—what I call strategic liberalization—that really opens up the political space.

Thomas Melia

Yes; the U.S. should encourage the development of authentic and stable democracy in countries around the world. We should do so not simply in order to proselytize about our own political experience…Rather, the U.S. should support the emergence of democracy, as and where it can (which is not everywhere), firstly because to do is consistent with our national interest. Stable democracies tend to be less prone to conflict, internally and with neighbors; they tend to be more prosperous over time and to make better trading partners. Another reason the U.S. should do so is because societies that are stable democracies tend generally to respect the rights of their citizens, and thus provide an opportunity for men and women to achieve more of their inherent human potential as individuals, it is the right thing to do.

The more pertinent question, however, is how the United States (and other democratic societies) can most
effectively protect democracy against the campaigns now underway around the world to diminish democracy. It seems less ‘imperial’ and interventionist and perhaps it would be less controversial if we were to put the question in the more defensive context in which we now find ourselves. Not enough attention has been given to the fact that the challenge in the world today is not so much how to enlarge democracy, but to keep it from shrinking any faster or further than it has been doing lately. The world is now in the throes of a global political recession—one that predates and is interacting negatively with the global economic downturn. In each of the last three years more countries have experienced downturns in the political rights and civil liberties their people enjoy than the number of countries experiencing improvements, according to the Freedom House annual survey Freedom in the World. There are numerous contributing factors that explain the worldwide decline in political freedoms, including the stresses that many new and fragile democracies have come under due to incompetence, corruption, civil strife and cross-border wars that test new governments’ democratic integrity. But there is also at the heart of this trend a deliberate and increasingly orchestrated campaign against democratic norms underway, led by increasingly assertive authoritarian regimes—often resource-rich authoritarian regimes.

**Eric Patterson**

The spread of democracy worldwide is consonant with America’s ideals and its long term interests. However, democracy must mean more than holding elections: at a minimum, official U.S. policy should define democracy as free elections (without impediments to participation as candidates, parties, or voters) and civil liberties (freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, etc.). So-called “illiberal democracy” should be consistently labeled as unsatisfactory by the U.S. government except as a first-step in a political transition.

The U.S. and its allies would be well-served by a strategic approach to democracy promotion, such as occurred during the 1980s and 1990s when the U.S. thoughtfully and heavily invested in Eastern Europe over a long period of time. The U.S. government should be on the lookout for critical junctures and long-term trends that make some contexts particularly fallow for outside moral and financial support: it is likely that it is third-tier countries of little geo-political significance are the ones where long-term, smart assistance can make the most difference (such as Burundi or Guatemala). At present, however, it seems that the general bulk of U.S. foreign assistance is simply spread around so that everyone gets a little something; in contrast, activities like those of the Millennium Challenge Corporation that are targeted, of significant size and duration, and which compel conditions of governance and accountability up-front are most likely to pay-off over time.

**Gerald Hyman**

The United States should definitely continue to support stable liberal democracies and democratization wherever it can. The amount of support and the modalities of support should vary depending first on the political, economic, and social conditions in the country, and second
on the importance of the country to the United States. The former affects the likelihood of success and the likely timeframe. The latter affects the intensity of the assistance and may override considerations of probable success. They both affect the best strategy. In general, however, a conjunction of U.S. values and U.S. interests commends continued support for democracy. Certainly both U.S. values and concrete interests are better for the relatively recent transformations in Central Europe, Indonesia, and most of Latin America. No doubt there has been a decline in momentum of democratization and some reversals. Some of the most difficult challenges lie ahead, and many democratization efforts may fail. But their cost is not so great, and the returns for successful investments are substantial...Military intervention is an entirely separate matter and would require a different threshold decision and criteria.

The alternative to peaceful, legal support to democrats (or to those who at least support some of democracy's component elements even if for "non-democratic" reasons) is to watch authoritarian or semi-authoritarian governments continue without any response. It is hardly clear why that would serve any U.S. interests.

When such countries have significant numbers of religious citizens and religious communities, how if at all should U.S. democracy promotion policy engage religious actors and communities? Should the US, for example, seek to encourage liberal political theologies within influential religious communities? If so, how?

Thomas Melia

The United States should definitely seek to engage—diplomatically, programmatically, in development activities, in our exchange-programs, and otherwise—religious actors and communities. In many countries to avoid doing so would be to avoid large swaths of the population and to avoid some of the most influential people in those societies.

As for how we should do so, I am going to offer a proposal that seems to contradict what I previously said about the inadvisability of proselytizing about our own experience. While there are aspects of contemporary American society...that should definitely not be taken on the road around the world, one of the things Americans should be proud to show the world is the extraordinary degree of religious freedom that exists in this country, and how it enables religious believers of every imaginable variety to live and worship as they please virtually without constraint. The story of how we came to this—and how our religious liberty is perpetually debated, legislated and litigated—is one that every diplomat and NGO activist should be obliged to learn and to tell.

When it comes to the particular theological or ideological debates underway globally or within country contexts, I think as a general proposition it would not be wise for the U.S. to intervene to shape religious outcomes. And I certainly do not think it is clear that—should the U.S. choose to intervene somehow, even if this just means expressing a diplomatic or political preference in public or private—that to do so on behalf of "liberal" tendencies is the better way to go.

Indeed, the challenge to those trying to make the case for democracy as the preferred mode of governance in the modern world, is to explain that conservative and traditional strands in most religious traditions have at least as much to gain from the development or strengthening of political democracy as would liberal strands. That is where the battle of the minds is to be resolved, and that is where we should concentrate our attention.

Daniel Brumberg

I don't think it is useful for the US to define this problem as an Islamic problem. It's an identity problem. It's a political problem. And I don't think the solution will be found...in the effort to promote a liberal Islamic ideology. I think this is a dangerous game, I think it could easily backfire.

I think what we have to do is promote an institutional context with rules and institutions which change the calculations of the players, both within regimes and in oppositions, so you get some movement beyond state-managed political liberalization...And the beginning of this is not to worry about fixing Islam, but by addressing the political context in which Islamists and their rivals compete. And that's going to require, of course, getting them to talk to one another and find some ways to agree on a set of rules...I call [this]
strategic liberalization, opening up the political space so Islamists and their rivals can debate in a serious way and so other voices can express themselves and in that way redefine the political game. So the real issue is not fixing Islam, it’s not promoting the Islamic liberalism that may or may not come, but it has to come out of a constitutional and institutional context which the US should be actively involved in supporting.

**Gerald Hyman**

Basically, the U.S. should engage self-identifying religious actors similarly to actors without self-conscious and articulated religious identities, but with some special considerations for the religious ones. In many countries, religion is a powerful organizing principle and a powerful, often organized, political force. To the extent that religious actors support or oppose democracy, they are an ingredient, among others, in the strategic calculations for promoting democracy. They may be allies or antagonists of democracy or (less likely) they may be neutral. If allies, they could be assisted in their pro-democracy political activities, although, for the reasons discussed below, some concern should be taken to distinguish their religious from their political activities and the way in which they identify themselves when they undertake political (especially democracy-promotion) activities. If opponents or neutrals, they need to be considered within the democracy-promotion strategy like any other opponent or neutral force, and if possible converted to democracy. At least some common cause should be explored between them and other, non-religious committed democrats. They should be engaged accordingly.

In my view, however, it is risky and possibly counterproductive to engage on a theological or explicitly religious basis with U.S. government support. First of all, we have our own Constitutional principles to consider. Second, precisely because religion is so personal and often so deeply felt, it is precarious for an official U.S. government supported effort to engage on these issues. The U.S. must distinguish its model from French laicite (radical separationism) that banishes religion from public life.

The most promising avenue for U.S. engagement on religion in its democracy promotion efforts is firm, consistent support for the ideational and social conditions of democracy—human rights and civil liberties. More specifically, U.S. policy has been inconsistent and uncoordinated when it comes to the issue of religious and related freedoms (speech, press, assembly, etc.); you simply cannot have liberal democracy—nor thrive politically and economically over the long run—without such freedoms. Rather than trying to assert influence over political theologies—which is a difficult and controversial proposition—the U.S. government will be more successful in generating long-term respect and dialogue on contested issues (such as “popular sovereignty” and the political rights of religious minorities in some Muslim countries) by calling upon and deploying its rich religious capital: religious American citizens, track-two diplomacy, international exchange of faith leaders, the expertise of our academies and think-tanks, etc.

**Eric Patterson**

Most developing countries around the world have significant numbers of religious citizens and religious communities. First and foremost, U.S. policy should treat such citizens and their collectives on a level-playing field: U.S. policy should not actively discriminate against religious people and their organizations, such as by denying them humanitarian or development funding because of their religious character. Second, U.S. public diplomacy should highlight the religious freedom and diversity characteristic of contemporary American society: there is no fusion of a state religion with central political authority in the U.S., however, religious citizens, faith groups, religiously-inspired ideas, and people of no faith are all free to discourse and compete in America’s public sphere. The U.S. must distinguish its model from French laicite (radical separationism) that banishes religion from public life.

In my view, however, it is risky and possibly counterproductive to engage on a theological or explicitly religious basis with U.S. government support. First of all, we have our own Constitutional principles to consider. Second, precisely because religion is so personal and often so deeply felt, it is precarious for an official U.S. government supported effort to engage on these issues. The U.S. democracy promoters could easily look like official missionaries, and the efforts could easily look like a U.S. government effort at religious conversion. For those reasons, U.S.-sponsored individuals could engage on theology and even encourage “liberal political” theologies, but it would be a tricky and sensitive venture. At the least, the invitation to do so should come from the local religious adherents independently or through mutual agreement. Better, perhaps, would be to engage on the liberal principles which underlie the liberal political theologies and to do so outside of a specifically
Have U.S. democracy programs in the past tended to ignore religious ideas, actors and communities? If so, why? How has this tendency affected our policies?

Gerald Hyman

Democracy assistance programs have perhaps not so much ignored religious ideas, actors, or communities as they have been sensitive about how to approach them…perhaps more sensitive than they need to have been. The issues on the U.S. side are partly philosophical and legal, and partly tactical, and on the recipients side they are touchy…Most probably this issue arises from concern not about religious ideas, actors, and communities in general, but rather about Muslim ideas, actors and communities. (It was no where near so much in evidence before September 11.) In the current geopolitical context, those are the very believers most suspicious of U.S. motives, actors and interests, and most likely to believe that religious engagement by the U.S. is patronizing or instrumental or aimed at religious conversion or domination…Their wariness, even mistrust, is more acute now than perhaps it was at certain times in the past, in part because of Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. policies, however, are not framed in religious but in philosophical, organizational, and procedural terms, although the issue of freedom of religion and the separation between religion and the state is likely to strike many Muslims as wrong-headed, aimed at disempowering them, and at creating a secular society through the guise of democratization.

One issue, not much discussed, is the status of a democracy in a country self-defined in religious terms. It is often said by democracy promoters that democracies need not be organized or look like American or European democracies, yet implicitly most democracy assistance assumes either a separation of religion and the state, and/or a less religious society. It would be quite instructive to explore this dimension more fully.

Thomas Melia

While I have observed a certain hesitation on the part especially of U.S. government officials, who sometimes fret about whether this or that engagement or activity will somehow run afoul of what they understand to be constitutional strictures against too close an involvement with religious establishments, I think the concern implicit in the question is a bit overdrawn. Certainly, any political organizer worth his or her stripes knows that a political party or candidate or a civic mobilization effort probably benefits from considering how best to align one’s cause with the religious inclinations of the community and how to enlist religious leaders in support of the effort at hand…Moreover, those human rights and advocacy groups that are removed from U.S. government sensibilities by dint of the fact they are privately funded would rarely consider the religiosity of a partner or citizen to be factor in any way. Just look at the statements and petitions that are presented frequently in the press and in missives to Congress and to the president and so on, on behalf of religious minorities or in defense of religious expression. But I take the question to be directed mainly...
towards official U.S. efforts, and there I would say the record is decidedly mixed, though I do not have a basis to quantify the matter.

Eric Patterson

Much of the world is religious, but the U.S. government has tended to focus on state-to-state relationships first and this has been exacerbated by a secularist worldview among many that is often blind to the cultural and religious vibrancy of foreign societies or wary of engaging religious actors due to Establishment Clause concerns. Nonetheless, our best diplomats realize the need to engage not only those in government, but as many of the legitimate (those with authentic, wide-spread authority in their communities) social actors in a society as well. For example, Ronald Reagan’s last ambassador to South Africa visited churches and faith leaders of all stripes in order to demonstrate U.S. commitment against apartheid.

A major problem of U.S. democracy promotion activities is their lack of strategic coherence. In other words, the Bush Administration and now the Obama Administration have not connected the various tactics of democracy promotion—which President Obama calls support for “sustainable democracy”—into a meaningful grand strategy. This disconnectedness can be seen in at least two areas. The first is the disjointed nature of the ideational argument: Bush and Obama’s describe political liberty and democratic structures, but say little about other features such as religious liberty or private property, privileging certain elements of liberty (e.g. voting) over others (e.g. religious freedom). Second, government actors engaged in these issues are scattered across multiple bureaus and agencies with little interaction. A good example of this was the complete disconnect between Bush’s Freedom Agenda and the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (with its own State Department Office and an independent Commission on International Religious Freedom. More generally, President Obama should re-tool U.S. democracy promotion policy by explicitly defining how its constituent policies (e.g. human rights, private property, free trade, and religious freedom) relate to and reinforce one another.

Should U.S.-funded programs administered by groups such as NED, NDI, IRI, State and USAID focus more than they do on religious actors?

Eric Patterson

Most developing countries around the world have significant numbers of religious citizens and religious communities. First and foremost, U.S. policy should treat such citizens and their collectives on a level-playing field: U.S. policy should not actively discriminate against religious people and their organizations, such as by denying them democracy supportive funding because of their religious character. However, it may

3. I am defining legitimate as having wide-spread, authentic authority within their communities.
take more work for the NED, USAID, and their associates to engage religious actors appropriately because of the limited religious and cultural awareness of the Americans managing such programming. Such work, though, may be a particularly rich long-term investment in engaging the widest possible set of non-governmental actors, religious and non-religious, in supporting civil liberties and representative government.

**Thomas Melia**

I think for a better, fuller discussion of this matter, I would want to review a good report about the degree to which the principal American programs in democracy support do, in fact, engage with religious communities and religious leaders...[but] As far as I know, such a good report does not yet exist. I suspect one of the findings would be that American democracy promoters actually do engage more frequently with religious organizations, and religious leaders, than one would expect. I know that in many countries, indigenous election monitoring enterprises often include religious communities among the constituent parts of civil society from which volunteer monitors and organizers are recruited—and I also know that support for such efforts is a regular feature of U.S. assistance to electoral processes in many parts of the world.

For instance, I know that the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs does, in fact, engage directly with the major religious parties in the Middle East (where this question is fraught with controversy) when those parties also fulfill NDI’s other criteria for partners. Those criteria include political significance, democratic inclination, a commitment to non-violence, and so on. I suspect the record of the International Republican Institute is not very different.

This is a discussion that would be enhanced by a systematic and independent survey of activity, including funding decisions, but not restricted to funding. It should include a review of the ways that religious leaders, and adherents, are included in a broad range of activities—from diplomatic events (receptions and dinners) to exchange programs to scholarships and also formal inclusion in programs labeled as “democracy promotion.”

**Gerald Hyman**

As noted above, the NED, NDI, IRI and other so-called democracy promotion organizations should focus primarily on what is likely to advance the cause of democracy most successfully. To the extent that engaging religious actors enhances the likely prospects for democratization and is consistent with their/our own principles, they should take those opportunities but with the caveats noted above. To repeat, this is partly a matter of principles and partly a matter of practical strategies and tactics. The latter should not be confused with the former and vice versa.
Thinking About Islam and Democracy

A liberal Islamic political theology might be defined as principles for political action that are grounded in the sacred sources of Islam and that support the foundations of stable liberal democracy. Those foundations include, inter alia, equality under the law for women, non-Muslim individuals and religious groups, minority Muslim individuals and religious groups, and Muslim and non-Muslim religious dissidents. Those foundations would also include the rights of all citizens and religious groups, majority and minority, to present their religious truth claims publicly in an attempt to persuade others to accept their claims and join their religious groups. They would include the rights of individuals to change their religious beliefs and affiliations without restriction by civil or criminal law, and without coercion from any human agent. Finally, the foundations of stable liberal democracy include the rights of religious actors, whether individual or collective, to enter the public square with religion-based arguments about justice and the common good on the same basis as non religious actors and arguments. What are the central theological resources present in Islam that might yield a liberal Islamic political theology so defined?

Jennifer Bryson

While I generally concur that the foundations outlined in this definition comprise the core components for liberal political frameworks, I believe it would be more fruitful to speak in the plural of “liberal Islamic political theologies” than of a single “liberal Islamic political theology”. Inherent in “liberal” is recognition that pure, absolute, set-in-stone answers about how to structure society can be elusive. “Liberal” implies recognition of complexity, and with it an openness to seeking truth and allowing others of different perspective to participate also in seeking and trying to define truth, and its implications for society, publicly.

A key error by the U.S. in ideological battles of recent decades has been seeking abolition of one totalitarian system by means of supporting another totalitarian system, e.g. challenging Soviet communism in the 1980’s by supporting the Islamist uprising against the U.S.S.R.’s invasion of Afghanistan. Instead of gambling on what at any given instant may appear to be the lesser of two evils, trading one totalitarianism for another, we should instead challenge totalitarianism itself.

What we need today to challenge Islamist fundamentalism, some strains of which promote totalitarian political ideologies, is not yet one more rigid, singular ideology, but rather valuing and protecting fair access to the “public square” and affirmation of the primacy of rational argumentation, not violence, as the mechanism of public engagement. This needs to be coupled with strong, consistent affirmation of universal individual
human dignity and shared human interest in seeking common good.

As for resources within Islam to form liberal political theologies, examples from the Quran, the Hadith, and history are too numerous to enumerate here. To provide just brief examples, Quran verse 2:256 establishes a foundation for religious freedom in asserting, “Let there be no compulsion in religion.” Also, the Abyssinian period in the early history of Islam, when a group of Muhammad’s early followers left the Arabian Peninsula and went to live in mostly Christian Abyssinia under a Christian-led government, and then chose to remain there and lived peacefully as a religious minority, is an example of the intersection of Islam and peaceful pluralism.

Hassan Abbas

For Muslim states, modern democracy is a borrowed concept. Muslims are not inherently anti-democracy for any religious or theological reasons. The growth of democracy is primarily a matter of time—as Muslim states will have to go through the process to establish, sustain and nurture democratic institutions that are congenial to their circumstances, religious needs and environment. A ‘liberal Islamic political thought process’ is a complicated but creative way to frame the issue—as such a process will inevitably lead to strengthening of democratic ideals. The basic ingredients for such a transformation are already present in many Muslim societies. After all, countries like Turkey, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan, to name a few, opted for democratic models. There were clearly prevalent conceptual and ideological resources that inspired these societies to strive for democracy—especially in the face of military dictatorships and autocracy.

The Quran, the holy text of Islam, does not prescribe any specific system of government for Muslims, leaving it to them to craft one according to their needs and aspirations. However, it clearly provides goals and ideals of governance—a) establishing a system of justice, b) provision of security for the people, c) consultation (and even consensus building) on important matters, and most importantly, d) use of Ijtihad—the exercise of independent and rational judgment. One can strongly argue that these religious principles of governance can best be achieved through democracy. Moreover, there is nothing in Koran or Hadith that even indirectly supports the idea of monarchy or autocracy.

Emile Nakhleh

There is no one single Islamic political theology, liberal or otherwise; the Muslim world is highly diverse and complex, and Muslim theological discourse and theories have evolved over the centuries in different contexts—historical, geographic, cultural, and sectarian. The diversity of theological theory-building by Muslim theologians and scholars of religious sociology, both in Muslim majority or Muslim minority countries within the doctrinal confines of Sunni Islam and Shia Islam, make it very difficult to identify specific components of a liberal Islamic political theology or to specify central theological resources that would enjoy the support of most recognized Muslim theologians, currently or from
previous centuries. Although I generally agree with the definition given as a tee-up to this session, I think the definition is grounded in a secular understanding of democracy that would be difficult to implement in a religious context regardless of which monotheistic religion is being discussed. A discussion of Islam and democracy usually suffers from a three-fold problem. First, there is no separation in classical Islam between the faith and other facets of a Muslim's life; to many Muslims, Islam is a total way of life covering faith (Din), society (Dunya), and the state (Dawla)—the so-called three D's. Second, while classical Islamic political theory might not be inimical to notions of democracy, Muslim dictators and autocrats are. Some of these autocratic rulers publicly endorse the concept of justice and participation in decision making in the context of consultation (shura), allegiance (bay’a), and consensus (ijma’), but proceed to violate the most elementary practices of democracy in the name of preserving domestic civil peace and avoiding dissention (fitna). Third, Islam's classical political theory developed in the context of Muslim majority countries and regions where Islam was the dominant religion, culture, and historical narrative and the definer of a Muslim's connection to the larger community (umma). A democratic political theology that allows for equality under the law for men and women developed in a Muslim majority community, which was classically considered “Dar al-Islam” (abode of peace). Non-Muslims—for example, Christians and Jews—were protected minorities (dhimmis) and afforded social, economic, and cultural freedoms, but not political opportunities to participate in the affairs of state. Only Muslims in a Muslim umma could participate in the governance of that political community. The protection extended to dhimmis depended on the benevolence of the ruler and the ruling elites, who primarily were Sunni Muslims. Democratic practices, limited as they were for the whole population, did not extend to non-Muslims or even to Shia in a Sunni ruled state.

*What are the barriers within Islamic theology, history and current sociology that might inhibit the development of such a political theology?*

**Hassan Abbas**

[Some barriers include] gradual degeneration of religious political thought—partly as a consequence of deterioration of madrassa education system (which has largely become dogmatic, narrow minded and regressive). According to various studies, 10 to 20 percent of madrasas in the Muslim world are involved in propagating divisive, parochial and extremist views. Without reform of Madrassa education, little change is expected. The Madrassa institution historically produced a number of scholars of the highest intellectual caliber, including Al Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Muhyiddin Ibne Arabi, Jabir ibn Hayan (Geber), Alhazen (ibn al Haitham) and Al Farabi, to name a few. But that was long ago and the present situation (except some exceptions associated with institutions like Al-Azhar University and Najaf Seminary) is anything to be particularly proud of for Muslims. Second, the rise of clergy or priesthood, which has no formal place in Islam, also exacerbated this crisis.
The clergy has developed an agenda of its own over the centuries claiming exclusive right to interpret religious ideals and texts. The state of affairs is comparable to the role that Church assumed in the 16th and 17th century Europe for example. Entrenched sectarianism, both in its political and theological dimensions (especially the Shia-Sunni conflict) and the distortion of Islam’s ‘laws of war’ has given rise to violence in the name of religion. Political use and abuse of ‘religious injunctions’—for instance, extremists’ notion that Muslims have an individual obligation/responsibility to defend and pursue Islamic causes through force, has muddied the waters significantly. Finally, the low literacy rate in Muslim states is also relevant here (see the UNDP Arab Human Development Report and the Arab Knowledge Report 2009) as is the related lack of freedom for research, expression and political organization in many Muslim states.

Abdullahi An-Na’im

I think the problem that we may have with democratization…is a question of time frame, it’s a question of institutions—not the lack of desire for it. People in fact sacrifice and risk a lot in terms of their own personal safety and their family’s wellbeing to stand for these issues and causes. It is not for the lack of political will among people. It is understanding, then the post-colonial nature of the struggle: it’s very much fundamentally a question about underdevelopment, political instability, poverty, and lack of education. Those are the issues, the real issues.

Emile Nakhleh

The resources that might yield a liberal Islamic political ideology are diverse and difficult to pinpoint. They consist of classical sacred text (Koran and Hadith), the different interpretations of such texts by theologians and community political leaders, and the practices of rulers and religious leaders. In Shia Islam, the resources primarily include rulings and treatises of Grand Ayatollahs in Shia seminaries and Hawzas—in Qom, Najaf, Karbala, and elsewhere. The interpretation offered by a particular Grand Ayatollah, who is considered a source of emulation (marja’) because of his learning and theological achievements, is accepted by his followers without debate or questioning. When Grand Ayatollah Khomeini established the rule by jurisprudent (velayat-e faqih) in Iran in 1979 as the cornerstone of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he faced no significant opposition from the Shia community. Only now, especially since the brutal suppression of the opposition by the clerical regime following the June 2009 elections that the anti-velayat-e faqih arguments are becoming vocal in Qom, Najaf, Karbala, and elsewhere. The interpretation offered by a particular Grand Ayatollah, who is considered a source of emulation (marja’) because of his learning and theological achievements, is accepted by his followers without debate or questioning. When Grand Ayatollah Khomeini established the rule by jurisprudent (velayat-e faqih) in Iran in 1979 as the cornerstone of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he faced no significant opposition from the Shia community. Only now, especially since the brutal suppression of the opposition by the clerical regime following the June 2009 elections that the anti-velayat-e faqih arguments are becoming vocal in Qom, Najaf, Karbala, and elsewhere. In fact, a prominent Grand Ayatollah in Qom has argued recently that the velayat-e faqih system is undemocratic and anti-Islamic and should be abolished. The complexity and diversity of Islam as a religion and a body of the faithful and the doctrinal rigidity of some leading theologians constitute the main obstacle to the development of an Islamic liberal ideology. Although the doors of ijtihad closed with the establishment of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence (Shafi’i, Maliki, Hanafi, and Hanbali) almost thousand years back, there are signs of new...
thinking advocated by creative Muslim thinkers regarding Islamic theology and the human condition in modern societies; however, much of this thinking is found outside the Muslim heartland—in Europe, the United States, and Southeast Asia.

It should be noted that Islam supports the right of religious actors to enter the public sphere with religion-based arguments about justice and the common good; however, such practice varies from one country to the next and from one historical period to another. Religion-based politics in Indonesia, for example, operates much more freely than in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, religion-based political arguments compete in the public sphere relatively openly in Muslim minority countries. Furthermore, religious-nationalist arguments tend to be more vocal and more acceptable within a particular country than abstract religious arguments regarding democracy and political participation. Once elected to national legislatures, Islamic political parties—including those advocating Islamic law (Sharia)—to focus on pragmatic, bread and butter issues and engage in political compromises tend and the contestation of political values with other political parties regardless of their religious affiliation. In this regard, it would be more appropriate to replace “theology” with “ideology” when we talk about Islamic politics.

Jennifer Bryson

The barriers to development of liberal political theologies are not in Islamic theology per se. I see instead two other barriers which are more formidable. First, fear of free and open discussion blocks access to robust exploration of Islamic theology and history. This is particularly prevalent in Muslim majority communities governed by authoritarian, or even dictatorial, regimes. Second, confused conflation of cultural identity with faith draws attention away from faith toward political and other non-religious issues; this confusion in turn muddies the discussion of these issues, obscuring the emergence of viable progressive, constructive visions for the future of Muslim engagement in increasingly pluralistic, globalized modern societies.

To what extent can and should the United States, in its democracy policies and programs and in its international religious freedom policy, attempt to encourage the development of an Islamic liberal political theology?

Hassan Abbas

The U.S. should tread very carefully in this domain as well meaning and sincere effort in this direction can also be misinterpreted. President Obama’s Cairo speech and his address to students in Turkey provided a new and useful model for the U.S. engagement with the Muslim world. His emphasis on need for mutual respect and trust building was largely hailed by various Muslim communities. The real issue is not only about supporting progressive and liberal elements in the Muslim communities around the world but also about the U.S. support for autocratic and authoritarian regimes in many Muslim states. The following issues are worth considering in this context.
First, U.S. policy, in whatever way it is framed, should be clear and consistent. Contradictory approaches create distrust and suspicion. Second, the U.S. should avoid getting into sectarian politics within the Muslim world. Third, Muslim reformists and liberal intellectuals, who are considered credible and authentic within the Muslim societies, irrespective of their political leanings (pro-Western or not), should be supported. Fourth, U.S. funds and aid should be geared towards support and reform of public education systems in Muslim states as that would naturally counter the space being consumed by conservative and extremist religious centers. Fifth, there is an urgent need to encourage expansion of progressive and liberal publishing houses in Muslim states. For instance, there is a dearth of progressive publishers in Pakistan currently, whereas conservative and extremist writers (religious as well as political) have many avenues to get their works published. Oxford University Press is doing a phenomenal job in Pakistan in this context, but more such avenues are needed desperately.

**Abdullahi An-Na’im**

The nature of democracy is such that it cannot be [solely] promoted from without. It has to be home-grown, it has to be nurtured—built over time. There are no shortcuts… Change has to come to the Muslim world from within; it cannot come from without.

**Emile Nakhleh**

The United States should be interested in the debate within Islam about the future development of a liberal political ideology, but it lacks the credibility and expertise to enter the debate. Washington’s international religious freedom policy should be part and parcel of the total pursuit of the national interest of the United States. The United States should endeavor to empower religious communities in different countries through engagement to move them toward more tolerance of different religious and political views and a commitment to resolve their religious differences through dialogue. The challenge of course is how to reconcile our religious freedom policy with other human rights, including women’s rights, and national interest considerations. Our policy should attempt to convince single-religion majority countries to open up the public sphere to other religions, taking into consideration the realities of different countries and the depth of the interest-driven bilateral relations the United States has with those countries. The development of a liberal Islamic political ideology, as we have seen in Indonesia and Turkey, must come from within those countries. We can nudge them through engaging religious groups and civil society institutions, but the United States cannot realistically dictate such a course of action.

**Jennifer Bryson**

The best way for the United States to facilitate development of an Islamic liberal political theology is, precisely, not to attempt to encourage one. The approach we need to implement is affirmation and protection of peaceful pluralism and spreading a “do unto others as you would have done unto you” culture of religious freedom.
One of the greatest bottlenecks blocking development of an Islamic liberal political theology over the past few decades has been efforts by governments to place bets on one set of Islamic ideologues over another. Prime examples of this include Saudi government’s hyperactive promotion of Wahabbism and attempts by the Egyptian government to pacify the Muslim Brotherhood by giving their sympathizers, who might join the Muslim Brotherhood and rebel against the government of Egypt, nearly free reign in religious institutions.

Betting on one relatively liberal set of ideas over another is dangerously short-sighted. While the Islamic fundamentalists who currently have control of Al-Azhar in Egypt may be relatively preferable to Saudi Wahabbis, endorsing the former blocks opportunities for those who are even more liberal. This is currently the situation in which the Egyptian government, via Al-Azhar, blocks publication of works such as Muhammad Futuh’s book *Modern Clerics and the Industry of Religious Extremism* which vigorously articulates support for teaching critical thinking in public education, separating religion from government, and the like…

In consideration of this, the United States should create and protect space in which free and open discussion among Muslims, and between Muslims and non-Muslims, can happen. The United States should support efforts—freedom of religion, freedom of speech—which give primacy to civil articulation and exchange of viewpoints as the preferred mechanism (as opposed to intimidation, imprisonment, and violence) to disagree.

What recommendations would you make to the Obama administration with respect to its democracy and international religious freedom policies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and Iran?

**Jennifer Bryson**

Take religious freedom and constitutional democracy seriously as not only moral but also strategic imperatives. Put more emphasis on constitutions and helping populations understand that democracy is not just about winner-takes-all elections. Support religious freedom in majority communities; of course, protect religious minorities, but do not limit religious freedom promotion to protection of minorities. So, for example, support the religious freedom of Sunni reformers in Egypt to challenge, without facing censorship and even imprisonment, the monopoly of religious institutions controlled by the Mubarak government…Be cognizant of the sentiments of foreign populations, not just the policies and wishes of foreign governments. Recognize that the term “democracy” bears much baggage in some regions, resulting in widespread misunderstandings about what democracy even is. In such areas, devote resources, such as expanded public diplomacy, to explain what democracy is…Don’t confuse promoting the US with promoting democracy. Fostering good governance in foreign populations is more important to our national interests than how much they love us. Re-develop and leverage America’s once-upon-a-time robust, effective public diplomacy mechanisms to facilitate expansion of democracy and religious freedom in foreign populations.
Hassan Abbas

The U.S. has clearly more responsibility as well as room to maneuver constructively in those Muslim states which are recipient of large amounts of U.S. funds. Hence, the U.S. can do much more in Egypt and Afghanistan for democracy, pluralism and freedom than in Iran and Saudi Arabia for instance. For instance, U.S. support for democratic institutions in Pakistan should be the cornerstone of its “Af-Pak” policy. The perception in Pakistan that the U.S. attempts to micro-manage Pakistani affairs should be dispelled. There is a widespread view in Pakistan that its military dictators were always aided by the U.S. in the past. While it is expedient for the U.S. to engage all power centers in Pakistan, it must be recognized that civilian authority in Pakistan will be strengthened when the U.S. government also directs all its communications and links with the country through democratic leadership and institutions. In Afghanistan, Any U.S. military ‘surge’ should be coupled with more push for transparency and accountability in Afghanistan’s power corridors. U.S. leverage in the country should be utilized for more democratization of the state and supremacy of the Afghan constitution. Similarly, in Iraq the U.S. should abide by its withdrawal schedule irrespective of election results in January 2010. Democratic traditions take years (and often decades) to nurture and flourish. U.S. has done its best by removing an oppressor from the scene (though not without a human cost—both American and Iraqi) and it should now be left to Iraqis to refine their constitutional set-up, resolve ethnic differences and defeat sectarianism.

For Iran, dialogue to resolve differences amicably, through official as well as unofficial/back channel diplomacy routes, must continue. Opening up of diplomatic relations with Iran will open up more avenues for engagement and reformist forces will be surely empowered as a consequence. With regards to Egypt, U.S. support for political reforms should not be compromised on any pretext. The U.S. must continue to push for religious freedom, women’s rights, and the rule of law in Egypt as improvement in these areas will hopefully create a more fertile base for a potential democratic transition in Egypt in coming years.

Emile Nakhleh

Through quiet diplomacy and US law, the United States can use its leverage to nudge countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, and Iran to become more tolerant of other religions and religious minorities in their midst. Force—including the presence of thousands of American troops—the threat of regime change or sanctions will not force other countries to change their religion-based politics. Domestic and foreign public opinion will play over time a transformative role in effecting such a change in those countries. Together with appointing a distinguished America Muslim as ambassador to the OIC, the United States should appoint another distinguished American as ambassador for international religious freedom who would be empowered to raise the issue of religious freedom in international forums whenever the opportunity arises. The most critical challenge seems to be first over definitions and second over practice. It is doubtful whether many Muslim countries will accept the definition of a stable “Islamic political liberal democracy” that is presented as tee-up to this session. If that is the case, the first order of business should be to hone the definition in such a way as to make the practice a bit more palatable to some of these Muslim majority countries. As President Barack Obama said in Cairo in June 2009 and as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in Morocco in November, the United States makes a distinction between the minority of Muslims who support extremism and the vast majorities who do not. Accordingly, the Obama administration is committed to engaging Muslim communities on issues that would empower individual Muslims to lead a better life. Such engagement would apply to education, science and technology, economic opportunity, health, clean water and energy, and human rights, including women’s rights.
Biographies

Hassan Abbas is a Bernard Schwartz Fellow at the Asia Society, where he concentrates on U.S. relations with South and Central Asia. He is also a Senior Advisor at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, after having been a Research Fellow at the Belfer Center from 2005 to August 2009. Dr. Abbas is a former Pakistani government official who served in the administrations of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and President Pervez Musharraf. His latest book, *Pakistani's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army and America's War on Terror*, has been on bestseller lists in India and Pakistan and was widely reviewed internationally. His forthcoming book is *Letters to Young Muslims on Science, Sovereignty and Sufis*.

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im is a Visiting Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown Law, and a Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for the fall 2009 semester. He is on leave from his position as Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law at Emory University, where he focuses on cross-cultural human rights issues, with an emphasis on Islam. A native of Sudan and human rights activist, An-Na’im places the Qur’an and the development of the Islamic tradition in its historical context and examines their implications for our contemporary thinking about justice and the state. He is the author of Toward an Islamic Reformation (1990), African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam (2006), and Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari’a (2008). At Emory, he directs projects on Women and Land in Africa and Islamic Family Law, and a Fellowship Program in Islam and Human Rights. An-Na’im holds LL.B. degrees from the University of Khartoum and the University of Cambridge, and earned his Ph.D. in Law from the University of Edinburgh.

José María Aznar is the former Prime Minister of Spain, a position he held from 1996–2004. Today he is the President of FAES (Foundation for Social Studies and Analysis), and Chairman of Partido Popular and the Christian Democrat and People’s Parties International (CDI). Aznar has written several books, including: Libertad y Solidaridad (“Freedom and Solidarity”), España: la segunda transición (“Spain: The Second Transition”), La España en que yo creo (“The Spain I Believe In”) and Ocho años de Gobierno (“Eight Years of Government”). One of José María Aznar’s main concerns is the war against terrorism. He favors firm anti-terror policies and believes in fostering international cooperation among democratic countries. He is a strong supporter of a close Spanish-American relationship and believes that the European Union must strengthen its commitment to promoting greater freedom and economic reform.

Daniel Brumberg is an Associate Professor in the Department of Government at Georgetown University and Acting Director of the United States Institute of Peace’s Muslim World Initiative in the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. He primarily focuses on issues of democratization and political reform in the Middle East and wider Islamic world. He is the author of many articles on political and social change in the Middle East and Islamic world, and *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran*. He lived and studied in Egypt, and has conducted field research in Iran, Indonesia and Kuwait.
Jennifer Bryson is Director of the Islam and Civil Society Project at the Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, New Jersey and a contributor to ThePublicDiscourse.com. She previously worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in Support of Public Diplomacy, where she was the lead Action Officer for counteracting ideological support to terrorism. After September 11th, she worked in Public Diplomacy at the U.S. embassies in Egypt and Yemen and then managed a counter-terrorism research team for Department of Defense. Her research interests include creative and non-fiction media of progressive Muslims, Islamic theology and pluralism, as well as Islam and religious freedom. She holds a Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Yale University.

Jean Bethke Elshtain is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago, and the Dorothy and Thomas Leavey Chair in the Foundations of American Freedom and Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University. The author or editor of over twenty books, her most recent is her Gifford Lectures, published as Sovereignty: God, State, and Self, by Basic Books last year. Professor Elshtain also contributes regularly to journals of civic opinion and lectures widely in the United States and abroad. For four years, she has been part of an ongoing dialogue between Muslim Middle Eastern scholars and American scholars.

Thomas F. Farr, a former American diplomat, is Visiting Associate Professor of Religion and International Affairs at Georgetown's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is also Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, where he directs the Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy Program. A leading authority on international religious freedom, Farr has published widely, including “Diplomacy in an Age of Faith” in Foreign Affairs, and World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty is Vital to American National Security.

Brian J. Grim is a Senior Researcher on religion and world affairs at the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life. Dr. Grim is also the co-manager of the international religious demography project at Boston University’s Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs (CURA). There he co-edits the World Religion Database, which is published by Brill. He is a leading expert on the measurement of government restrictions on religion and religious hostilities in societies. His article on the causes of religious persecution around the world (with Roger Finke) received the distinguished article of the year award from the American Sociological Association’s Sociology of Religion section in 2009. Dr. Grim has extensive overseas experience. From 1982–2002, he lived and worked as an educator, researcher and development coordinator in China, the former USSR, Central Asia, Europe, Malta and the Middle East.

Allen Hertzke is the University of Oklahoma Guest Scholar at the Brookings Institution and the Director of Religious Studies at the University of Oklahoma. He has written extensively on religious advocacy in politics, and in particular faith-motivated activism in foreign policy. He is the author of Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights, which describes the movement behind the International Religious Freedom Act and the struggle for its passage. He is the co-author of Religion and Politics in America, and author of Representing God in Washington.

Gerald F. Hyman is a Senior Adviser and President of the Hills Program on Governance at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He provides assistance to the Hills-affiliated network of centers in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, manages the Hills Program in the United States, and conducts his own research on democracy and governance. He is also a member of the Advisory Council to the Center for International Media Assistance of the National Endowment for Democracy. He served with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) from 1990 to 2007 and was Director of its Office of Democracy and Governance from 2002 to 2007. Prior to joining USAID, he practiced law in Washington, D.C., with Covington & Burling. Between 1970 and 1982, Hyman taught in the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology at Smith College. He is the author, most recently, of A Cabinet-level Development Agency: Right Problem, Wrong Solution.
Ms. Marshall directs the think tank’s DeVolos Center for Religion and Civil Society and manages familyfacts.org, an online catalog of social science research relating to family and religious practice. She also works with other analysts to explore how moral values and civil society relate to issues like the size and function of government, health care, and foreign policy. Ms. Marshall is the co-author (with Thomas Farr) of “Public Diplomacy in an Age of Faith,” a chapter in Philip Seib’s forthcoming book, American Public Diplomacy: Reinventing U.S. Foreign Policy.

Thomas O. Melia has been Deputy Executive Director of Freedom House since May 2005. He was previously Director of Research at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, and Adjunct Professor in the School of Foreign Service, at Georgetown University, where he continues to teach graduate courses about democracy promotion. For more than a dozen years, Melia held senior posts at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a leading non-governmental organization engaged in the promotion of democracy worldwide.

Harris Mylonas is Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. His research focuses on the processes of nation- and state-building, immigrant and refugee incorporation policies, and the politicization of cultural differences. For the 2008–09 academic year, he was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, where he worked on a book manuscript entitled Making Nations: The International Politics of Assimilation, Accommodation, and Exclusion.

Emile Nakhleh was a Senior Intelligence Service Officer and Director of the Political Islam Strategic Analysis Program before retiring from the Central Intelligence Agency in 2006. Previously he was Chief of the Regional Analysis Unit in the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, where he also served as Senior Analyst and Scholar-in-Residence since September 1993. Prior to joining the CIA, Dr. Nakhleh was a professor at Mount St. Mary’s University. He is the author of numerous books, including A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America’s Relations with the Muslim World; Bahrain: Political Development in a Modernizing Society; The Gulf Cooperation Council: Policies, Problems, and Prospects; and The Persian Gulf and American Policy.

Eric Patterson is Assistant Director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and has a visiting appointment in the Department of Government. He previously served as a White House Fellow and a Foster Fellow at the Department of State. His research and teaching focuses on religion and politics, ethics and international affairs, and just war theory in the context of contemporary conflict. He is the author or editor of six books, including Debating the War of Ideas (with John Gallagher), Just War Thinking: Morality and Pragmatism in the Struggle Against Contemporary Threats, and Christianity and Power Politics Today.

Daniel Philpott is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and in the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. His current work focuses on the role of religion in world politics and on the ethics of political reconciliation. He is author of Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations, and editor of The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice. He has also published on religious freedom in American foreign policy and world affairs. He has pursued an activist dimension of his intellectual work by working for reconciliation in Kashmir through the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy and Burundi through the Catholic Peacebuilding Network.

Timothy Samuel Shah is a political scientist specializing in the relationship between religion and global politics. After holding senior research positions at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, he became a Senior Research Scholar with Boston University’s Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs (CURA) in 2007. He is Principal Investigator for a CURA research project on the influence of “An Emerging Evangelical Intelligentsia” on American intellectual life. This year (2009–2010) he is also among the first Joseph R. Crapa Fellows with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Recently, Shah also served as Adjunct Senior Fellow for Religion and Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations (2007–2009), where, with Walter Russell Mead, he conducted symposia, roundtables, and research on the relationship between religion and U.S. foreign policy.

Alfred C. Stepan is the Wallace S. Sayre Professor of Government at Columbia University. His teaching and research interests include comparative politics, theories
of democratic transitions, federalism, and the world’s religious systems and democracy. His acclaimed article “Religion, Democracy and the Twin Tolerations” was published in the Journal of Democracy in 2000. He has published Arguing Comparative Politics; Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe; South America and Post-Communist Europe (with J. J. Linz); Politics, Society, and Democracy: Comparative Studies (edited with H. E. Chebabi); Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone; The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes (edited with J.J. Linz); The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective; The Military on Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil. Stepan has also taught at Yale and All Souls College, Oxford.
About the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs

Religion is a critical but neglected factor in world affairs. The Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion and International Affairs, announced in 2005, seeks to deepen American understanding of religion as a factor in international policy issues. The Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University is the recipient of a two-year grant that funds the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs, implemented in collaboration with the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

The Luce/SFS Program focuses on two thematic areas: religion and global development and religion and U.S. Foreign Policy. Luce Foundation support enables innovative teaching, research, and outreach activities in both areas, as well as innovative publications and web-based knowledge resources.
THE EDMUND A. WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Founded in 1919 to educate students and prepare them for leadership roles in international affairs, the School of Foreign Service conducts an undergraduate program for over 1,300 students and graduate programs at the Master’s level for more than 700 students. Under the leadership of Interim Dean Carol Lancaster, the School houses more than a dozen regional and functional programs that offer courses, conduct research, host events, and contribute to the intellectual development of the field of international affairs. In 2007, a survey of faculty published in Foreign Policy ranked Georgetown University as #1 in Master’s degree programs in international relations.

THE BERKLEY CENTER

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, created within the Office of the President in March 2006, is part of a university-wide effort to build knowledge about religion’s role in world affairs and promote interreligious understanding in the service of peace. The Center explores the intersection of religion with contemporary global challenges. Through research, teaching, and outreach activities, the Berkley Center builds knowledge, promotes dialogue, and supports action in the service of peace. Thomas Banchoff, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service, is the Center’s founding director.

COUNCIL ON FAITH AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

The Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) promotes sustainable environments for religious freedom worldwide. As a faith-based organization, IGE believes firmly in universal human dignity and is committed to the protection of all faiths through the rule of law. IGE pursues this mission with a balanced approach, encouraging governments to protect religious freedom (top-down engagement) and equipping citizens to exercise that freedom responsibly (bottom-up engagement). IGE also sponsors two educational divisions focused on the role of religion in public life worldwide—the Council on Faith & International Affairs and the Global Engagement Network. IGE publishes The Review of Faith & International Affairs, which included a theme issue on U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy in 2008. The Review was generous in allowing this Report to utilize portions of many of those essays.
About The Berkley Center Religious Literacy Series

This paper is part of a series of reports that addresses the impact of religion on the foreign policies of key states around the world. These reports explore emergent issues, such as the mobilization of religious groups around foreign policy, the intersection between religion, migration, and foreign policy, and the politics of international religious freedom.

Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
301 Bunn InterCultural Center
37th & O Streets, N.W.
Washington, DC 20057
202.687.5696
http://sfs.georgetown.edu

Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs
3307 M Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20007
202.687.5119
http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu

The Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs
http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/luce-sfs

Copyright 2009, Georgetown University.