

The 21st Annual Camden Conference, FEBRUARY 22–24, 2008

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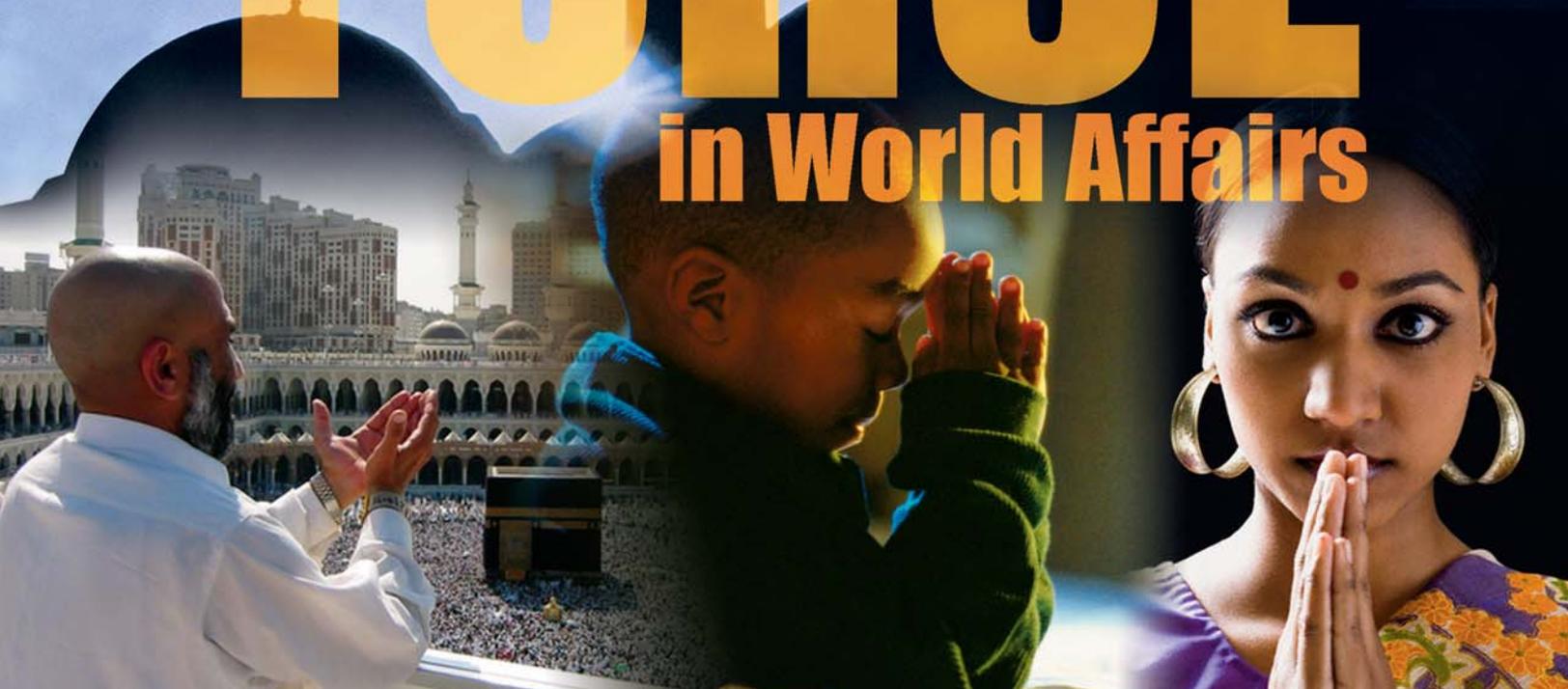
CAMDEN CONFERENCE

HIGHLIGHTS

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir
Andrew Preston
Scott Appleby
Andrew Natsios
Philip C. Wilcox Jr.
Rend Al-Rahim Franke
Ellen Laipson
Katherine Marshall
Douglas M. Johnston



RELIGION AS A FORCE in World Affairs



HIGHLIGHTS

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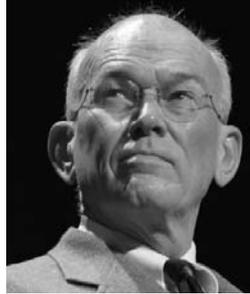
Laipson



Natsios



Francke



Wilcox

Few can doubt that in these turbulent times, religion has influenced the foreign policies of many nations.

This year's Camden Conference addressed the historical and recent interplay between religion and U.S. foreign policy; the effect of religions on the Middle East; and the role of religion in addressing global issues.

The conference, which took place February 22 through 24, 2008, presented nine speakers, each of whom addressed a topic of importance to all of us. This issue of *Highlights* distills the messages of those speakers. (*Highlights* is not a verbatim record. The conference can be viewed in its entirety on our website.) *Highlights* is designed to convey the sense of each speaker's presentation—in the speaker's own words whenever possible—and to indicate areas of agreement and disagreement. Every session, from Rev. J. Bryan Hehir's keynote address to the concluding panel discussion, is included here.

We hope *Highlights* will add to your understanding and provide you with a springboard for further discussion.

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Keynote

Religion, World Politics, and U.S. Foreign Policy

Can we find a collaboration between the secular and religious in a world of increasing complexity?

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir



Reverend J. Bryan Hehir framed his keynote address with three questions: Where have we been; where are we now; where might we go?

In recounting where we have been, Father Hehir reviewed the 400-year legacy of the Westphalian Treaty for intellectual discourse and political practice. In 1648, Westphalia effectively ended the religious wars in Central Europe during which one-third of the population had been killed. It removed religion as a legitimate *casus belli*; established the principle of territorial integrity and non-intervention of external actors in the internal affairs of sovereign states; and, implicitly, provided the foundation of secularized international relations.

“When the topic of the ‘resurgence’ of religion is raised,” he said, “there is an implication that religion has been absent and has only recently returned. This notion of absence must be qualified.” Religion has always been a part of people’s lives; resurgence refers to the ways in which religion has been understood analytically, how it has been taught, and how it has been practiced in the diplomatic world. Father Hehir noted that the perception of absence and resurgence is a function of the way foreign policy has been practiced historically. “We in the United States are so accustomed to perceiving the world through our own political model—in which religion is private, and government, secular—that we can be unable to perceive and understand models different from our own.”

The tradition of privatizing religion can be traced into the 18th century through the democratic American and French Revolutions, which preserved the personal value of religion, while proscribing its public role. Within the last sixty years, the Westphalian legacy was evident in the principle of non-intervention inherent at the founding of the United Nations. As effective as the legacy of secularized international relations

has been, in the face of recent events, and changing views of world politics, we are confronted with the necessity of reassessment.

For approximately 40 years, in events across the globe—in Central and South America, in Iran, in South Africa, in the Philippines, in Eastern Europe—there is clear evidence that religion has played a role. Each of these events has been regarded as significant in itself, but each was treated anecdotally. “As these events multiply,” said Father Hehir, “we must consider a change of perspective, moving beyond singular events to thematic interpretations. The resurgence of religion did not occur in isolation from other features of world politics.”

Since the late 1960s, he said, there have been three crucial externalities in the study of world politics:

1. The rise of transnationality, and transnational actors. “It is the comparative characteristic and advantage of transnational actors to be able to move ideas, personnel, and resources, across the borders of international politics,” said Father Hehir.

■ **Rev. J. Bryan Hehir**, Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, has also served as principal advisor on international affairs to the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference and on the faculty of Georgetown University and Harvard Divinity School where he was its executive head for three years. Hehir has been awarded honorary degrees from 25 institutions. His writings include *The Moral Measurement of War: A Tradition of Continuity and Change*; *Military Intervention and National Sovereignty*; *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World*.

2. Our collective journey from interdependence to globalization; and
3. The return of normative discourse in world politics. Religion provides one source of normative resources to address issues such as the rise of human rights, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, and questions of poverty and social justice.

“Here,” said Father Hehir, “two nodal points must be weighed. First, the publication of *The Clash of Civilizations*, by Harvard political scientist Sam Huntington, which proposed that 21st century political actors would be civilizations, rather than nation-states. It drew enormous attention, if not unanimity, and created legitimacy for analysis of the role of religion in world politics.” The second nodal point, Father Hehir said, “is September 11, 2001, the impact of which was universal in its significance. Both points force us to ask what we should do with religious claims in world politics. We are compelled to move from regarding religions’ influences on political events as anecdotal to recognizing a pattern that must be integrated into our understanding.”

Where are we now? How do we think about this dynamic interaction of war and peace, justice and equality? Father Hehir asked. “The present task is to move from the recognition of religion as a factor in international politics to the interpretation of that reality into our larger theme of understanding the world.”

What we must not do, he said, is to define religion primarily as a negative force to be defeated, banished or marginalized. Nor must we focus exclusively on Islam. And we must not define religion in the United States as exclusively the province of evangelicals.

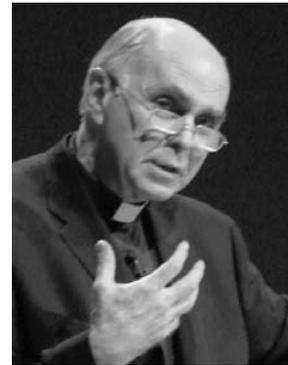
“How we put religion together with foreign policy and international relations requires a systematic assessment of the role of religion throughout the international system,” he continued. “Assessing multiple traditions, with multiple consequences of good and evil, we begin to deal with how the normative relates to the empirical dimensions of international relations. It is an interdisciplinary task in which no one commands all that is needed.”

The traditions of the world’s major religions must be regarded as a transnational force, present at every level within the international system, providing ideas, institutions, and community. But finally, he said, “It is communities of people that religion always brings to the table: people who are both believers and citizens of the time and world in which they live.”

Father Hehir then framed an additional issue for religion and foreign policy: The 1500-year-old question of the use of force and the ethics of war. There are new dimensions today: restraint and direction, as well as conflict prevention and recovery from force. What responsibilities do nations have after the war is over? Some traditions have seen only the task of refusing to participate in war, but a broader perspective, sometimes called “just war,” has argued that religious traditions ought to try to direct the use of force. This perspective

has relevance for the multiple forms of conflict we face, particularly when great powers are involved. “We must hold on to what we believe in practice,” Father Hehir said, “but in taking our model abroad, there is a necessary transition. In addition to considerations of religious freedom, we must look at a range of cognate issues, among them, religion and human rights; religion and globalization; religion and humanitarian relief. How do we address these issues and maintain the boundaries between church and state?”

“Religion poses a constitutional question for U.S. foreign policy that professionals



hesitate to address ... we must recognize the influence of religious organizations, which are often on the ground, present before governmental agencies.”

We are now at an historic moment in the tradition of the ethics of war, Father Hehir said. For an analogous example, we look back to the 15th century, to Europe’s transition to the Westphalian order. Three great figures—Francisco Vittorio in Spain, Francisco Suarez in Spain, and Hugo Grotius in Holland—had written on the question of war and were convinced that in the absence of a religious foundation, a moral foundation must be created.

In our globalized world, the empirical and the religious picture is far more complicated. The 1500-year debate on use of force has acquired new dimensions in our century, and we come again to the question of integration, said Father Hehir. With secular-religious collaboration, we must find agreement on the legitimate causes of war, and on the issue of non-combatant immunity.

At the end of World War II, before interdependence, before globalization, at the outset of the nuclear age, we had only the beginnings of a truly international system. Today, religion returns resurgent to a world of enormous empirical, religious, and moral complexity. Religion poses a constitutional question for U.S. foreign policy that professionals hesitate to address. And, as we review a range of issues in which religious perspective has been important—social safety nets, human rights, religious freedom, emergency relief, social justice, prevention of violence—we must recognize the influence of religious organizations, which are often on the ground, present before governmental agencies.

History has provided multiple responses to questions about Just War. In the 21st century, we must examine the lim-

its we set on waging war, addressing moral conflicts as well as the responsibilities of combatant nations after the war is over, questions which are made more difficult when the great powers are involved.

“And where do we go from here? Lacking a religious foundation,” said Father Hehir, “our secular states’ policies must

have a moral foundation. We must talk across the lines of religion, find nodal points and discover agreement, addressing ourselves to the root causes, meaning, and limits of terrorism. The challenge requires collaboration between the secular and religious in our world of increasing complexity.”

■ *Reported by Marsea Ryan*

Q&A

Q: Could you comment on the new attempt by President Sarkozy to revive Catholicism? Do you think he’s trying to strengthen the social fiber of Europe? Do you think he reflects this larger concept of the return of religion? Does he conceive it as a possible barrier to aggressive Islamism in Europe?

Hehir: Of course there’s been quite a vigorous debate across Europe over the last five or six years regarding this question. In the wider European context, my guess is that an absolutism trying to exclude religion will run into more resistance now than it did within the past five to eight years.

Europe has had a vibrant religious history, and I believe it ought to find some reflection in its definition of what that is today. That remains unsettled.

I am no expert on the president of France. That said, in France, there’s a very particular tradition that is a distinctive form of a secular society. I’m not positive that Sarkozy saw a need to reenergize the society by introducing religious themes. I suspect that would be a very hard sell in France.

Q: What role should religion play in the use of torture of captives?

Hehir: The “Just War Tradition” has been broad enough to encompass some uses of force as morally acceptable. Indeed, the tradition says that some use of force is morally obligatory; for example, to stop genocide. While that tradition has been broad and flexible, there are two absolute principles in the ethic of force.

One: the direct and intentional killing of noncombatants is always wrong and no exceptions are permitted. Two: torture is always wrong because of what it does to the dignity of the human being. It is not to be permitted legally or morally. The other point to make is as ancient as the ethic. At the foundation of this ethic stands St. Augustine, in 5th century Rome. Augustine said about war: The worst thing that happens in war is not that people get killed, as bad as that is. The worst thing that happens in war is what happens to the people who are in the midst of it.

That quote is very relevant for torture. The damage is not only to those who are tortured but also to the dignity of the person conducting the torture. That’s why law and policy should protect the people of our military and our government from having to carry out torture. That is the function of policy: to set limits on what people must do in difficult situations.

Q: You addressed many incidents where policy analysts might have noticed and considered the significance of religion in politics. Examples include the Iranian revolution; Latin American resistance to dictatorship; South African resistance to apartheid; Christian and Catholic resistance in Poland to the Soviet domination. Many, if not most, of that resistance was nonviolent. I would add the Civil Rights movement in the United States to those examples. I wonder if religion has not been noticed as a force in these examples because it has been nonviolent. Do we notice religion now because religion has turned violent?

Hehir: There have been different responses from different religious traditions and a significant strain of that has been the nonviolent witness, rooted in religious conviction. There is a lasting value to that kind of witness. To some degree, it doesn’t get on the pages of diplomatic history and world politics and often passes unnoticed.

Sometimes this is translated to say that it is virtually impossible to think that religion could give moral sanction to the use of force. But this takes you to the very nature of world politics. There are historically recorded events where if you were not willing to use force, great harm could be done. That’s the meaning of the title of “just war”—war for the sake of justice. World War II was a prototypical example of “just war.” Hitler needed to be stopped and it was unlikely that it could be done with diplomacy.

The failure to respond in a way that could have reduced death in Rwanda—if not stopped the genocide—is an example of how we get to the very edge of the moral universe, in some circumstances. I grant the significance of non-violent witness, and I recognize that the ethics of war, which has been my life for 40 years, is at the very edge of the moral universe. It is about how you make sense out of the use of force. Unfortunately, I think that in addition to the silent witness of nonviolence, the nature of the world is such that some possible use of coercion is still part of the needed moral universe.

Q: Will you discuss your views on the ethics of a pre-emptive strike policy?

Hehir: I don’t think it has much ethics—that’s my short answer! And I’m not trying to be flip about it.

■ *Reported by Elizabeth Banwell*



A Look Back at Religious Influences on American Foreign Relations

Is a return to exceptionalism in our future?

Andrew Preston

This year's Camden Conference saw religion and world politics viewed through many lenses. Andrew Preston focused on how religion shaped the foreign relations of the United States, from its earliest days until the present. Preston combined his knowledge of the history of United States foreign relations with his current study of the intersection between religion and politics and how they have influenced American war and diplomacy. In his presentation Preston showed how religion played a role in the formation of the United States and was central in the ideas and activism that shaped the early country, and continues to shape it today.

He referred to five grand themes that have contributed to our American brand of foreign affairs:

- exceptionalism
- the promotion of democracy
- the separation of church and state
- religious liberty
- international organizations.

Preston stated that the Puritans, a deeply religious lot, brought their ideas of exceptionalism to the new world. They really did think they were different than, even better than everyone else, and they wanted to find a place for themselves where they could escape the “taint” of the unexceptional rest of the world. Their “errand into the wilderness” was their effort to find the best way to live on earth.

This feeling of exceptionalism continued in the United States through the era of westward expansion. Preston noted that the history of this time should be thought of as a period of U.S. foreign expansion, and not just part of our domestic history. The U.S. fought wars with the French, Spanish, British, Mexicans and, yes, the Native American nations to increase its land holdings and spread democracy. Manifest Destiny proclaimed, “Our land was designed to be the home of the free. It's man's nature to be free.”

The late 19th and early 20th centuries ushered in a very religious era, one that saw the use of missionaries to spread word of democracy and freedom as well as the word of God.

They felt, not unlike George Bush of today, that survival of liberty depends on liberty in other lands, that physical and ideological security (our values) were inseparable. Both needed protection.

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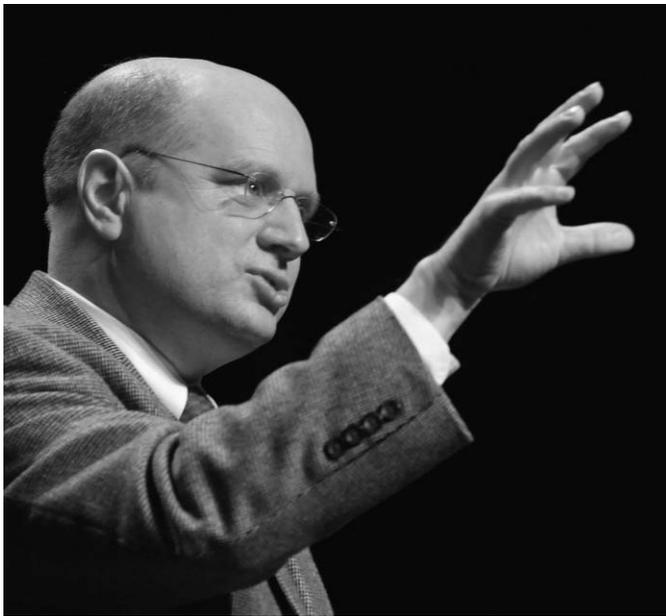
Religious liberty was at the heart of American nation building and central to American foreign policy. But it had to be the right kind of religion. Catholics were a menace, beholden to the Pope in Rome. The French-Indian war, the Mexican-American War, the war in the Philippines—all could be thought of as Catholic problems. The English Protestant religious ethic was still what was wanted in the New World. It was not until immigration brought a greater diversity of faiths to U.S. shores that the concept of religious liberty began to soften, to change from one that favored one religion over all others to one that invited people to worship as they saw fit. This broader definition of religious freedom took on new meaning as the cold war and the spread of communism filtered

■ **Andrew Preston** teaches History as a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge University in England and is also a Fellow at the Cold War Studies Center of the London School of Economics. He has taught at the University of Victoria and at Yale University where he was twice an Olin Fellow. He published *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* in 2006 (Harvard University Press) and co-edited *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977*, which will soon be issued by Oxford University Press.

into the U.S. consciousness: communists were atheists, godless people seeking to eradicate God on earth. This was the inverse of U.S. thought, which was why the threat seemed so dire.

This Communist inversion of all things American led to a new, unified U.S. foreign policy, one of anti-communism. It created a new Judeo-Christian era, a believer vs. non-believer era. In 1948, President Harry Truman asked the country to unite against a common enemy, the Soviet Union. Truman felt that the core of the Soviet threat lay in its violation of the separation of church and state. This fact would, in turn, energize the U.S. to develop an interventionist foreign policy.

It was during this period, Preston indicates, that mainstream Protestantism began to take a back seat to the steadily growing religious right. In the 1960's President Nixon and Henry Kissinger began to work with the Communists, ushering in the era of détente, which was unthinkable to the religious right. Nixon pursued stability. The religious right wanted justice and voted for deeply religious Jimmy Carter, only to find him interested in détente as well. It was left to Ronald Reagan to embrace the anti-communist cause.



■ **R. Scott Appleby** is Professor of History and Director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame University. From 1988 to 1993 Appleby was co-director of the Fundamentalism Project at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He previously chaired the Religious Studies department at St. Xavier College in Chicago. His writings include: *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation* (2000); editor of *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (1997); co-editor of the five volumes issued by the Fundamentalism Project; and co-editor of *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America* (1995).

During this period the United Nations became less popular in the United States. The U.N., very popular with the mainline ecumenical movement, became very unpopular with fundamentalists, who valued identity and nationalistic pride. They felt that pacifism and compromise were dangerous, allowing people like Hitler, the Nazis and the Japanese to flourish. The religious right did not recognize Israel. They felt that their literal Bible could not be compromised, not at all like the diplomatic world.

Preston ended his remarks by pointing out that religious activism is once again strong in U.S. foreign policy. He cited the motto of the National Association of Evangelicals, “Cooperation Without Compromise” as an example of how skewed some U.S. foreign relationships have become: not any old kind of democracy will do (i.e. Hamas), but just the right kind of democracy is necessary. It sounds more and more like the United States of earlier days, when very specific religious doctrine was thought to be necessary to make the new nation work for its leaders. They may again be calling it exceptionalism.

■ *Reported by Gail O'Donnell*

Fundamentalism in Recent U.S. Foreign Policy

We are seeing what happens when religious objectives converge with the policy interests of other powerful forces.

R. Scott Appleby

Professor R. Scott Appleby opened his talk by stating that the religious right has drawn a great deal of criticism over the past 30 years, much of it deserved, some of it hyperbolic and unfair. “This interest group,” he said, “has been so successful in shaping public opinion and making deep inroads into the Republican Party that many secular or religious-liberal Americans fear, detest and scorn the religious right. They feel that the influence the religious right exercises over American policy “is disproportionately large compared to the variety of cultural heritages and political opinions of most Americans.”

As background, Appleby described what he sees as two competing “religio-moral” strains in the American character. One is the 350-year-old cultural and religious tradition of

moral reform and the “perennial dynamics of sin,” originally known as Puritanism, which has waxed and waned in influence ever since. A balancing tradition is the prophetic Social Gospel, which represents a “robust commitment to the collective life, given expression in social movements, labor unions, churches and synagogues, and other voluntary associations of civil society.” These two strains have always shaped public policy debates, laws, and the size and purposes of government. The perennial question is, “Is sin the result of personal moral failure, or is it an inevitable product of unjust, oppressive social institutions?” The “apostles of character” or “neo-Puritans” portray social ills as the direct result of moral turpitude and irresponsibility on the part of individuals. The Social Gospel types want the state to outlaw “sinful” social practices such as racial discrimination.

Both these camps have expected the state to act on their behalf, and both have had successes. “Each episode of moral outrage led to prohibition of the suspect behavior, followed by the growth of regulating agencies that stayed in place long after the original moral fervor abated.” A contemporary example is the Department of Homeland Security.

Appleby explored three major subject areas in his talk. The first dealt with the question of how, in general, does American religion interact with and sometimes significantly influence the direction of U.S. policy? He sees two ways that happens. The first is that religion has always been a determining factor in the formation of American culture. “Religious ideas such as a chosen nation, a shining city on the hill ... not to mention President Bush’s sense that Providence has called him to the presidency for a specific moral purpose, help make plausible political ideas such as the conviction that a defining element of U.S. foreign policy should be to make the world, or at least the Middle East, safe for democracy.”

“The ‘apostles of character’ or ‘neo-Puritans’ portray social ills as the direct result of moral turpitude and irresponsibility on the part of individuals. The Social Gospel types want the state to outlaw ‘sinful’ social practices such as racial discrimination.”

Another way religion influences foreign policy is directly, “in the reduction of religion to ideology.” Appleby sees the influence of the religious right on foreign policy as a result of a confluence of interests. These certainly include religious concerns, but when their objectives are aligned with the policy interests of another powerful force such as the oil lobby, their influence is stronger. “The best known example of that confluence,” he said, “is the concern of Christian evangelicals, especially the subset of fundamentalists, over the fate of the Holy Land, which has dovetailed conveniently with U.S. strategic and economic interests in the Middle East.”

Appleby cautions that “it is far from clear that the Israel lobby, the oil companies, and the religious right set out to collude with each other or whether they separately or together manipulate the government like a marionette. But when their interests conveniently coincide, they can form a critical mass and influence decision-makers—especially when decision-makers, and the ‘Great Decider’ himself, are susceptible to the Puritan tradition of apocalyptic imagination and religious-nationalist discourse.”

Religion can also stand as an independent variable, lending “a fierce absolutism” to secular politics and policies. The “fundamentalist imagination” then can project the state of Israel “into the realm of cosmic war, and cast as a pivotal player in the divine drama of Good vs. Evil.”

Appleby’s second topic is that “there are signs that after a quarter century of cultural prominence and religio-political dominance the Puritan tradition is again waning in influence,” as it had in the run-up to the Civil War, at the turn of the 20th century, and in the postwar period leading up to the 1960s. Another waning sign “is the failure of the religious right to identify, support and sustain a viable presidential candidate.” Appleby sees a fragmentation of the evangelical political community, or at least a greater visibility of its internal diversity. An example of this is the increasing prominence of evangelical leaders who avoid demonizing opponents and who “encourage ecumenical, inter-religious and religious-secular collaborations against poverty, environment degradation, excessive corporate privilege, torture, and the like.”

Yet another reason for the decline in the Puritan influence is the “shifting political landscape,” which itself is determined by many factors (economic, social, cultural, as well as religious). Appleby sees Barack Obama as “attempting to channel the spirit of the prophetic Social Gospel tradition that enlivened the civil rights movement led by Dr. King.”

Another reason is the “partial secularization” of the new Puritans, after their entry into the economic and cultural and political mainstream. “This is what happened to the religious right when it ... won a place at the table, as Ralph Reed crowed after conservative evangelicals helped the GOP sweep the 1994 midterm elections. The shenanigans of the religious right during the current Bush administration may be seen as its final flare-out, its last glorious, compromised run.”

Appleby’s third topic was a review of “the enduring consequences ... of the triumph of fundamentalist-like religious politics over other religious competitors for influence” on some of the key foreign policy tenets during the post 9/11 years. He noted the presence of some constructive religious or religiously literate people in the Bush administration over the years, particularly the “stunning” sensitivity to culture and religion and diversity demonstrated by USAID under the leadership of Andrew Natsios.

In balance, however, Appleby believes there was a pernicious convergence of secular fundamentalist and religious

fundamentalist mentalities in the Cheney and Bush wings of the White House.” The worst effect of this “lay primarily in the way in which it led us to depict the enemy ... To inflate the enemy’s power and reach ... To homogenize a major, internally plural and politically diverse world religion. We applied a Christian fundamentalist lens and saw an Islamic fundamentalist world. Both visions are reductive.” Appleby concluded, “Perhaps it is time for a return to the prophetic, time to do something about ‘sinful social structures’ that make the outlandish Al Qaeda rhetoric plausible.”

■ Reported by Lucia S. Hatch

Q: Why haven’t we seen a more coherent response to the religious right from religious liberals?

Appleby: It’s easier to mobilize when one’s focus is narrow. Look at Karl Rove’s interest in winning only 51 percent. Furthermore, religious liberals are more ecumenical, collaborative and broad-based, and less equipped for hard-edged combat. Also, there has arisen an orthodoxy on the left (exemplified by its uncompromising stand on abortion rights) that has led to a polarization that has hurt religious liberals.

The Influence of Religion in American Diplomacy and Development Policies

The case for engaging local religious traditions and leaders in implementing economic development and health reforms.

Andrew Natsios



“Don’t ask people to violate their religious traditions,” Andrew Natsios told the Camden Conference. “In order for economic development and health initiatives in developing countries to be effective,” he said, “it is crucial to engage local religious traditions and leaders in their implementation. Such initiatives must be promoted and delivered in ways that are consistent with the local culture and beliefs. We have to engage at the level of their own value system.”

In his presentation, Natsios drew upon his many years of Foreign Service to focus on operations—the on-the-ground level of U.S. foreign policy rather than academic considerations. “The real world frequently defies abstractions,” he said, “so that pragmatic considerations usually guide development work. That pragmatism must require taking into account local religious values.” He presented case studies in Macedonia, Nigeria, India, and Ethiopia to make his point.

According to Natsios, the role of religion in international development has been encouraged by the Bush Administration. “This is a change from the way things had been for many years,” he said. “Foreign Service had been a secular institution because of the separation of church and state so that

even deeply religious people working in U.S. programs were not comfortable discussing their beliefs.” As a devout Christian, Natsios experienced that restriction himself. “Now it’s easier to talk about,” he said. Natsios takes issue with the idea that international development officials working for the U.S. government should be required to ignore their own religious faith while engaging in their work. “Many people are doing this work because of their deeply held religious beliefs.” He believes that the worldwide focus on human rights in recent years, what he calls “our present golden age,” actually

■ **Andrew Natsios** is currently Distinguished Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy and Advisor on International Development at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown. Previously, he was Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development under the Bush Administration, including management of reconstruction programs in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan. Natsios has written numerous articles on foreign policy and two books: *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1997) and *The Great North Korean Famine* (2001).

springs from the world's great religious traditions.

As an example of the influence of the Bush Administration's beliefs on foreign development, Natsios cited the United States' "ABC" program (Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condoms) in Africa designed to reduce sexually transmitted diseases. The program has been criticized as being ineffective for emphasizing abstinence while not providing adequate information on the use of condoms in disease prevention, a criticism that Natsios views as unfair. He argued that it has been successful by supporting local religious teachings on sexuality while simultaneously distributing condoms appropriately.

Natsios also wanted to take issue with some of the previous Conference speakers who criticized the Bush Administration's relationship with Islam. "President Bush has gone out of his way not to demonize Islam," he said. "The President has repeatedly said that Islam is a religion of peace."

"In Third World countries, we cannot deal with development or political situations without accounting for the religious faith of that country. If an impoverished woman believes her child is sick because she offended the river gods, such a belief must be accounted for as aid workers try to change her behavior in order to help her child."

"In Third World countries, we cannot deal with development or political situations without accounting for the religious faith of that country," he said. "If an impoverished woman believes her child is sick because she offended the river gods, such a belief must be accounted for as aid workers try to change her behavior in order to help her child."

Natsios cited a campaign to provide polio immunizations for Nigerian children as an example of a program that failed because it didn't take into account local religious concerns. Polio was nearly eliminated worldwide, according to Natsios, present in only a few remaining provinces. As foreign development officials were encouraging parents to have their children inoculated, "it was disgusting what happened," Natsios said. A rumor was circulated by political extremists that the immunizations were actually sterilizing the children. As a result, parents did not participate, and polio has re-emerged, spreading worldwide as a significant problem. "We made a mistake. We should have engaged local Islamic leaders," he said.

After that experience, a different approach was taken in India. Muslim doctors and the Shira council were engaged in the process to approve the vaccinations and to build support within the community. After reviewing the scientific literature, religious leaders in fact issued a Fatwa proclaiming that refusal to immunize one's children would be a violation of the Koran; the polio eradication program there was subse-

quently deemed a success with robust participation. A similar process was then begun in Indonesia.

In Ethiopia, the support of Eastern Orthodox clergy and Muslim Imams was enlisted for an HIV/AIDS education program. The disease was spreading there as in much of Africa despite efforts to contain the problem. Natsios's program put together a unified approach by visiting the villages country-wide in the company of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch and local Imams.

In the early years of the 21st century, the Republic of Macedonia was on the verge of a civil war seemingly based on religious differences between the 25 percent of the population that was Muslim Albanians and the rest of the country. To circumvent the problem, Natsios approached the U.S. Ambassador at the time with an idea to bring together leaders from the Islamic, Jewish, Methodist, and Christian Orthodox communities for a meeting. The Ambassador was skeptical, saying, "We've never done anything like this before."

Although there were some tense moments among participants when the meeting was held, they were able to conduct subsequent meetings that resulted in a reconciliation statement that avoided confrontation. What Natsios describes as one "sad aspect of the process" was that the Imam could only agree if the document wasn't translated into Albanian because he feared for his life. Natsios blames this on "nationalism that had nothing to do with the teachings of Islam."

Natsios then went on to discuss the situation in Darfur and the Sudan, which, at the time of the Conference in mid-February, Natsios feared was on the edge of eruption once again. (He was proven correct a week later.) Based on his own 18 years of experience in the region, Natsios attributed some of the continuing problems on what he called "international advocacy groups with their own agendas about which side in the conflict is wrong and which is right." He said that there is a tendency in the West to politicize the issue by making it black and white and thereby limiting U.S. diplomacy. "The reality," Natsios said, "is that it is mostly gray."

"Our focus on good guys and bad guys prevents the United States from acting," he said. "The need for justice and the need for peace in Darfur are not the same thing." Trying to combine peace and justice doesn't solve the problem, he argued. "What is more important to the people in the refugee camps—peace or justice?" he asked. "They want peace so they can go home." The Sudanese government itself "needs to feel safe before it can sign the peace agreement." Feeling safe for government officials means not being afraid they will be tried as war criminals. Natsios attributed the work of churches, mosques, and synagogues as having made significant contributions in solving the problems there.

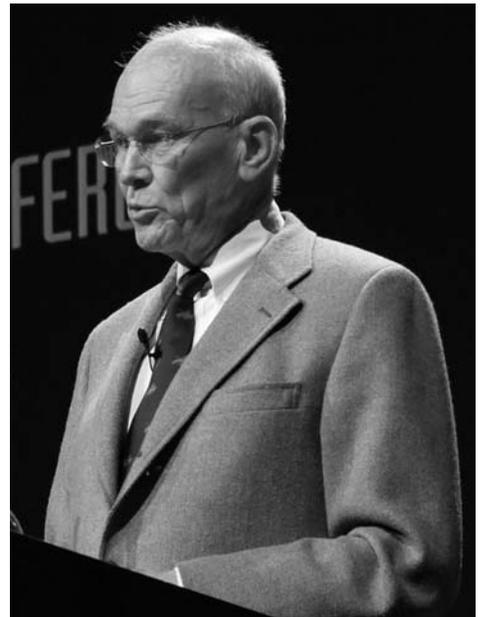
One of Natsios's comments about Darfur may be a good summary of the Conference in general when he said, "What we advocate for here in the United States has consequences elsewhere—sometimes unintended."

■ *Reported by Linda Buckmaster*

The Role of Religious Identities in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Players include but are not limited to Hamas, Saudi Arabia, Fatah, American Jews and Muslims, messianic Christians, and the U.S. government.

Ambassador Phillip C. Wilcox Jr.



Ambassador Wilcox introduced the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a one that many people believe is “an intractable holy war between Jews and Muslims with the Christians stirring the pot.”

Yet Zionism, the creation of Israel, and the ensuing clash with the Palestinians, who lost their homeland, did not grow out of religious conflict between Jews and Muslims. Zionism began as a secular nationalist movement led by an Austrian journalist, Theodore Herzl. The Zionist quest for a Jewish homeland was a reaction to centuries of Western, Christian anti-Semitism. Herzl was a secular humanist and although he believed that a Jewish state was necessary to liberate Jews from persistent anti-Semitism, he envisioned a secular community and regarded Judaism as an anachronism that would fade away in the new Jewish state. Herzl did not grasp that creating a Jewish state in Palestine would lead to conflict with the Palestinians.

Herzl died young, but David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizman, who were also secular Zionists, persuaded the British to back a Jewish homeland in Palestine with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and to sponsor a Zionist colony under a British mandate after World War I. Although the Zionist experiment attracted significant Jewish immigration in its early years, it was the Nazi era and the Holocaust that prompted a flood of new immigrants in the 1930’s and 40’s and generated international sympathy for the creation of the Jewish state. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, after the British withdrew, the western world embraced the new state, notwithstanding the bitter opposition of the Arabs who saw Israel as another manifestation of European colonialism.

At first, Jewish rabbis opposed Zionism as blasphemy in the belief that only God could determine when the Jews would return to their ancient homeland. On the eve of Israel’s independence, a group of powerful rabbis had threatened to lobby

against Israel at the United Nations unless Ben-Gurion agreed to give them an official monopoly over religious practice. Ben-Gurion surrendered, granting the rabbis legal control over religious education, worship, and dietary and family law.

In the 50’s and 60’s, Israeli life and politics remained largely secular. But the Orthodox rabbis, using their favored position and government subsidies, became part of the system and expanded their religious parties, which had become a crucial swing block in the Knesset. Although Israel remained largely secular, the rabbis were gaining momentum.

Israel’s 1967 conquest of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem—lands which were controlled by the ancient Jewish kingdoms—transformed Israel’s political and religious life. A group of radical Jews, inspired by a heretical doctrine that Jews

were obliged to conquer these territories and thereby hasten the coming of the Messiah, put their beliefs into action. They formed a small but determined cadre with the help of the Israeli military, which wanted the land for security reasons,

“The Zionist quest for a Jewish homeland was a reaction to centuries of Western, Christian anti-Semitism.”

■ **Ambassador Philip C. Wilcox Jr.** (ret.) is President of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, a Washington, D.C.-based foundation devoted to fostering peace between Israelis and Palestinians. During his thirty-one years of service for the Department of State Wilcox held many posts including Deputy Director of UN Political Affairs, Director of Regional Affairs for Middle East and South Asia, Director for Israel and Arab-Israel Affairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, and Ambassador at Large for Counter Terrorism. His overseas posts included Laos, Indonesia, and Bangladesh with a last assignment as Chief of Mission and U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem.

and began settling these territories with Jews. This Greater Israel project requiring the dispossession and subordination of Palestinians, could not be justified by the need for a Jewish refuge in 1948 after the Holocaust. It was also a radical departure from traditional Jewish principles of justice, peace-seeking, and respect for the rights of others.

Ben-Gurion, who had retired from politics, warned prophetically that occupation and settlement of the territories conquered in 1967 would corrupt Israel, alienate other nations, and provoke violent rebellion by the Palestinians and more wars with the Arabs. But since the majority of Israelis were secular and the orthodox monopolized religious teaching and worship, there was no competing religious voice in Israel to challenge the new policy of occupation and settlement on the basis of mainstream Jewish values. Messianic settlers, many of them religious fanatics, supported by the army, sought a new Jewish Kingdom in the occupied territories. Thus, extremist religion, justifying Israeli territorial expansion and repression of the Palestinians, has become a powerful new element in the conflict, threatening Herzl's dream of a liberal secular state based on modern Jewish values and culture.

Polls show consistently that most Israelis realize that settlements and peace with the Palestinians and the Arab world are incompatible. Yet Israel's parliamentary system has been unresponsive to moderate public opinion because its structure favors religious and right-wing parties that oppose the emergence of a viable Palestinian state and a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.

Religious extremism has also become a growing factor in Palestinian politics. Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Fatah movement dominated Palestinian politics for decades, vowing to destroy Israel and recover the homeland lost in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. While Arafat and the PLO occasionally used Islamic symbols, the Fatah movement was predominantly secular. Their enemy was Zionism, not Judaism. In 1988, after a long evolution toward pragmatism, Arafat and the PLO agreed to accept Israel and a two-state solution, setting the stage for the Madrid peace conference in 1991 and the Oslo peace talks launched in 1993.

Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic party, first began to challenge Arafat's Fatah when it emerged in 1987. A mirror image of the Israeli religious right wing, Hamas rejected compromise and vowed to recover all of Palestine for Allah. Hamas gained momentum as the Oslo peace process languished in the 1990's as a result of the misgovernment and corruption of Arafat's quasi government. Hamas first turned to terrorism after an Israeli settler killed 29 Palestinian worshippers at the Tomb of Abraham in Hebron in 1994. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who favored territorial compromise with the Palestinians, was murdered by a fanatic Jewish settler in 1995.

The Oslo peace process collapsed in 2000, amidst rising mutual violence that led to the second *intifada*. Hamas unleashed a new wave of suicide bombings that killed almost 1000 Israelis and harsh retaliation by Israeli forces took over

3000 Palestinian lives. In 2005, as a result of Arafat's weak governance, the corruption of his Palestinian Authority, and their failure to win Israeli concessions, Hamas won the parliamentary elections. During the campaign, Hamas did not stress a religious agenda, and its victory was more a result of protest than public support for an Islamist government. Although the U.S. had supported the elections, it rejected the result based on its view of Hamas as a terrorist organization and not as a substantial element of Palestinian politics with whom Israel and the U.S. would have to reckon.

The U.S., in collaboration with its European allies, boycotted the new Hamas Government and terminated all aid to Palestine. After Saudi Arabia worked to broker the national unity government of Fatah and Hamas, the U.S. worked to undermine it, providing arms and money to fuel the unrest. Following growing violence between Fatah and Hamas militias in Gaza, Hamas soundly defeated the Fatah forces and took full

“There is strong evidence that the majority of Israelis and Palestinians and Americans seek a two-state peace that will enable Israelis and Palestinians to escape from decades of conflict and a bleak future.”

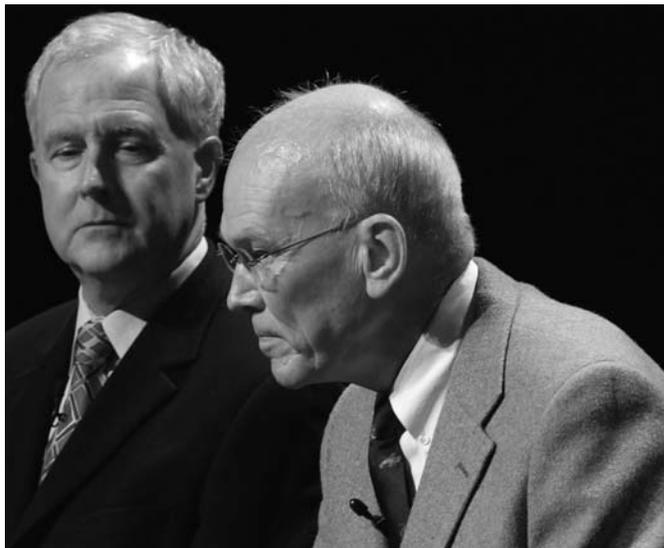
control of Gaza. Hamas leaders in Gaza have not called for a Sharia society, recognizing that Palestinians are predominantly secular. At this stage, the Hamas vs. Fatah conflict is more a struggle for power than a religious and ideological battle. Hamas is divided between religious extremists and pragmatists, and its senior leaders have hinted broadly that it is prepared to negotiate and accept a two-state peace if Israel will reciprocate. Nevertheless, extremist Islam is likely to grow in Palestinian society and politics, favoring Hamas and more right wing Islamic groups, if there is no hope for a genuine two-state peace.

The policies of the United States toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have also been influenced by religion. America's cultural identity as “Judeo-Christian” has been a factor in creating a political alliance with Israel that has slighted Palestinian equities and discouraged even-handed American mediation. American policy has also been affected by strong, well organized support from American Jewish groups for Israel. While only a few American Jews support the messianic “greater Israel” goals of the settlement movement, Israel is important to the identity of many American Jews. For some, it has become a kind of “secular religion” whose policies must not be challenged or criticized. Many other American Jews, while loyal Zionists, worry about the corrupting impact of Israel's settlement and occupation policies on Jewish values and seek strong American diplomatic leadership to resolve the conflict. Adding to this complex mix, there is a strong, politically active movement of American messianic Christians who applaud Israel's occupation and settlement of Palestinian lands which they believe will bring the

second coming of Christ. There are also mainstream Christian groups in this country who support a two-state peace and a shared Jerusalem and who are especially concerned about the plight of Palestinian Christians living under occupation.

There is strong evidence that the majority of Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans seek a two-state peace that will enable Israelis and Palestinians to escape from decades of conflict and a bleak future. Fortunately, various Jewish, Christian Palestinian-American, and Muslim American groups are mobilizing to persuade the U.S. government to become more active and even handed. In their advocacy and educational work, these groups sometimes draw on the deepest teachings of the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Koran—that we are all God’s children and that we are called to make peace and to treat others as we would have them treat us.

■ *Reported by Mary Anne Driscoll*



Conference moderator Graham Phaup and Ambassador Wilcox

Q&A

Q: Can you comment on the writing of the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé about ethnic cleansing of Palestinians?

Wilcox: Ilan Pappé is one of several Israeli revisionist historians who have challenged the previous patriotic historic narrative that blamed all on the Arabs and claimed that Israelis always sought peace. It is true that Zionist forces drove out 750,000 Arabs in 1948, and that the Israeli governments are still seeking to control the Palestinians in the occupied territories. There have been rights and wrongs on both sides. The events of 1948 that led to Israel’s creation were based on profound historical forces, and it is futile to argue that they can or should be reversed. Israel’s current occupation of Palestinian territories seized in 1967 is another matter. This can and must be resolved in order to create peace via two states.

Q: Since it will be difficult to evacuate 270,000 settlers, how plausible is a two-state solution?

Wilcox: I don’t believe in geographic determinism. The current adventure is a catastrophe for everyone. Many settlers were motivated by attractive housing, amenities, and subsidies, not for religious zeal. Buying them out would be good solution. At present, settlements breed constant violence and suffering. They block the legitimate aspirations of a very large Palestinian community that wants to live in freedom and dignity. And they corrupt the ideal of a Jewish democratic state living at peace with the world.

Q: Research shows that American media coverage favors Israel by a factor of 4 or 5 to 1. Can you comment?

Wilcox: It is not just the media. There is a deep religious, cultural and emotional strain in America that creates a strong bond with Israel. Governments of Israel have played on this affinity, and the Holocaust generated a sense of moral debt to Israel. The Palestinians have not

been successful in telling their story in America, and we have little history or experience with the Arab world. Indeed, there is still a strain of Islamophobia in this country. So the Israelis have huge advantages. The Palestinians have used terrorism to gain attention, as have other beleaguered people, including the Jews, who turned to terrorism when the British cut off Jewish immigration in the 1940s. But terrorism arouses fear and anger in the United States and is indefensible in any case. But it happens unless underlying conflicts that prompt it are resolved.

Q: The United Nations has been trying to find solutions. What should the United States role be at this time?

Wilcox: The US has the leading, indispensable role because of our power and influence, our relationship with Israel and previous efforts at peacemaking. We are fated to take the lead, and I think we can. I do not accept that the President of the United States is paralyzed and held hostage by a Jewish lobby and is unable to protect American national security interests involved in this conflict. If a U.S. president had the wisdom and will to take a strong leadership initiative for peace, I believe American Jews, Christians and Muslims would rally to this. So would Israelis and Palestinians, including, ultimately, their governments.

Q: Israelis and Palestinians have much in common such as hard work, business acumen. Can they work together as independent states?

Wilcox: Of course. They have much to unite them. Until recently, the Palestinians had the highest percentage of Ph.D.s in the Arab world, and the Israelis are a highly educated people. Both are industrious and entrepreneurially inclined. If the political and territorial issues were resolved, there could be great synergy between the two societies.

■ *Reported by Mary Ann Driscoll*



The Clash Between Sunni and Shia in the Middle East

Arabism v. Islamism also adds to the contest.

Rend al-Rahim Francke

Rend al-Rahim Francke takes objection to the word “clash” as too harsh to explain what is happening across the Muslim world. She sees it is a contest of power and politics rather than theology.

The Muslim *umma* [totality] diverged immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 A.D. over the issue of succession. A large and influential group of the Prophet’s companions decided that the successor should be among a number of his companions whom they identified. A smaller group felt that the proper inheritor should be Imam Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, and then Ali’s descendants through his wife. This dissenting group became known as the Shia and the political divergence began at that moment.

This schism intensified in 680 A.D. when Husayn, the third Imam and grandson of the Prophet, again contested the leadership of the Muslim community, this time against the caliph Yazid, the Umayyad caliph. Husayn was brutally killed along with his family and followers finalizing the rift. At its heart the schism was political, although over decades and centuries, the Shia and Sunni developed theological differences, including doctrine and schools of jurisprudence. For most of Muslim history the Sunnis ruled and led the Muslim world. The Shia remained the minority, only about 15 percent of Muslims, and have always lived under Sunni rule, with periodic aberrations and Shia revolts, and occasionally a short-lived Shia state.

Shia doctrine is, in fact, somewhat anti-state because it believes that all political leadership is illegitimate until the return of the messiah, the 12th Imam, casting from the beginning a shadow of doubt of legitimacy on Sunni rule. The schism was broken in 1501 when the first Safavid Shah, Isma’il, came to power in Iran and declared Iran a Shia state and coerced his people to adopt Shi’ism even though the majority is Sunni. Iran remained the only Shia state until today.

The Sunni regard the Shia as unorthodox, subversive, religiously dubious. Their allegiance is even suspect since they look to Iran for protection and sustenance. Until modern times they were tolerated, particularly during the Ottoman Empire,

but as a religious minority without political rights and outside the public domain. Occasionally they were persecuted and hunted down and rarely did they participate in state affairs.

In the 20th century, the period of independence in the Muslim world, and creation of the modern Muslim state, some countries that had substantial Shia minorities or indeed majorities—Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait—began to take Shia into the body politic on a selective basis. Nevertheless, the state remained firmly Sunni and the leaders were wary of giving the Shia any leverage on the political process; they remained a political and economic underclass with their curtailed access to state resources. In Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, with sizeable Shia communities, the pockets of poverty are higher among the Shia.

The issue of Shia disenfranchisement and Sunni suspicion of the Shia world-view created distinct identities. The Sunni identity became that of the dominant class, the natural rulers; the Shia identity was that of the underdog: excluded, occasionally the persecuted, and the poor. The issue of identity has been the defining element in their relationship. There was a Shia awakening mid-century, around the 1950’s, early 1960’s, particularly in Iraq, where there arose a group of Shia clerics who wrote a great deal about Shia politics, philosophy and economics. An intellectual revival and modernization of Shi’ism arose which tried to transform the Shia identity from

■ **Rend al-Rahim Francke**, Executive Director of the Iraq Foundation in Washington, D.C. was born to a Shia family in Iraq and educated in Lebanon, at the Sorbonne in France, and at Cambridge University in Great Britain. Rend became an American citizen in 1987. In 1991 she established the Iraq Foundation in Washington, D.C. to lobby for democracy, human rights, and regime change in Iraq. In 2003 Rend was appointed Ambassador to the United States on behalf of the new government in Iraq. She co-authored with Graham Fuller *The Arab Shia—The Forgotten Muslims* (2000) and currently serves as a fellow at the United States Institute of Peace.

the under trodden to a self-perception of people with rights and a claim on society. By the 1970's this movement had developed and was beginning to challenge the Bathist state and even to spread to Bahrain, Kuwait and Lebanon.

A number of events helped strengthen the launch of this new Shia awakening. The first was the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the rise of Khomeini and the launch of a triumphal Shi'ism, which spread across the Middle East. A second event was the panic that seized the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein and the subsequent expulsion of thousands of Shia from Iraq to Iran, including many clerics. The third event was the 1975 Lebanese civil war—metamorphosing with the 1982 Israeli invasion into Southern Lebanon with its Shia majority. This absolutely fixed the classic Shia identity in the Arab world as poor and exiled from the public arena of life in Lebanon. These were the communities that took the brunt of the Israeli invasion, which gave rise to Hezbollah with the encouragement and support of Iran. Today it is Hezbollah in Lebanon that is the force to reckon with.

All of these Shia movements are contesting the traditional power definition of the state in the Muslim world, certainly in the Arab world. The Shia movement is asking why, where the Shia are the majority or a strong plurality, there is still Sunni rule. Because Shia clerics in Iraq and Iran, and to some extent Lebanon, provided the intellectual underpinnings of the Shia political movement and revival, and because Khomeini's Iran provided indispensable support, the character of political Shi'ism became fused with Shia Islamism and now when you talk about political Shi'ism, we are really talking about Islamist Shia political movements. Whether Hezbollah in Lebanon, or the Supreme Council in Iraq, it is an Islamist. The political elements and Islamist are fused in these Shia movements; the Shia are not only challenging the Sunni on their entitlement to the power of the state but also the Sunni interpretation of Islam.

Political Shi'ism has taken different shapes in different countries and the Sunni response to the distinct challenges in each State has been different. In Iraq for example, in the last four decades the Shia movement has been revolutionary, a reaction to extreme Sunni domination and a determination to reverse the order. The 1991 Shia uprising in Iraq following the first Gulf War was the point of no return for the Iraqi Shia. When they returned to Iraq in 2003 they were determined never again to have Sunni domination and suppression such as they had under the Bathist regime.

In Lebanon, the Shia movement that fomented Hezbollah came to power in the name of liberating Southern Lebanon from Israeli occupation; it is a liberationist movement. In its essential construct, it remains a liberationist movement, although firmly entrenched in Lebanon and a contestant for political power. Hamas is a Sunni Islamist liberationist movement in Gaza and the Palestinian territories. The Hezbollah relationship is very strong because of the liberationist focus that unites Hamas and Hezbollah in their shared vision of what it is to be Islamist and to champion an Islamist cause.

Bahrain, with a majority Shia population, is a Sunni state. The Bahrain Shia opted to work through human rights channels, and on the whole has worked for human rights and constitutional needs. In Kuwait, the Shia, about 25 percent, is perhaps the best integrated in a Sunni-dominant country in spite of the dramatic increase in Wahhabism. The 1991 war was a catalyst for creating a Kuwaiti identity that transcended the Sunni-Shia divide. In Saudi Arabia, where the Shia are about 10 percent of the population but strategically located in the East Coast oil region, they have followed a human rights agenda, including rights and freedom of worship, but their situation is probably the most difficult in the region. In 2006, when Hezbollah was fighting Israel in Southern Lebanon and was seen as the champion of the anti-Israel movement, the question was posed whether the Muslims, including ordinary Sunni, could support Hezbollah in its battle against Israel. The Saudi cleric bin Jibrin said no, because Hezbollah is an heretical movement in Islam, a pernicious influence around the world and it is not permitted to support any Shia movement anywhere in the world. His statement caused a furor in the Arab world because the Hezbollah had acquired hero status and there was strong suspicion that bin Jibrin, who was said to be close to the Saudi ruling family, was expressing their views. The problem is becoming exacerbated because the Wahhabi influence is extending during a Shia revival and giving justification to their killing.

“The Sunnis often perceive the Shia as being a Trojan horse for Iranian influence, particularly in Lebanon, Bahrain, and Kuwait.”

The problems arising in Iraq are a struggle between the Shia majority community, led by Islamist political groups, and a backlash from a Sunni, largely Islamist, community that is struggling over who will rule. While the Shia came to redress imbalance, they are redefining the state as Shia and creating the same conditions of fear and distrust in the Sunni community that existed before 2003 in the Shia community. This is one of the biggest dangers in Iraq and now also in Lebanon over hegemony in the political arena.

The other dimension is that of Arab identity and other identity in these two communities. The Sunnis often perceive the Shia as being a Trojan horse for Iranian influence, particularly in Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain and Kuwait. It is true that the Shia of these countries sympathize with Iranians and receive at least moral and probably other support from Iran. The Arab states have reacted vehemently against any notion that the Shia might be close to Iran and regard them as hostile to the Arab world and Arabism. The Shia are in an awkward situation because they do not want to deny their Arab roots, but they feel alienated from their Arab context. In contrast, Sunnis emphasize their Arab context and Arabism in the region because they are united traditionally. The Shia

Rend Al-Rahim Francke

both in Iraq and Lebanon need the broader Sunni Arab world for their validation.

This leaves the question of whether the Arab world is all Sunni or Sunni *and* Shia? Are the Shia also Arabs or only Shia and Iraqi, Shia and Lebanese? Are the Sunnis ready to embrace

the Shia as equal members of their communities? We are seeing today a contest with many elements—within each country and also regionally—that will go on for some time and will need to play out before there can be a mutual accommodation.

■ *Reported by Jo Anne Bander*

Q&A

Q: How do expatriate Muslims in the United States relate in the U.S. context and how can they or might they relate to forces in the Middle East?

Francke: For the most part the Sunni and Shia communities in this country—Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Detroit—relate very comfortably. There are pockets that have a preference for Hezbollah or Hamas, but they are peaceful.

Q: Are the roles of the clerics different for Sunni and Shia?

Francke: Every Shia has to have a cleric to consult and listen to. Shias are obliged to follow the recommendations of the muja they have selected, although they can choose a number of muja and move from one to the other depending on whether they like the recommendation or not. Sunnis are less bound by the statements of their clerics, although the Sunni doctrine has changed with time and become somewhat similar to Shi'ism, and today there are many Sunni clerics who feel they have the right to give religious pronouncements. Today Sunni clerics give interpretations of Islam that are radical and not necessarily based on the traditional interpretations of the world that were formulated in the Middle Ages. We tend to have a free-for-all now, making the situation in the Sunni world very complicated and somewhat chaotic, more so than in the Shia field.

Q: What ethnicity and religious persuasion are the Kurds? And what is the religion in Southern Lebanon, where there is a large Palestinian refugee population. Are they Sunni?

Francke: The Kurds ethnically are related to the Persians and are not Arabs. Their language is closely related to Farsi. Most are Sunni with a small minority of Shia. The Kurds are famous for their Sufi religious orders.

In Southern Lebanon, the Palestinian community is in a camp called Ein el-Hilweh, one of the largest Palestinian camps in Lebanon that sits right in the Shia heartland. It is a breeding ground for Wahabism and Jihadi Muslim groups. In the summer, we had a situation in a Northern Lebanon Palestinian Nahr El-Bared Refugee Camp, where Fatah al-Islam, a militia thought to be linked to Al Qaeda, fought the Lebanese army. Ein-el-Hilweh is certainly a hotbed, but there have not yet been attacks on the army. My understanding is that there is a firewall

and the Hezbollah does not interfere with the radical Sunnis in the Palestinian camp.

Q: What is the position of women under Sunni and Shia law?

Francke: There are five major schools of jurisprudence in Islam, four Sunni and one universally recognized Shia school. The predominant Shia school of jurisprudence is regarded as the most equitable to women, particularly when compared to the Sunni Hanbali school, probably the most restrictive. Under Shia law, divorce laws and inheritance are more favorable.

There is also the concept in Shia law of “pleasure marriage,” which is a marriage contracted for a pre-defined period. The problem with these arrangements is that many women enter into these marriages for reasons of economic need and in response to social ostracism, a situation that is happening often now due to the many widows with young children.

Q: Can the Sunni and Shia people live together in a united and democratic Iraq after a U.S. withdrawal? Or is partition the most likely or desirable outcome in Iraq?

Francke: The conflict in Iraq is not about Sunni or Shia religion but about who rules Iraq and how to rule Iraq, about power sharing and balancing power. The danger of the Shia majoritarian rhetoric was neither recognized nor curbed, and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) came with an oversimplified idea about an Iraqi society divided by walls between Sunni, Shia and Kurd, building the myth that with their history of revenge, conflict and bloodshed, they will not talk to each other and that separation was preferred.

The Shia entitlement to power was crudely stated and reinforced by US policy, especially in the first two years, including dismantlement of the Iraqi army. Naturally, when you have a very violent action you have a violent reaction, so the Sunni reacted with terror and insurgency.

Today we are at a point where the Shia in power recognize that they cannot rule Iraq on their own, even as the majority; they will have to come to some accommodation with the Sunnis and Kurds. The big danger in Iraq is continuing to define the politics of Iraq as either Sunni politics, or Shia politics or Kurdish. The emergence of a national politics is necessary, possible, overdue and now in formation.

Islam and Governance: The Realities

Drawing the line between religious freedom and good government is complex in the dynamic Muslim world.

Ellen Laipson



The first thing Ellen Laipson did in her talk on “The Struggle Between Modern Governance and Resurgent Islam” was discard the word struggle. In place of this negative image, she presented a glimpse of what is actually happening to “governance” in different parts of the huge and diverse Muslim world and tried to illuminate how Islam is—and is not—affecting those events.

Laipson conceded that a lot of “deficits” still exist in governance in the Muslim world. “The Arabs themselves say, ‘our deficits are in freedom, information and women’s rights, and before we can achieve truly modern governance, there are big challenges from people who want to turn the clock back, not forward, like Bin Laden and other radicals.’ But Muslim countries do have governance, and while not all of it is modern, not all of it is bad either.” There are monarchies and, in Morocco and the smaller Arabian Gulf states, “modernizing monarchies.” There are “old and tired military regimes” in Syria, Egypt and Libya that are not delivering all of the core requirements of governance. And there are “quasi democracies or almost fully consolidated democracies” in Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia.

In engaging with the Arab world, the United States has focused on “democracy, reform and the freedom agenda,” Laipson noted. But these concepts need to be differentiated and present some problems. “First, the strongest voice for change and the strongest articulation of the desire for change is often from political actors that use Islam as one of their defining identities or principles. Sometimes the people who want the Western model are not necessarily the people with strong political bases anymore,” she explained. “We can have

Western looking and feeling electoral processes, but not necessarily Western looking results.”

A second problem was expressed as a question. “Are we living in an historical moment where there’s one prevailing model that is about democracy and free markets? Or are we

“Are we living in an historical moment where there’s one prevailing model that is about democracy and free markets? Or are we still in a classic period of competition between different ideologies and different political models or alternatives?”

■ **Ellen Laipson**, President and CEO of the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. has 25 years of government service in such key positions as Vice Chairman of the National Intelligence Council and Special Assistant to the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She also has served as Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs for the National Security Council; National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia; and a member of the State Department’s policy planning staff after being a specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs for the Congressional Research Service. Her writings include: *Iraqi Kurds and Iraq’s Future* (2006), *Security Sector Reform: The Final Frontier* (2005), and *Relating to the Muslim World: Maybe Less is More* (2004).

still in a classic period of competition between different ideologies and different political models or alternatives?” Laipson later explained that many intellectuals in non-democratic countries “are asking the question, ‘why democracy? We know we want a better government. We know we want a government that is more accountable to the people. But is democracy the only model out there?’ Americans often think democracy is an end in and of itself. I think other societies that are transitioning from a non-democratic form of government to something where there’s more citizen participation ask the question. They ask it in an open-minded way. It’s not that they’re hostile to democracy, but they’re trying to think through, ‘will we get the social justice that we want? Is this the only way?’ And they look at some of the downsides of American democracy. They look at how much money we spend; the corruption, the lobbyists.”

“Many intellectuals in non-democratic countries are asking the question, “Why democracy? We know we want a better government. We know we want a government that is more accountable to the people. But is democracy the only model out there?”

In Muslim states, as everywhere, governance involves questions of territorial integrity and the security of the state, providing law and order and justice, distribution of natural resources and economic resources. “Islam does have a view on most of these issues. But it is rarely the key or sole determinant of national policy in most of the Muslim world,” Laipson said. “Bin Laden’s writings don’t present a developed political concept and so don’t represent a genuine threat to Muslim states that are struggling to modernize their forms of governance without experiencing revolutionary upheaval.” Rather, Laipson turned to some pairings of often quite different Muslim states to illustrate how governance and Islam are actually interacting.

First were Egypt and Turkey: one an Arab country, one not; one democratic, one not. But both long governed by secular elites that reject religion as a path to modernizing society. “Egypt has evolved from a pure military dictatorship to a hybrid with contested elections and political parties, but the government still fears political Islam. Turkey is a more sophisticated and cosmopolitan democratic system where the military remains on the sidelines to intervene in case democracy is jeopardized by Islamists, but where parties that associate themselves with Islamic culture, values and virtues have been accepted as legitimate if they don’t advocate total Islamization.”

Next Laipson looked at Saudi Arabia and Iran: again, one Arab, one not; one Sunni, one Shia; each representing “a model of a strategic pact that was made between people who

want power and people who have religion.” The al-Saud family dynasty in the 1930s acquired the legitimacy needed to consolidate the modern state of Saudi Arabia by forming a strategic alliance with the conservative Wahabi religious clerics. Although those clerics retain great political influence, with wealth and corruption has come a “third pillar,” groups seeking “an even more austere and pure form of religious governance in Saudi Arabia. This is in a way what Bin Laden represents.” In Iran, those mobilized during the revolution by political and economic objectives formed an alliance with “very clever clerics with deep legitimacy in the society.” Those clerics have created a parallel system of governance “that allows them to overrule apparently semi-democratic governing institutions.”

Laipson also reviewed the situation in Indonesia, “a country of very lively, colorful and dynamic Islamic culture that is in a very exciting period of democratization.” In this country of a thousand islands, decentralization has seen roughly one-quarter of the provinces adopt some form of Islamic law, although the federal government has not. “While some women activists worry about this, others say the Islamization of law has already peaked and is tapering off,” Laipson said.

She concluded her talk by stressing that the interaction of governance and Islam is “a dynamic and not a static process.” Some people are becoming more religious because they’re dissatisfied with their government, even as governance is often changing in response to non-religious factors. She also argued that when “political space opens up in countries that are not fully democratic, Islamic parties tend to lose some of their popularity,” citing Pakistan as a notable example. Finally, she described the “quietest trend in Shia Islam,” in which the likes of Iraq’s Grand Ayatollah Sistani and some revered Indonesian clerics want Islam to be “a source of inspiration but do not want clerics governing.” They argue “in a very indigenous and authentic way that a line should be fashioned between religion and the state.”

■ *Reported by Sarah Miller*

Q&A

Q: Might Western countries eventually open up space for Islamic legal practices by their own Muslim citizens?

Laipson: [Earlier in her talk Laipson had described her discomfort in trying to decide where lines should be drawn between religious freedom and the need for competent, effective governance.] For me one of the red lines is honor killing. I don’t want to hear a defense lawyer saying that a man killed his daughter because that’s what his religion demands of him. If he kills his daughter, I want him to face the normal charges for murder ... It’s that wonderful phrase, I don’t want us to be so open-minded that our brains fall out.

Ethical Challenges to Global Social Justice

The overriding goal is the dignity of the human person.

Katherine Marshall

Drawing on her three decades of experience as a senior practitioner in what she describes as the “value laden” profession of international development, Marshall opened her talk by parsing its title. “Global social justice” is, for Marshall, the critical issue for professionals in the field of development, as well as being a “central plank” for all religious traditions. This commonality of goals can be obscured both by the tendency of many development specialists to speak in technical, sector-specific language, and by the larger difficulty in defining ultimate goals—the kind of world we are working for. She noted, however, that the general reluctance on the part of development specialists to use morally charged language tends to fall by the wayside when funding appeals are being made. Marshall concluded the opening part of her presentation by citing the Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Martin, on the overriding importance of the “dignity of the human person”.

In the second portion of her presentation, Marshall identified five “dynamic changes” that have transformed development thinking and the relationship between the development professionals and religious communities over the course of her professional career, and have created a series of “conundrums”. The first she described as the growing realization that development was not a linear process, and that there were no “magic bullets”. The religious communities had correctly challenged the limitations of approaches to development which relied solely on technology or specific economic sectors, ignoring social networks and belief systems. On the other hand, the faith community sometimes romanticized the past, when the terrible burden of mass poverty stifled hope for change. The need today is not to discard modernity for tradition or tradition for modernity, but to navigate between the two. Complicating that task is the accelerating and disorienting pace of change. A striking illustration of this was a prediction emerging from a recent conference in Silicon Valley that the majority of jobs which will be held by today’s sixteen year-olds have not yet been invented.

The second conundrum identified by Marshall was the



Conference moderator Graham Phaup and Katherine Marshall

collapse of previous paradigms that had dominated thinking about development for decades. Tried and true phrases like “First, Second and Third Worlds” or “North-South Divide” have lost their meaning. As an example of a new paradigm that Marshall found compelling, she cited the recent book of Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*.

A third major shift in thinking has resulted from the realization that, for the first time in human history, it is conceivable that poverty could be eliminated on a world-wide basis. The Biblical injunction, “The poor always ye have with you,” has now become subject to human choice. It is no longer merely sad that women die in childbirth or that children die of malaria or lack an education, but a “scandal.” To illustrate the degree of change in perspective, Marshall recalled reading serious studies early in her career which concluded that countries such as Singapore and Ireland, both of which are now flourishing, were “basket cases.”

The fourth and fifth changes both stem from the above. With the dramatic changes in world poverty that have taken place, there has been a shift of focus to questions of equity,

■ **Katherine Marshall**, Senior Fellow at the Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs as well as Visiting Professor at Georgetown University, has worked for over three decades on issues of international development with a focus on concerns for the world’s poorest countries. From 1971 to 2006 Marshall served with The World Bank as a manager addressing leadership issues, conflict resolution, the role of women, and the role of values and was Counselor to the bank’s president with a mandate to cover ethics, values, faith, and religious liaison in development work. She serves on boards of and as an advisor to leading non-governmental organizations, including the World Faiths Development Dialogue, the Fez Forum, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

which, Marshall emphasized, were considerably more complex intellectually and morally. In her view, the issue was one that the development community had barely come to terms with, but she felt the issue of providing quality education would become the central focus. This, in turn, leads to the final conundrum: the linkage of development and security, especially terrorism. This linkage was long resisted by security experts, who, she recalled, would often sit with “glazed expressions” at meetings when the topic of development came up. To be sure, the linkage was not a direct one in the sense of “poverty causes terrorism”. Most terrorists are not poor. Rather, she contends that poverty and terrorism stem from common causes. The two

“... poverty and terrorism stem from common causes. The two most important are failed or



badly governed states which are unable to provide a sense of hope or opportunity to their citizens and a pervasive sense of injustice.”

most important she identified as 1) failed or badly governed states which were unable to provide a sense of hope or opportunity to their citizens, and 2) a pervasive sense of injustice. The latter, in Marshall’s view, is a very powerful thread that can be greatly intensified by modern technology. In her work in Morocco she sees the most squalid of tenements, housing those with no hope of a job or normal family life, equipped with satellite dishes providing access to hundreds of channels bringing some of the worst images of the excesses of our culture. This is a recipe for frustration, or worse, for anger.

Marshall opened the third segment of her presentation by noting what she describes as the “dialogue of the deaf” between the secular development community and the faith-based communities regarding the religious and ethical challenges of development. She noted that it was generally more difficult to talk across the secular/religious divide than it was for representatives of different faiths to dialogue. She illustrated her points by quoting the 19th century John Godfrey Saxe’s version of an old South Asian tale of six blind men trying to describe an elephant: “So oft in theologic wars/ The disputants, I ween,/ Rail on in utter ignorance/ Of what each other mean,/ And prate about an Elephant/ Not one of them has seen.”

Some key issues identified as central challenges are:

- The complexities of dealing with the new emphasis on “equity,” a word which can mean many things. Tensions between the concepts of individualism and community as well as between equal standards and the preservation of diversity are not easy to resolve;

- The growing emphasis on development assistance, as rights-based rather than rooted in the more traditional religious concept of charity, creates additional challenges for the two communities;

- New partnerships have been created across traditional boundaries. This has occurred especially in areas such as human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and global warming.

Concluding, Marshall quoted from an article by Denis A. Goulet, “One Eyed Giants,” describing the confrontation between Westerners bringing “science, but not wisdom” to traditional societies which possessed “wisdom, but not science.” The need to balance material, social and spiritual dimensions is critical to successful development.

Just prior to the question period, Marshall gave several illustrations from her own in-box of how the general trends she described above manifested themselves in real-life issues. These ranged from a proposal from Catholic bishops to organize a meeting on extractive industries to an effort to organize a march against female feticide in India; from a World Council of Churches initiative on the impact of trade reforms on the rice trade and the right to food to an effort to get companies manufacturing sanitary napkins to make donations to poor women through religious organizations; and from a Dutch rabbi’s effort to revitalize progress on the Earth Charter to an upcoming meeting at the National Cathedral on the role of women in international development. What all of these have in common, Marshall concluded, was that all had both secular and religious dimensions and had the potential to promote essential dialogue, partnership and cooperation between the secular and faith-based communities.

■ *Reported by Bob Rackmales*

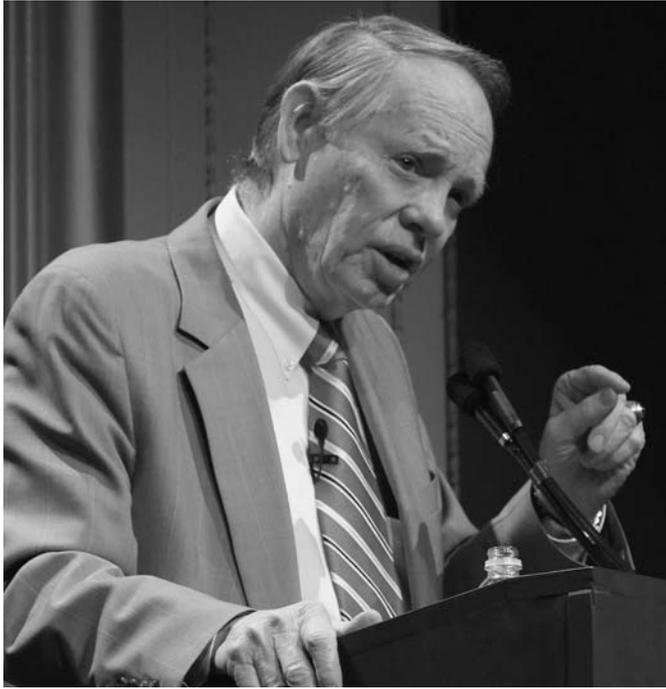
Q&A

Q: What is the impact of capitalism on living standards?

Marshall: Paraphrasing Churchill’s epigram about democracy, “the worst system, except for all the others,” she noted that capitalism was both a problem creator and a problem solver, and praised European economists and business schools for devoting greater attention to the social impact of capitalism, pointing out that this view was also gaining traction in the United States.

Q: Aren’t community programs in a country like Haiti like “spitting into the ocean”?

Marshall: While helping at the community level is important, efforts need to be made to link these to higher levels, up to the national. Modern technology allows even individuals to send aid directly to those in need, such as a fisherman whose boat was destroyed in a Tsunami, but bypassing local authorities carries real risks. Waste and corruption in the assistance chain are real problems, but the answer is in “hard, slogging work.” Only through coordinated efforts involving entire societies and their leaderships can a “critical mass leading to fundamental social change” be achieved.



Faith-Based Diplomacy: Bridging the Religious Divide

The time has come to use the role of religion positively to avoid conflict and promote reconciliation.

Douglas M. Johnston

Mr. Johnston noted at the outset that for more than a decade, defense planners have been wrestling with the challenge of countering asymmetric threats of the sort that Bin Laden used on 9/11 to rock us back on our heels. He further opined that there “is not enough money in the U.S. Treasury to protect our country against the full range of asymmetric threats that could be brought to bear.” What is needed is an “asymmetric counter” to get at “the ideas behind the guns.” Unless we complement our military action with an effective strategy of cultural engagement, all we will do in the final analysis is gravitate toward a police state and expand the pool of future terrorists.

Samuel Huntington noted in his *Clash of Civilizations* that religion is the defining element of culture, and that is not good news for the US. The US government has shown it has little ability to deal with the religious imperatives of others primarily because of our own tradition of separation of church and state, a situation which does not exist in much of the Islamic world. The result is we don't understand how

■ **Douglas M. Johnston**, President and founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, led the seven year study that produced the book, *Religion—The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford University Press, 1994). He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University where he later taught at the Kennedy School. Johnston has served as Director of Policy Planning and Management in the Office of Secretary of Defense, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Chief Operating Officer at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Among his books are: *Foreign Policy into the 21st Century: The U.S. Leadership Challenge* (1996) and *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (2003).

others, without this constraint, view the world. It's necessary “to put religion back in the equation.”

Weapons of mass destruction and religious extremism are a particularly dangerous combination. There's a need therefore to incorporate religion into international politics, “to bridge the gap” between religion and diplomacy, and to use the role of religion positively in both avoiding conflict and promoting reconciliation.

This approach, which Mr. Johnston refers to as “faith-based diplomacy,” is what The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) has been practicing in various trouble-spots around the world since its inception 8 years ago. To illustrate how it works in practice, he discussed several specific instances in which this new form of engagement has been brought to bear.

In Sudan, where over two million people had been killed and four million displaced in a north-south civil war pitting the Muslim majority against the Christian/Animist south, the Center began its efforts by visiting Khartoum and meeting with top government officials to get, as it were, an official imprimatur. They then brought together a high-level group of Muslim and Christian religious leaders and scholars to focus on what steps a Muslim government can take to alleviate the second-class status of non-Muslims in a sharia (Islamic law) context.

The Center actually brought a prayer group from the United States to fast and pray for the success of the deliberations while they were taking place. Their presence, coupled with other religious observances, lent a religious aura to the meetings, which proved particularly effective with the Muslims, who generally have difficulty dealing with secular constructs. The Sudanese Christians, who interestingly had initially been reluctant to participate, bared their grievances candidly but cordially.

Eventually, 17 consensus recommendations emerged and an Inter-religious Council was created. Forming the Council took two years to accomplish, as much necessary time was spent in getting the right relationships in place. It started as a top-down process, but it was necessary to involve and get buy-in from the second- and third-tier decision makers to convince the bureaucrats that such an organization could be a win-win for both sides. To lend added credibility, the Center was able to get a gifted Muslim leader (and major critic of the regime) to head up the Council. And Darfur notwithstanding (which is a Muslim vs. Muslim contest), the government to date has honored the recommendations of the Council, to the extent of providing more than \$500,000 in funding and real estate to facilitate the building of new churches and to provide restitution for past government seizures of church properties.

“By raising questions—what would Jesus (who is favorably viewed in the Koran as a predecessor to Muhammad) or the Prophet Muhammad do?—The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy has managed to relax the extremist approach.”

The Center’s efforts in Pakistan have been aimed at reforming the curriculums of the madrassas (Islamic religious schools). These madrassas have an ancient and noble history going back to the Middle Ages when they were important and progressive educational centers. However, over the last couple hundred years or so, partly in reaction to colonialism, the schools have regressed to the point where only religion is taught and where rote memorization of the Koran in Arabic—a language quite different from native Urdu—is the principle educational tool. The ICRD’s goals have been twofold: to expand the curriculums to include the physical and social sciences, with a particular emphasis on religious tolerance and human rights (especially with regard to women); and to transform the pedagogy in a way that will produce critical thinking skills among the students.

The Center, working with indigenous partners, has pushed these reforms by showing that what the madrassas are doing is actually working against their own best interests. Without any ability to challenge or question, the students are particularly vulnerable to local militants who misappropriate scripture in order to recruit them to their cause. The process is, of course, a complicated one, in which the key to success has been giving the madrasa leaders a genuine sense of ownership in the process, and inspiring them with their own heritage, by pointing out how many of the pioneering breakthroughs in the arts and sciences, including religious tolerance, took place under Islam a thousand years ago. So far, the Center has influenced about 1200 madrassas, which

is only the tip of the iceberg, as there are some 15,000 throughout the country. But success breeds success, and the Center is now training standouts from their earlier workshops to work with and teach others.

It’s not easy, Mr. Johnston pointed out. He gave an example of visiting one of the most extreme madrassas at the height of the Lebanese War in the summer of 2006. There was lots of rage and overt anti-Americanism in the room, which he countered by discussing how the US was not anti-Muslim, how it had been involved in helping Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia. He talked about shared values and quoted passages from the Koran extolling “cooperation among nations.” And a key point that he made along the way was that the Center is an independent NGO, which has received no US government funding. (In fact, as he later observed in his talk, the State Department was initially somewhat skeptical of what the Center hoped to do; now, impressed with the results, there is real enthusiasm, not only at State, but at Defense and the CIA as well).

The Center has worked successfully with the most extreme religious factions in Pakistan, including the Wahhabi and Deobandi sects. By raising questions—what would Jesus (who is favorably viewed in the Koran as a predecessor to Muhammad) or the Prophet Muhammad do?—ICRD has managed to relax the extremist approach. A Taliban commander, who had lost two of his sons in the fighting, participated in one of the Wahhabi workshops.

Another time, Mr. Johnston met with some 57 Taliban commanders and religious leaders on the Pakistan/Afghan border, where the Afghans frankly discussed their antagonism toward the US: why is the US attacking Islam throughout the Middle East? Why did it invade Afghanistan? In trying to emphasize common ground, he pointed out that the US and the Afghan people had worked together in the struggle against the Soviet Union and that the American people admire and respect Afghans; that what the US wants is a peaceful, democratic region; that it would like to see reconciliation between the Karzai government and the Taliban and a severing of Taliban ties with al-Qaeda.

Other questions were more difficult to answer: Why did the United States invade Iraq? The emphasis in this answer was on the fact that Saddam had tried to assassinate the first President Bush. Israel was an even more difficult discussion still; the Center emphasized that while the US government considers Israel to be a strategic ally, support for the Palestinian plight is growing among many Americans. The bottom line is that mutual engagement based on a demonstrated respect for one another’s views provides far greater leverage to influence a situation than do policies based on isolation and demonization.

More recently, the Center conducted a workshop for a madrasa at which about a quarter of the graduates typically join al-Qaeda. To tamp down extremism, the Center works through Islamic scholars and jurists. For example, in address-

ing the terrorism in Kashmir, one Wahhabi jurist told the workshop participants that defending Islam is permissible, but fighting a war, as in Kashmir, merely to acquire land, is not. This led to a debate in which a consensus developed around the conclusion that the conflict in Kashmir was politically motivated, but not religiously sanctioned.

Because of the trust it has created in Afghanistan, the Center was able to intervene successfully with the Taliban in freeing the nearly two dozen South Korean aid workers who were recently kidnapped. For the future, the Afghan government has solicited ICRD's help in convening a conference of Afghan religious and political leaders to enlist their joint cooperation in supporting desperately needed development assistance.

ICRD will also be working to reform women's madrasas in Pakistan—an interesting development, as it was Pakistani men who, after participating in the reform process, now see the need to do the same for female students.

In concluding his formal remarks, Mr. Johnston said that

what the Center is doing is similar to firefighters who set a counterfire to fight an out-of-control forest fire: “the best antidote for bad theology is good theology.”

During the question and answer period, he made the interesting observation that part of Arafat's difficulties in negotiating for the Palestinians was that, as the head of a secular entity, he was not empowered by Islam to deal with matters of great consequence to the religion, such as the final disposition of Jerusalem. He further noted that if religious leaders were included in the peace process, they would not only provide a capability for dealing with such questions, but they would also bring a moral authority to the deliberations that could prove particularly helpful with the Muslims. Moreover, if one wants to ensure that whatever political settlement emerges will be lasting in nature, it becomes important that the religious leaders feel some ownership in the process, because of their unrivaled influence at the grassroots level. They can make you or they can break you.

■ *Reported by Mac Deford*

The Camden Conference traditionally concludes with a discussion panel, allowing the audience to ask questions and the speakers to vigorously engage each other.

Wrapping Up Questions for All



Moderator Graham Phaup, Executive Director of the Institute for Global Ethics, fielded audience questions to the panel. Seated from left are Andrew Preston, Scott Appleby, Andrew Natsios, Philip C. Wilcox Jr., Rend Al-Rahim Franke, Ellen Laipson, and Douglas M. Johnston.

The 2008 Camden Conference, Religion as a Force in World Affairs, wrapped up with a lively one-and-a-half hour panel discussion among the presenters, based on questions from the audience. (Rev. J. Bryan Hehir and Katherine Marshall were unable to attend.) Top of mind for many in the audience was the war in Iraq.

Q: Please address the impact of the presidential campaign on a U.S. decisions to leave Iraq—recognizing the loss of lives and investment of billions of dollars.

Ms. Laipson stated that voters will have a choice in November but that leaving Iraq will not be an easy task if that is the decision. The Iraqi people are not ready to assume power and are conflicted themselves about the war and about the assumption of power internally. Professional military see the need to stay. However, this is not a “feel-good” situation and also not one that can possibly be turned into victory. A critical mass of the population now understands this. But it is clear that a rapid departure is not possible. It will take one to two years to move the

troops and it must be managed carefully to ensure security and the Iraqi ability to self-govern. This is a lot of work, and in the end there must be at least 30 to 50 thousand troops left behind for security and training.

Ms. Francke, on the other hand, believes that it is a dangerous and emotional subject that requires coolheaded policies and decisions. There should be no timetable, but rather a careful look at how best to manage departure, and how to do so over the long-term, keeping in mind American interests in Iraq and in the region and the interests of Iraq and others in the region. Despite the emotional issues there are core questions to consider: Iraq is in a fragile state. What are the consequences if we pull out? To Iraqis? To U.S. security? The country was shattered in 2003 and is building now from the ground up, with neighboring states eager to meddle. But to claim that the occupation will last for 100 years is nonsense; it's not going to fly.

Mr. Natsios began his response by noting that he supports John McCain in his bid for the presidency and thinks he was being a bit hyperbolic when he made the statement about 100 years in Iraq. Mr. Natsios is passionate about what is occurring in other countries, in which he believes we are “state-building” in Bosnia, Kosovo and so forth (building the apparatus of a government) as opposed to “nation-building.” He believes that there are three things that must be understood:

- It takes a long time to establish a functioning democracy—at least 10 to 15 years. During that time there must be advocates for democracy. People in developing countries want control and protection of human rights. We should not be naïve about transferring things from here that do not work there.
- We need consistent long-term development funding for the 10 to 15 years while we support the building of democratic institutions through the Iraqi government. Our troops are still in Bosnia, for example, after 10 years.
- There must be local leadership and our job is to help them develop it. If there is no local leadership, all of this fails. There is no template that works everywhere—what is appropriate for Iraq may not have been what worked elsewhere. I think there is a huge potential for a real stable Iraq. It is unethical to leave all of a sudden.

Mr. Appleby sees that there is real *politique* but also a morale *politique* and they must be seen together. Ethically, we are obliged to consider Iraqi interests when we consider our ethical obligations. This is not a just war and the criteria for a just war criteria were not in place when we invaded. Now that we are in there, we are ethically obliged

to consider Iraqi interests as well as U.S. interests. Our interests and theirs are not necessarily mutually exclusive in every respect. Who is going to pay the price? We must bring about a just peace. As Colin Powell said, “When you break it, you own it.” And we own it.

Mr. Preston reminded the group that from an international perspective, the war was extremely unpopular around the world, and it has damaged the reputation of the United States. American foreign policy will have to deal with that for a long time to come. We must build so there is no chaos. It cannot be done too quickly so that there is a repeat of what happened in 2003 with the rioting and looting. Our world reputation will be further damaged if we pull out too quickly and Iraq is worse off than it was before.



Q: It seems clear that a sophisticated religious literacy should be a basic job qualification for American foreign policy and development professionals. What are your recommendations for this ensuring this sort of retraining?

Mr. Natsios stated that there is no money left for any training in AID. The foreign service staff is down from 3000 to 1000, and that is a disaster. “The budget for Army bands is bigger than that for the entire foreign service!”

Mr. Johnston believes that no one in the administration has stepped back and looked at the big picture to see how we can redirect existing assets and create new initiatives to get at some of the causal factors. In the wake of 9/11, we have been largely fixated on symptoms, spending billions of dollars on baggage inspectors and the like. We need to position ourselves more effectively. There is an unfortunate hodgepodge in the training of Foreign Service personnel. He believes a new post should be considered—that of religion attaché, who would be able to inform foreign policy choices as they relate to religion and terrorism. Typically we have no clue where and when we stumble. The complex questions in this arena typically are handled by the cultural affairs attaché or the ambassador and often get pushed aside. A stable of perhaps 30 specially trained religion attachés could handle the problem and help train foreign service officers in religious issues and cultural implications, which must be understood. It would cost about 10 million per year, which pales next to the billions we spend per year on the symptoms.

Ambassador Wilcox noted that there is the larger issue of how to protect national security. Over the years we have progressively exaggerated the efficacy of military

force as the primary source of our national security and have diverted massive resources to superb training and weaponry at the expense of adequate investment in diplomacy and economic development. In the end, diplomacy and economic development are ultimately more effective in preventing conflict before it bursts out. We are in danger of becoming a warrior state. How do we use our resources to protect our interests? The United States is way behind among the other privileged modern nations of the world in the per capita proportion of income devoted to diplomacy, the soft side of national security. This must be addressed by the next administration.

Mr. Appleby noted that it is quixotic to think we can make people experts in religion simply with training. There are no Muslims in the inner circle of advisors in our administration, and we need to have more in the ranks who can be more thoroughly integrated. We can train, of course, but must also draw on other important forces and sources, and we do not draw on those enough.

Q: What is the relationship between the different sects of Islamic ideologies and terrorism?



Mr. Johnston: One of the fundamental assumptions underlying his work is that everyone is not bad and those that are bad, are not bad all the time. We do try to play to the angels of their higher nature. It is critical to get terminology right. A lot of things we are saying in the West are offensive and we must be

very careful how we use words. And while doing that, one of the things we should not be into is any of the self-styled language used by bin Laden and others, such as holy warrior, which reinforces any images they are trying to create.

Ms. Francke: Terminology is confusing on both sides and there is obscurity of language even in the Muslim world. People identify themselves differently and have a label for different things. Terms are ill-defined as well as being in flux. We do not have a neat box in which to put terms.

Q: How can religion offer solutions to world population overgrowth?

Mr. Natsios: Most of our population growth statistics come from the United Nations which, within the past three years, issued a report that reduces the population growth estimates dramatically. There are three factors that empirically demonstrate why growth will slow and/or stabilize. As the wealth of a nation increases and the wealth of a family increases, the number of children in a family decreases. The more educated the women in the nation (eg, high school graduate), the lower the birth rates. In both cases,

dramatic improvements have occurred since the report. It also is important to note that family planning has been more available in more countries. We always focus on how bad things are when indeed much progress has been made. It is self-defeating and empirically wrong to overstate the problems, often done for the sake of funding.

Ms. Laipson: In spite of progress, public policy issues still exist and this would be a promising area for dialogue between leaders of faith communities and the developing world. There are still problems with the demographic shape—Population Action International—The Shape of Things to Come—for example, how wide is the youth pyramid in countries? Some will face future public policy challenges like how to produce enough food, and so forth. New research about climate change tries to game out how climate change will be if population growth stabilizes at various levels. In addition, climate change matters hugely in terms of whether total population changes. We should care about population growth and climate change; it is absolutely essential to do so, and together they are major public policy issues.



Q: Should we be concerned about terrorist tactics by various forms of nuclear or chemical attacks that would kill millions?

Ambassador Wilcox: The ticking bomb scenario is very rare and is not considered as very possible by experts. We often exaggerate the precision and quality of our intelligence. More often than not human intelligence based on torture turns out to be unreliable. The cost of torture to our notions of civilization and human dignity is very high—“if anything goes, everything is soon gone”. It is very difficult to kill a lot of people; it technically is extremely difficult. Nuclear bombs are difficult to steal and transport and there are major safeguards to prevent this form occurring. We must think about such scenarios and the possibilities are not to be ignored, but they are unlikely.

Ms Francke: The 2004 torture in Abu Ghraib, as far as we know, was not officially sanctioned behavior. But it did incalculable damage to the United States in lowering American prestige and honor as well as moral authority and moral standing in Arab world. The most important thing the United States has to offer is our system of values. For a lot of people in the region, our image as a country with values has collapsed. How can they do this, the world asks? How can they fail to train Armed Forces to respect people’s dignity? It is a question of the self image of the United States. Who are we? What are we about? What do we stand for? Our behavior does not go unnoticed by the world.

Q: Where do belief systems of East Asia fit into this conference?

Mr. Johnston: We are doing the same work in Kashmir dealing with Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims and the same principles apply.

Mr. Preston: Our ignorance of Asian religions is what undermined U.S. policy in Vietnam.

Ms. Laipson: The 21st Century is likely to be the Asian Century. The pendulum has swung to Islam, but let's not have a knowledge deficit for 100s of millions of population in East Asia. We need to adapt our education systems. We need to take care of minorities wherever they are in the world. The public policy issues are similar, and they resonate in these areas.

Mr. Natsios: Three traditions appear to have a high correlation with high social and economic development. They are, Protestantism/Christianity, Judaism, and Confucianism. Values affect development in a profound way. There is a large argument for the relationship between growth and development and religious values, which must be respected and learned from the Asian culture.

Q: American Exceptionalism is alive and well, especially in the presidential campaign— but how do we get beyond it?

Mr. Johnston: Building relationship and trust among leaders, beginning with religious leaders, is an important and critical component of efforts to communicate in the Middle East. Recently he has developed thinking regarding a Peace Game, a facilitated brainstorming concept in which they wrestle to overcome the obstacles because there are so many interests that can be complementary. We need to tone down the perceived arrogance in our foreign policy, think in more humble terms and take into account other people's interests, similarities and differences.

Q: A number of presenters have alluded to the fact that religion seldom causes war, but once a war is introduced, it plays a role. In situations where the line is crossed, what is a strategy? Religion brings non-negotiable elements. How can we break through that and achieve peace?

Ambassador Wilcox: Religion is a universe that spans unyielding maximum extremism with one that also expresses humility and respect for the unknown and tolerance. All great religions experience these two themes—the extremist and the more pragmatic and more tolerant. In many conflict situations, people



who claim to be religious and claim to speak on behalf of God are more interested in power and have discovered the extraordinary power of invoking religion and disguising real and territorial issues in religious terms. Religion is not invoked well on behalf of compromise in Israel and Palestine because, in Israel, the establishment rejects the more human and tolerant strain of religion and is more secular and militaristic. I despair of achieving peace in the near future in Israel or Palestine because of this. On the other hand, there is great potential in this country where Jews, Catholics and Muslims believe in more human brand of religion. We must watch our language regarding how we describe other faiths and religions. This is all about the discourse of human dignity.

Ms. Francke: In the case of Al Qaeda, they are not trying to get territory, they truly believe that Islam is under assault. They believe God is totally on their side; they have a narrative of history that is radically different from our narrative of history. Their core beliefs are religiously based. It is not an issue of land or another economic issue. They believe they must destroy Christianity in order to preserve their own world.

Q: Can faith-based NGO agencies create an atmosphere of mutual respect in their work so as not to further erode indigenous ways of life?

Mr. Natsios: When I was with a faith-based NGO in Ghana, the Saudis funded the distribution of the Koran to every student in the school system. In response, the NGO sought to provide a Bible to each student as well. The Education Ministry directed that both be given to the students. In my experience, people of indigenous religions are more likely to offset the influence of one major religion (Islam) with another (Christianity), rather than asserting their traditional belief system. The fact is that people will keep their religious traditions and other religions will draw from them too, but these traditions are in danger because they are not written down. There are stories, but no scripture, hierarchy, or funding mechanisms as in the major religions.

Mr. Johnston: In many families in the south of Sudan, some are Muslim, some Christian, and some African traditionalists. People there maintain old beliefs and rituals while simultaneously practicing a more major religion. They get along just fine because of the common denominator of traditional religion.

Ms Laipson: In the age of globalization, I would like to believe there will be more of a capacity to capture oral traditions and create a record, to be certain the oral tradition does not get lost! We should be making a serious effort through technology to document these very old ways of doing things.

■ *Reported by Bill Amidon and Maryanne Shanahan*

About The Camden Conference



Established in 1987 and marking its twenty-first anniversary this year, The Camden Conference provides the opportunity for experts and interested individuals to share knowledge and concerns on issues of global importance. Each year, a topic is selected and a series of related events are held in Maine communities from Damariscotta to Bar Harbor—culminating in a weekend conference in February in Camden, Maine.

Community events include lectures, short courses, and symposia; group discussions of selected books, journal articles, and news reports; and films, art exhibits, and other cultural occasions. All events are open to the public; most are free of charge. They are led by scholars and other well-informed area residents.

Speakers at the three-day conference come from government, business, the media, academia, and international organizations. Each speaker addresses an aspect of the year's topic, answers questions from the audience, and participates in an exchange of ideas. The speakers spend the entire weekend in Camden, challenging each other, publicly and informally.

In the years since The Camden Conference was founded, programs have examined “The Making of American Foreign Policy”; “The Environment and Foreign Policy”; and “The Influence of the News Media in Shaping U.S. Foreign Policy.” In other years, the focus has been on such specific geopolitical areas as Russia, Africa, Japan, the Middle East, China, Europe, and Latin America.

The Camden Conference is a nonpartisan, Maine federally tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. The board of directors includes residents of thirteen midcoast towns—all of its members volunteer their time and talent to manage these events.

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Global Leadership and the U.S. Role in World Affairs

In 2009 Camden Conference will gather one month after a new President of the United States has been sworn in. The new President, following the Bush Administration, will face formidable tasks in foreign policy. New leaders will have to define and implement coherent and effective strategies to promote our national interests and advance our values. Sessions may include topics such as:

- What is the international context for U.S. foreign policy in 2009, and where is history taking us? How do we see the world as it is, not as we imagine or prefer it to be? What are the most important trends, challenges, and underlying conditions that will confront the new administration?
- Is there a central theme or “grand design” that should guide U.S. foreign policy in the coming era?
- Can or should the United States aspire to be the leader in the world? Will there be a basis in our economic strength, political and diplomatic skills, and military prowess to be the central player on the world stage? What will be necessary to ensure moral standing and to demonstrate “a decent respect to the opinions of mankind?” Considering the opportunities, costs, and risks, is it to the benefit of ordinary Americans to try to be the world leader?
- What are the issues and areas that pose the greatest risks, threats, and vulnerabilities in 2009 and beyond?
- Conversely, what will be the greatest strengths, assets, and opportunities for the United States to play an effective and constructive role in international affairs? We expect that the discussion will touch on many specific policy areas related to U.S. leadership, such as:

- The United Nations and other institutions of the international community;
- Environmental and energy policy, trade, migration, poverty and economic inequality; human rights and humanitarian intervention;
- The Islamist movement, the Middle East, China, Europe, Russia, India, Latin America, and Africa.

Check the Camden Conference Website for updates on speakers, programs, community events, and registration.



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