

# U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AND THE U.S. CONGRESS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## KEY FINDINGS

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*Despite increased attention to religion in U.S. foreign policy in recent years, global levels of religious persecution, violent religious extremism, and religion-related conflict remain dangerously high. U.S. International Religious Freedom (IRF) policy could be far more effective in addressing these threats to minorities, to regional stability, and to American national security. The Trump administration and Congress have an extraordinary opportunity, at low cost, to forge a successful U.S. IRF policy.*

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## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS:

- The President should state clearly and often that U.S. IRF policy will be a national security and minority rights priority for his administration. He should invite other world leaders and nations to join him in advancing IRF as a universal human right necessary for peace and stability.
- The administration should produce a National Security Strategy and Presidential Directive on IRF. It should integrate the IRF Strategy into the *National Security Strategy of the United States*.
- The President should nominate quickly a highly qualified and widely respected Ambassador at Large for IRF to mold and lead U.S. policy. Congress should rapidly confirm the nominee.
- With Congress, the administration should ensure that the IRF Ambassador has the enhanced authority, funding, and staffing needed to succeed.

- The administration should clarify and improve the bureaucratic structures and relationships between the IRF Office and other religion-related offices at the State Department, and with other agencies responsible for foreign policy, counter-terrorism, post-conflict stabilization, and national security.
- With Congress, the administration should implement and fund the new Congressional requirement to develop an IRF training curriculum for all American diplomats. The administration should consolidate and expand regional training begun under the previous IRF Ambassador.
- The administration should elevate the priority and resources devoted to IRF within all U.S. democracy, civil society, and human rights programs.
- The administration should increase both the staff expertise and programmatic focus on religious freedom in U.S. strategic communications and public diplomacy.
- The administration should maintain and expand U.S. leadership on religious freedom in multilateral institutions. It should place a senior IRF official at the U.S. mission to the UN.
- The administration should engage the growing number of foreign IRF groups and coalitions eager to partner with the United States.
- The administration should encourage the U.S. IRF Commission to expand its focus on religious freedom and violent religious extremism. The administration should support the Commission's initiatives in education and leadership development.
- Congress should hold annual oversight hearings on the effectiveness of U.S. IRF policy. The Senate and House Foreign Relations Committees should establish sub-committees on IRF.
- To the maximum extent possible the administration and Congress should endeavor to make "politics stop at the water's edge" on this issue — engaging, improving, and supporting America's vitally important IRF policy in a nonpartisan manner.

# U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AND THE U.S. CONGRESS

### THE BOTTOM LINE

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*Despite the importance of religious freedom for the United States and the world, U.S. international religious freedom policy has had little long-term impact. By consolidating recent improvements and expanding that policy, the Trump administration has a remarkable opportunity, at low cost, to make a major contribution to international justice and stability, fundamental human rights, economic growth, and U.S. national security. Congress should enhance its current bipartisan support for U.S. policy by strengthening its institutional role.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Religious freedom has long been a nonpartisan American value, fundamental to our nation's founding and self-understanding. It is likewise a universal value, strongly affirmed in international norms and international law as an issue of justice, and protection of minorities.

By the same token, advancing religious freedom is, or ought to be, a national and international security imperative. A growing body of research demonstrates that the absence of religious freedom contributes to persecution of minorities, religious extremism, terrorism, and instability. Its presence discourages persecution, violent religious extremism, and over the long term contributes to stable democracy, civil society, and economic growth.<sup>1</sup>

The International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), passed unanimously by Congress in 1998, created a U.S. foreign policy mandate to advance religious freedom worldwide. IRFA established an Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF) in the State Department, led by an IRF Ambassador at Large, to implement the policy. IRFA mandated an annual State Department report on the status of religious freedom worldwide, an annual designation of the worst violators (“countries of particular concern,” or CPCs), and an advisory IRF Commission as policy tools to advance religious freedom.

Over the past decade the capacity of the U.S. Government, particularly of the State Department, to analyze and engage religious ideas and actors has increased. During those years the State Department added several senior officials to focus on religion-related issues.<sup>2</sup> The Department now has approximately 50 staff positions working full-time on religion-related issues, including IRF. Under the previous IRF Ambassador the budget for the IRF Office doubled, and Congressional funding for IRF programs increased five-fold. U.S. capacity was bolstered further in December 2016 when Congress passed, and President Obama signed, amendments to IRFA via the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act.

Furthermore, recent years have seen a new level of interest among America’s democratic allies in promoting international religious freedom, such as the creation of an International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

However, notwithstanding these signs of increased attention to religious freedom, the global tide of religious persecution and conflict remains dangerously high. One careful but typical estimate, based on 2014 data, indicates that 74% of the world’s population lives in countries with high or very high governmental restrictions on, or social hostilities toward, religion.<sup>3</sup> Millions are subject to violent persecution because of their religious beliefs.

While many suffer persecution around the world, the genocide practiced by ISIS against Yezidis, Christians, Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims who reject ISIS, and other minorities in Iraq and Syria constitutes the vilest contemporary case. What is happening to minorities in the Middle East



represents a humanitarian catastrophe and a serious national security threat. We believe that the most effective way to address both is to uphold the principle of religious liberty for all people in the Middle East—indeed, to support religious freedom for everyone, everywhere.

This policy brief outlines an agenda for enhancing the U.S. Government’s capacity *and practical effectiveness* in advancing the global spread of religious freedom.<sup>4</sup> The recommendations that follow are in part derived from an extended process of collecting expert views on the past, present, and possible future of U.S. IRF policy. In the summer of 2016 *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* published a special collection of articles on the theme “Faith, Freedom, and Foreign Policy,”<sup>5</sup> and also partnered with Georgetown University’s Religious Freedom Project to host consultations with leading experts in the field. In November we held a public event on the future of IRF policy at Pepperdine University’s Washington, DC campus.<sup>6</sup> This brief also builds on recommendations we issued eight years ago at the start of the Obama administration, while also taking into account improvements that have been made.<sup>7</sup>

## THE PROBLEM

- Despite increased attention to religion in U.S. foreign policy, global levels of religious persecution, violent religious extremism, and religion-related conflict remain alarmingly high. America’s interest in global justice, the protection of minorities, and its own national security, is directly affected.
- The scale of the problem is vast. Many religious communities are threatened; the severity of suffering is high and varies by region. Globally, studies show that Christian minorities are currently most at risk, especially in the Middle East, where they are dying and fleeing in ever greater numbers.
- The ancient Iraqi Christian, Yezidi, and other minority communities are in danger of elimination, with extraordinary moral, humanitarian, and security implications for the region, and for international security.

- No administration has invested enough authority in the IRF Ambassador, or resources in the IRF Office, to strengthen U.S. policy in the many areas where religious persecution and religious extremism are destroying lives, destabilizing countries, and threatening America's national security.
- No administration has seen IRF policy as a national security imperative. There is no national security strategy to advance religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy.
- No administration has integrated IRF into the policy mainstream of diplomacy, defense, intelligence, and development work. For example, despite recent improvements IRF remains only marginally or episodically integrated into programs on countering violent extremism, counterterrorism, post-conflict stabilization, democracy and civil society promotion, public diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, and international law.
- Congress has recently provided increased funding for valuable U.S. IRF programs that invest in long-term change (e.g. programs funding human rights lawyers, civil society groups, and an independent media). But there is an urgent need to take such initiatives to a larger scale, and to include an increased focus on minority religious communities and religious actors.
- Current U.S. foreign policy efforts to understand and counter violent extremism and terrorism, either as a preventative or a post-conflict stabilization measure, do not sufficiently address the influence of religious motives.
- Current U.S. foreign policy efforts to understand, counter, and prevent religious persecution do not give sufficient attention to religious ideologies, or to radical secularist ideologies, or to the dynamics involved when repressive regimes cynically manipulate religious or anti-religious sentiments.
- There is a need for increased coordination between State Department offices responsible for violent extremism (e.g., the offices of Counterterrorism, Conflict and Stabilization Operations,

and the Global Engagement Center) and the Office of International Religious Freedom.

- There is insufficient coordination on IRF policy among the various U.S. agencies with allied foreign policy responsibilities, including the White House, the National Security Council, the Department of Defense, USAID, the CIA, and the Department of Homeland Security. There are no clear points of contact in those agencies for those engaged in IRF issues.
- The recent IRFA amendments strengthened the annual designation of “countries of particular concern.” But the designations should be part of an integrated strategy to improve religious freedom in those countries.
- The IRF Ambassador needs increased resources and greater authority in advancing religious freedom in key areas around the world. Financial resources allocated to funding IRF projects have increased but are still insufficient given the stakes involved. The IRF office has influence but does not control the process by which funds are granted to organizations. The IRF office lacks the staff resources needed to carry out all the critical tasks necessary to success.
- U.S. IRF policy is often viewed abroad as an attack on majority religious communities, as cultural imperialism, or as a front for American missionaries. However inaccurate, these perceptions have dramatically curtailed the policy’s impact. They should be countered by arguments that can be understood and accepted by target nations, especially arguments that will be seen by stakeholders as in their interests.
- Although training has improved in recent years, U.S. diplomats and other foreign policy officials are not yet being adequately trained in how religious freedom is important to American interests and values, and how to advance it in U.S. foreign policy. Lack of awareness and basic fluency on religion also remains a problem, both in training and in American public diplomacy and strategic communications.

- Domestic debates and legal battles over religious freedom have led some Americans to view religious freedom with suspicion as a partisan issue. This false perception risks harming U.S. IRF policy.
- Notwithstanding the positive step it took in passing amendments to IRFA in December 2016, Congress as a whole has historically taken little systematic interest in U.S. IRF policy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: THE WHITE HOUSE, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, AND INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

### **1 Set a Clear Policy Priority for International Religious Freedom and Commit the Institutional and Financial Resources Necessary to Succeed.**

- The President should state clearly to the American public, the Congress, the U.S. foreign policy establishment, and the world that:
  - ❖ Religious freedom is vital to U.S. interests in the world, including our quest for international justice, peace, the defense of minorities, and the defense of American national security.
  - ❖ Religious freedom is a universal right, a nonpartisan American value, and an essential component of social stability and well-being.
  - ❖ Religious freedom is vital to the interests of all nations, especially those in which religious violence and persecution are destroying societies, uprooting minorities, and stunting economic growth.
  - ❖ IRF policy will be expanded under the Trump administration.
  - ❖ Religious freedom, along with other core human rights issues, will be raised regularly in bilateral discussions, including discussions with allies.

- ❖ IRF policy will be integrated into U.S. strategies to reduce religious persecution, protect minorities, counter violent religious extremism and conflict, stabilize post-conflict societies and struggling democracies, promote economic growth, and pursue justice.
- The administration should seek opportunities to internationalize the President’s voice with respect to religious freedom promotion. President Trump should speak jointly with other world leaders about religious freedom as a universal human right and a necessity for peace, security, and stability.
- The National Security Adviser should name a Senior NSC Adviser on IRF Policy.

## **2 Produce a National Security Strategy and Presidential Directive on IRF Policy.**

- The National Security Adviser should announce an inter-agency Task Force on IRF policy and national security, to be co-chaired by the IRF Ambassador and the Senior NSC Adviser on IRF policy.
- The Task Force should produce a National Security Strategy on IRF policy, incorporating all dimensions of the policy’s goals, including counterterrorism, post-conflict stabilization, political and economic development, stability, justice, and peace.
- The Strategy should lead to a Presidential National Security Directive on IRF policy.
- The Strategy should be incorporated into strategic plans of all executive agencies with foreign policy responsibilities, including the Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review.
- The Strategy should be incorporated into the *National Security Strategy of the United States*.

- The Strategy should emphasize the critical importance of ongoing IRF education across all national security institutions and in interagency contexts.
- In addition to providing specific guidance on policies and institutions, the Strategy should clearly articulate key principles and parameters. It should:
  - ❖ Acknowledge that, while violent religious extremism has emerged from all world religions at one time or another, a highly lethal current threat to national and international security emerges from violent Islamist extremism. At the same time, neither the Strategy nor other policy documents or statements should blame or vilify all of Islam or all Muslims. Such actions exacerbate anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination and fuel the appeal of terrorist groups. When Muslims here or abroad defend religious freedom and liberal democracy, their actions should be acknowledged, praised, and encouraged.
  - ❖ Recognize that the relationship between religion and extremist violence is complex, and that strong religious devotion can often be a source of resilience against the appeal of violent radicalism and can be a driving factor for peace and toleration.
  - ❖ Recognize that a current phrase in general use, “countering violent extremism” (CVE), can be conceptually too broad. The Strategy should refer to “countering violent religious extremism” (CVRE) in contexts that clearly merit this phrase.
  - ❖ Make clear that the U.S. government will not allow counterterrorism to become a license to trample religious freedom—nor will the U.S. government look the other way if other governments, including those of allies, do this.
  - ❖ Employ fact-based arguments that religious freedom can advance the vital interests of particular countries (political, religious, and economic).

### **1 Provide Greater Authority and Resources to the IRF Ambassador and the IRF Office.**

- Within the new administration's first wave of nominations after the Cabinet level, appoint and secure rapid Senate approval of a highly qualified and widely respected IRF Ambassador at Large. The qualifications for IRF Ambassador should include:
  - ❖ Significant expertise on international religious freedom and foreign policy, with ability for integrating IRF into other policy areas;
  - ❖ A passion for promoting and protecting the freedom of people of all religions, while respecting the rights of those with no religious faith;
  - ❖ A reputation for excellence and fairness across the religious and ideological spectrum;
  - ❖ Proven management ability, including the capacity to succeed in a difficult and sometimes hostile bureaucracy.
- Early in the term, elevate the status of the position of Special Adviser for Religious Minorities to Special Envoy.
- Ensure the IRF Ambassador reports directly to the Secretary of State as mandated in the December 2016 amendments to the IRFA.
- Clarify and improve the bureaucratic structures and relationships between the IRF Office and other religion-related offices of the Department of State, which currently include:
  - ❖ The Office of Religion and Global Affairs
  - ❖ The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism
  - ❖ The Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Countries
  - ❖ The Special Representative to Muslim Communities

- Retain the Office of Religion and Global Affairs; clarify its functions; appoint as head of this office an individual with broad foreign policy knowledge and contacts with international religious actors; give the office head autonomy and authority under the supervision of the IRF Ambassador.
- Consider placing the other offices under the IRF Ambassador as well, including those that relate closely with religious freedom issues such as the Special Envoy on Anti-Semitism.
- Request from Congress on an annual basis no less than \$30 million per year for programs, to be administered by the IRF Ambassador, to advance religious freedom and counter violent religious extremism and terrorism.
- As these programs prove their worth, increase the amount requested from Congress.
- Grant to the IRF Ambassador full authority for the disbursement of these funds.
- Provide a staff for the IRF Ambassador's office of no less than 50 full-time Foreign Service Officers and Civil Servants. These positions can be found by consolidating existing religion-related offices.
- Review, under the authority of the IRF Ambassador and the Senior NSC Adviser on IRF policy, the State Department's existing *U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement* worldwide. Invest the IRF Ambassador and the Senior NSC Adviser on IRF with responsibility for ensuring consistency between it and the new National Security Strategy on IRF policy.
- Assign a Senior Adviser on CVRE to the IRF Ambassador at Large. Within the IRF Office change the recently-established CVE unit to CVRE, and staff it with specialists on religiously-motivated terrorist organizations.



- Maintain and increase outreach to NGOs and religious actors with deep experience in target cultures, as well as U.S.-based clerics and scholars, in order to increase American understanding of extremist and terrorist groups and how to defeat them.
- Require each regional bureau at the State Department to develop a religious freedom strategy as part of its annual program planning.
- Require more direct collaboration between the State Department's regional bureaus and the Office of International Religious Freedom by establishing an IRF officer position within each bureau and for each geographic desk in which religion is a significant foreign policy issue.

## **2 Train America's Diplomats to Advance International Religious Freedom.**

- Implement immediately the new requirement of the December 2016 IRFA amendments that the State Department develop a training curriculum for all American diplomats in IRF policy.
- Request that Congress appropriate funds for the development of a training curriculum as required by the December 2016 IRFA amendments.
- Ensure that any entity chosen to develop the curriculum have experience in pedagogy and how the State Department operates, and a deep understanding of religious freedom and its value for American foreign policy and national interests.
- Incorporate substantial CVRE elements into the new training curriculum.
- Recognize the extraordinary importance of IRF policy to the work of American diplomacy; encourage diplomats to specialize in religion and religious freedom by instituting a voluntary religion/religious freedom subspecialty under the political, economic, and public diplomacy career tracks for Foreign Service Officers.

### **3 Empower U.S. Missions Abroad to Advance Religious Freedom.**

- Mandate, in the President's letter of instruction to U.S. ambassadors, the allocation of embassy resources to engage religious actors, ideas, and communities, and to advance religious freedom.
- Require the development of a religious freedom strategy as part of the annual program planning of all U.S. missions abroad.
- Expand and institutionalize what are currently regional IRF training initiatives begun under the previous IRF Ambassador.

### **4 Reenergize Attention to Religious Freedom within U.S. Programs Promoting Democracy, Civil Society, and Human Rights.**

- Integrate religious freedom into all U.S. democracy planning and programs, including those of the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and those at the U.S. Agency for International Development; urge that Congress require such integration in programs at the National Endowment for Democracy.
- Ensure the IRF Ambassador and IRF Office are consulted regularly on strategic and operational decisions (particularly where any religious issues are involved) regarding U.S. democracy promotion and programming.
- Increase support, via foreign aid and democracy funding, for religious and secular nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around the world who seek to advance religious freedom as part of democratic development.
- Encourage nations and multilateral institutions that have been supportive of IRF to integrate IRF strategies into democracy and civil society programs.
- Where appropriate, frame religious freedom as an issue of diversity, minority inclusion, and cultural preservation, especially

when engaging audiences that may be less receptive to arguments grounded in human rights or national security considerations.

## **5 Make Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy More Attentive to Religious Freedom.**

- Provide training to improve awareness and fluency concerning religion on the part of American foreign policy officials responsible for strategic communications and public diplomacy.
- Ensure that leaders with expertise in religious freedom are among those appointed to senior public diplomacy positions.
- Increase the frequency of religious freedom programming on Voice of America and other public diplomacy outlets.
- Increase the frequency with which U.S. government officials consult with nongovernmental experts, including academics, religious leaders, and NGOs with experience in target cultures.
- Engage the International Religious Freedom Roundtable, a Capitol Hill forum of NGOs that meets regularly to discuss the issue.
- Revive the Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group within the State Department's Federal Advisory Committee established by the previous administration.

## **6 Engage Multilateral Institutions and International Law Related to Freedom of Religion.**

- Provide strong support to existing UN institutions that have specialized expertise on religious freedom.
- Ensure that officials covering human rights at the U.S. mission to the UN receive training on IRF.
- Given the need to increase attention at the UN to religious persecution and religion-related extremism, place a senior IRF

official in the U.S. mission as an adviser to the U.S. Ambassador to the UN.

- Leverage the growing network of foreign IRF-focused institutions that are eager to partner with the United States. The administration should support coalitions of like-minded countries and multilateral bodies such as:
  - ❖ The International Contact Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief
  - ❖ The Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
  - ❖ The European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance
  - ❖ The International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief
  - ❖ The Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief
- Ensure frequent consultation and collaboration between U.S. IRF officials and their counterparts in like-minded countries and multilateral organizations.
- Increase the administration's commitment to international human rights monitoring institutions, including those that monitor and report on human rights and religious freedom in the United States.
- Expand programs in key countries to educate religious groups and lawyers about victim's rights under international law and about complaint and reporting mechanisms available to them within international institutions.

## **7 Work Closely with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.**

- Encourage the U.S. Commission on IRF to monitor and publicize the administration's progress toward integrating IRF policy into the mainstream of foreign policy.

- Encourage the U.S. Commission on IRF to continue and expand its efforts to study the effects of religious freedom on violent religious extremism.
- Support initiatives of the U.S. Commission on IRF in education and leadership development, such as a fellows program.
- Encourage greater communication and collaboration between the U.S. Commission on IRF and other foreign policy institutions, as well as the nongovernmental IRF advocacy community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: THE CONGRESS

- Both Houses of Congress should involve themselves systematically, rather than episodically, in U.S. IRF policy, viewing it as both an issue of justice and of American national security.
- The Senate Foreign Relations Committee should immediately confirm a qualified nominee for IRF Ambassador at Large.
- Congress should appropriate ample funding to support an effective and successful IRF policy, led by the IRF Ambassador but involving the entire U.S. foreign affairs establishment.
- Both Houses should hold annual oversight hearings on the conduct and effectiveness of U.S. IRF policy.
- Both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs should establish sub-committees on IRF.
- Members of both Houses should strongly consider joining Congressional caucuses on IRF, and supporting international bodies such as the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- To the maximum extent possible Congress should endeavor to make “politics stop at the water’s edge” on this issue — engaging, improving, and supporting America’s vitally important IRF policy in a nonpartisan manner.

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- 1 See for example Brian Grim and Roger Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), and Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).
  - 2 Religion-related positions currently include the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, the Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Special Representative to Muslim Communities, the Special Representative on Religion and Global Affairs, and the Senior Adviser on Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia.
  - 3 Pew Research Center, "Trends in Global Restrictions on Religion," June 23, 2016, available at <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/06/23/trends-in-global-restrictions-on-religion/>. See also Jonathan Fox, *The Unfree Exercise of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
  - 4 We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Bradley Foundation in supporting this policy brief and the broader series of events and publications of which it is a part. Thanks also to our colleagues, especially RFI Senior Adviser Timothy Samuel Shah and IGE Editorial Fellow Judd Birdsall, for their extensive advice and support of the series.
  - 5 Published open-access at <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rfia20/14/2?nav=toclist>.
  - 6 View the full event video at <https://globalengage.org/news-media/video/can-the-politics-of-religious-freedom-stop-at-the-waters-edge-faith-freedom>.
  - 7 Thomas F. Farr and Dennis R. Hoover, *The Future of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy: Recommendations for the Obama Administration* (Washington, DC: Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University and Center on Faith & International Affairs at the Institute for Global Engagement, 2009). Available at <https://globalengage.org/faith-international-affairs/reports/the-future-of-u.s.-international-religious-freedom-policy-special-report>.

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## ABOUT THE SPONSORS



The Religious Freedom Institute (RFI), a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C., is committed to achieving broad acceptance of religious liberty for all people by promoting it as a fundamental human right, the cornerstone of a successful society, and a source of national and international security. The RFI seeks to achieve this goal by convincing stakeholders that religious freedom can help them achieve their own objectives—political, economic, strategic, and religious. RFI is establishing Action Teams in select regions to build coalitions and make religious freedom a priority for governments, civil society, religious communities, businesses, and the general public.



The Center on Faith & International Affairs (CFIA), based at the Institute for Global Engagement, equips scholars, practitioners, policymakers, religious leaders, and students with a balanced understanding of the role of religion in public life worldwide. CFIA advances its mission by creating forums — in print and in person — for rigorous scholarship, practical policy debate, and constructive dialogue. CFIA's programs include its flagship quarterly journal, *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, books, policy briefs, op-eds, courses, and conferences. Recent books published under CFIA auspices include *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Security* and *Religion and Foreign Affairs: Essential Readings*.