Faith and Diplomacy in the International System

Summary

As modern diplomacy became systematized in the 17th and 18th centuries, wars of religion gave way to wars of national interest in the age of nationalism. To this day, conventional wisdom holds either that religion is irrelevant to diplomacy in the modern secular nationalist age, or it is the source of future conflict (Sam Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations”). This paper argues that religion generally has steadily grown more important since the creation of the state of Israel in 1947. In the post-Cold War period since 1990, religion has also grown more central in international politics (and hence diplomacy). This has occurred with the increase in religious/ethnic/national conflict on all continents, including the collapse of governing structures (Robert Kaplan’s chaos argument).

Moreover, far from being a purely negative factor, religion properly managed has played, and may play, an even more important positive role in diplomacy and conflict resolution. If some religious values strengthen diplomacy, diplomacy also provides tools for managing, perhaps even resolving, religious disagreements and easing religious conflicts. The biggest impediment to this auspicious outcome is lack of knowledge and correct information by all major social groups about religious/diplomatic linkages.

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“It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.”

--James Thurber
For nearly 20 years, the international relations community has been wrestling with the problem of the relationship between religion and diplomacy, first pointed out by Barry Rubin in an article later reprinted in the excellent analysis, *Religion and Statecraft*.\(^1\) Rubin was commenting on U.S. policy failures in Iran, and noted that U.S. and other policy/decision makers had systematically ignored the impact and influence of religion in Iran. He, and others since, have traced this to the pervasive belief that “modernization” has brought about increasing secularization of society. The past decade has produced several landmark efforts to correct that misinterpretation—a special issue of *Deadalus*, Summer 1991, on “religion and Politics;” a special issue of *ORBIS*, Spring 1998 on “Religion in World Affairs;” and a number of books including the above-mentioned volume.\(^2\) The recent emerging discussion on globalization involves religion as well, and particularly the importance of religion as both social and psychological base for choices that individuals and societies make.\(^3\)

Concurrent strains of thought suggest that science and God may be coming closer together, and that the reemergence of the importance of religion in politics stems from the alienation created by aspects of modern life such as capitalism and bureaucratization. World systems theories, including Marxism, have likewise proven inadequate because of their focus on the material aspects of life. Robert Wuthnow suggests that these theories err because they leave no room for charismatic and the spiritual elements which defy the best efforts of rational choice theorists to create a predictable universe.\(^4\)

Faith and diplomacy have been soul mates all along, it seems, and we are currently engaged in seeking the post-Modern connections and exploring both the empirical and normative aspects of this combination. This challenge is particularly difficult because it cuts across scholarly categories and severely challenges some components of current “scientific” and pseudo-scientific orthodoxy. In truth, as James Der Derian reminds us, diplomacy has been there all along; the first diplomats serving as mediators between sovereigns who carried divine rights with
them. Walter McDougall carries the story further by tracing the continuing influence through the Westphalian period down to today.\textsuperscript{5} A significant part of the problem is that religion plays different roles at different times and different places. It supplies the underlying subtext of meaning, which may surface in domestic or international relations, sometimes on an intermittent basis (specific human rights issues), and sometimes as the central element of policy and action (the Iranian revolution). A quick rundown of some cases will make the point:

The Iranian revolution placed religion at the forefront of society and policy-making on all issues. It totally changed Iran’s government from a secularizing and modernizing monarchy to a theocratic, religiously fundamentalist state and society. The Khomeini revolution initiated the new discussion of the importance of religion in international affairs, and is often considered the benchmark for religious involvement in politics.\textsuperscript{6} Less well known is the role the Protestant Church played in the demise of the German Democratic Republic, when the Federation of Evangelical churches provided space for discussion of politics and privately urged the regime toward a more open and progressive society. This culminated in church support for a series of demonstrations across East Germany which led to the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the GDR.\textsuperscript{7}

The Catholic and Protestant traditions have been well documented in diplomatic history and literature, forming the basis as they do for the Western Westphalian diplomacy of the past 400 years. Catholicism’s impact today stems from tradition and doctrine reflected in the Catholic Church as an institution (the only one that has diplomatic representation), Catholics as a community, and catholic thought and ideas, including the “Liberation Theology” found a decade or two ago in Latin America. Protestantism has played a major role in the United States. The Protestant rejection of hierarchy and focus on individual salvation became mingled with and driven by the American democratic experiment, and even today fuels American idealism and universal human rights aspirations.\textsuperscript{8} Given the predominance of both traditions in Europe, it is probably useful to consider the
traditional Westphalian Balance of Power as a product of a Christian philosophy of restraint a balance, rather than merely secular alternative to religious struggle.

The Eastern Orthodox Church has always played a significant role in the context of the states where it was the dominant force --10 countries in Eastern Europe, all but one of whom (Greece) were communist for much of the past 50 years. The newly-acquired independence of the Eastern European region, including Russia, has channeled Orthodox religion activity along nationalist lines, with residual criticism of free market economics and open political debate, which it sees also as a challenge to its monopoly.9

Some historians count the revival of religion as a development in international politics with the creation of the state of Israel and the Arab-Islamic political response to what they considered a dismaying event. Islam and the West have been at odds since the time of the crusades, 800-plus years ago for geopolitical more than religious reasons, though the two reinforce each other throughout history. As this state of affairs became enmeshed with colonialism and the Arab nationalist response, religion took a back burner until the establishment of Israel. For the Jews, however, particularly in the post-Holocaust world, it became a unique and special beacon to Jews all over the world. This and the hostility of the Arabs in varying degrees over time, created the present geopolitical configuration in the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli Peace Process of the last 30-plus years has involved as much diplomacy in that time as any other set of issues.10

Less familiar to Americans, and perhaps to others, are the roles of religion in Japan and China. Because of its particular geographic isolation, religion in Japan has had little effect on, or connection with, diplomacy by comparison to may other states in which monotheistic traditions deeply affect ethical norms. Religion there tends to function at familial and communal levels rather than at a level of universal beliefs in strongly held ethical imperatives or articles of faith. Only during the pre-World War II ascendancy of state Shintoism were patriotism and religion melded into a creed deeply impressed into the populace. Both the academic and popular press in Japan warn against the possibility of a turn toward
religious nationalism, and there is tension between secularism and fear of revived
militarism fueled by religion. Religion in Japan, however, does not mean the same
thing that it does elsewhere.\textsuperscript{11}

In China, the communist government which came to power in 1949 began
eradicating religion from political and social life. Today, the CPP government
energetically patrols religious activities and organizations such as the Falan Gong
because it fears the growth of independent authority and civil institutions beyond
its control. Nevertheless, religious views will play a role at the personal level and
in the growing debate about personal rights. Political authoritarianism has always
been absolute, and religion/Confucianism was always controlled and coopted more
completely than in the West. Religion may yet turn out to be a greater factor in
foreign than domestic politics, since Beijing is fending off penalties for violating
religious and other human rights, and seeking to remove the Vatican mission from
Taiwan.\textsuperscript{12}

This resurgence of religion in foreign policy has been obvious not only in the
Middle East, but in ethnic and religious struggles in Bosnia, Kosovo, and the
emergence of a Slav/religious component to Russian foreign policy. This has been
acerbated by the “collapse of the categories” at the end of the Cold War, the end of
bipolarity, and emerging chaos in much of the developing world which Robert
Kaplan so distressingly outlined in his book, \textit{The Ends of the Earth}.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{The Impact of Faith and Religion}

A major change in diplomacy and international politics has been the creation
of new states over the last five decades which brings the number of U.N. members
to 185 instead of the 50 which formed the organization. Add to this the rapid
increase in communications, transportation and the combination of non-
governmental organizations (NGO’s) with the power of the internet, and the
cacophony in both religion and diplomacy can be deafening. How are these effects
to be best analyzed? The following four-category table is an initial cut:
1) Faith and religious beliefs of politicians, statesmen, and diplomats. The individual beliefs of the players affect not only their perceptions of issues, but what they do. Studies of American presidents and statesmen have shown this—Wilson’s Presbyterian sternness and moralism; Dulles’ and Reagan’s religious views about the evil of the Soviet Union. The link between Bismarck’s and Gladstone’s beliefs have been spelled out by historians, and Iranian foreign moves have been closely linked to the beliefs of key ayatollahs. Work on leadership orientation should include analysis of the “faith” component of an individual’s beliefs. One of the issues that will surface rather quickly is that most foreign policy officials have scant grounding in religious/faith issues—that just isn’t part of the dialog at Foggy Bottom, Westminster, or the Qai d’Orsay, even if it should be. Edward Luttwack once argued that embassies should have religious attaches, but that begs the problem—to truly understand faith/religious issues requires that ALL levels of policy/decision maker have some idea of what’s going on.

Conversely, if faith issues are important, the normative side of the equation implies that individuals on the religious side of the equation would benefit from an understanding of diplomatic terms and analysis and a realistic understanding of the working elements of international relations. In any event individual faith./belief/religious reference is certainly a category of understanding that could use further clarification.

2) Belief structures which underlie national/international views. This category would include philosophies, intellectual currents, and beliefs which contribute to national/organizational views. These may be distinguished from individual faith views, but obviously influence them. The secularist view of modernization is one such view; individual religious doctrines are another. Islamic radical views which see the West as corrupt and modernizing governments as tools of Satan are an important political view, because contained in this body of thought is a carefully
worked out philosophy of terrorism which is substantially at odds with Western as well as much Islamic tradition.\(^{15}\)

The connection between American belief structure has been one of at least partial denial. Although separation of church and state has been one of our enduring political myths; in fact, religious belief and religion have played a key context-establishing role since before the framing of the constitution. Religion has helped shape American values since the earliest days when Americans saw the United States as the “new Jerusalem,” the city on the hill where people could work out their destinies free of old restraints—and as a beacon on the hill for others. Belief in a divine creator, if not in a state religion, suffused our political life—and still does despite the increasing 20th century secularization. In practical foreign policy terms, missionaries were engaging in their own forms of “diplomacy” before the United States even had a diplomatic service, and missionaries outnumbered American diplomats abroad until well into the 1950’s.

History may be coming full circle—over the past six or seven years, the privatization of some aspects of foreign policy has led to increasingly prominent roles for church-connected relief agencies such as the Catholic Relief Service, the American Friends Service Committee, World Vision, and the Episcopal Presiding Bishop’s Relief Fund. In the past decade, American religious fundamentalism, particularly on the right, has had greater visibility in overseas-related activities.\(^{16}\) The creation in 1999 of an Office of Religious Freedom in the State Department as a result of the Wolfe-Specter Bill in response to the Christian Right has already stimulated at least one “get lost” reaction on the part of a major government.\(^{17}\)

Such links between belief and policy can be found in almost every country, and certainly with many NGO’s. Searching out those links can improve our understanding of policy and those who make it, as well as providing better overall strategic understanding.

3) **Organizational impact of faith issues and religious organizations.** The obvious example here is the Vatican as a diplomatic organ of the Catholic Church. In
comparison, there is no similar organization at that level of effectiveness for any other religion. Islamic nations meet together as a body, but internal conflicts detract from their work. Jewish Zionist organizations are effective, but do not have their own diplomatic service.

Within nations, the situation is more structured. The State-controlling Guardians Council in Iran may wind up in conflict with Iran’s newly-elected parliament if the reformers push liberalization. Christian Democratic parties have dominated much of Europe’s landscape since World War II. The rise of the Hindu BJP since 1990 in India to control the government suggest that religious involvement in politics is alive and well. Western analysis has in the past unduly discounted religious parties because it took only its immediate secular prowess into consideration. It is impossible to understand the bitter ethnic/religious conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the government in Sri Lanka unless one understands to roots of the Buddhist/Hindu religious issue as well and the ethnic bases of the conflict.

4) Special issues that religion poses for statecraft.

“...religion is an intractable force that can be unresponsive to all the instrumentalities of state power, let alone the instrumentalities of foreign policy.

-Edward Luttwak

Tapping religious fervor may be a good way to build support in a conflict, or to do battle--but it also ties his or her hands when it comes to negotiating a settlement. The current state of peace negotiations in Northern Ireland merely underline the point. Diplomats generally deal with power and conflict--their stock in trade is persuasion, bargaining and deals. Religious motivations are transcendent and unpredicatable, often accompanied by prophetic visions, the Mandate of Heaven, the Word of the Prophet. Those who act in their name seek
victory, historical vindication, and have a deeply hostile view of the "others-as-enemy."

This is not conducive to settlements instead of Armageddons, and might be very dangerous indeed when dealing with nuclear issues or weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, during the Cold War, the Russians were very concerned about American fundamentalism and what they saw as its propensity for Armageddon in crisis situations. The fact that few scholars and perhaps even fewer statesmen, theologians, or media folk are equally knowledgeable in both fields could be a scary proposition. Those who know statecraft often admit they are beginners in spiritual matters, while few theologians would claim experience in diplomacy or the political scramble.

**Religion and Politics**

Thus the interplay between religion and politics/diplomacy can be subtle and complex. Getting religious fervor behind a political struggle may act as a force multiplier in a political struggle--as in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, or Kosovo, but it can also bring the machinery of conflict resolution to a halt. Worse, it can even leave societies in ruins as in Lebanon in the 1970’s and ‘80s, or Algeria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan today.

However, used rightly--and no one is exactly certain of how this works for sure in all cases--it might also help resolve conflicts, deal with some of the more negative aspects of globalization. Historians note that true believers have been responsible for some of the most sordid as well as the most sublime events in history. Richard Falk, in the paper cited earlier, suggests that religious identity provides an important counterweight to the relatively inhumane forces of the global economy, and others agree that this may be the only way to stop or temper the Globalization juggernaut. It also suggests that the modernization/ secularization thesis of contemporary social science is either wrong or needs to be completely recast.
The emergence of a world-wide economic system means we are connected with others elsewhere in ways our parents could never imagine. Political and military issues and clashes are less severe in the contemporary world--but they are still there, and still as deadly to the participants. The prospect of nuclear and chemical-biological terrors has not been banished. The increasing weakness of the social order in so many places, as documented by Kaplan and others, suggests that complacency and withdrawal are inappropriate responses to international questions on either secular foreign policy or religious grounds.

With the advent of post-Modernism and the resurgence of both religious and social movements, a greater diversity of spirituality and ideas about the sacred, spurred on by modern mass communications, perhaps we are approaching a "post-secular society" in which both normative theory and religion be a requirement for understanding and coping with the future.

**Religion as a Two-Edged Sword**

If the coming age is one of reforming and recasting values, the international system must deal with that, and diplomacy will be called into the service of such ends. Preventive Diplomacy--heading off conflict and disaster before they arrive--and effective conflict resolution abilities are becoming at least as important as classical geostrategic, economic, and political military skills. The logistics and costs of relief efforts, refugee politics and assistance move more toward the center. Religious people of all faiths have traditionally focused their efforts in this direction, and even today accelerate these activities.

Perhaps more important, there must be a recasting of the intellectual categories to get away from the fact/value separation that underlies much of modern social science from Max Weber to the more rigid political analysis of the fully committed Realist school of thought. Some amelioration of this divide is necessary for the more critical task of getting religious thinkers and international
relations scholars to talk constructively with each other. We need to get away from the kind of separation represented by individual who declaimed derisively “Going to war over religion is basically killing each other to see who’s got the better imaginary friend.”

Historical trends strongly show that religion is a two-edged sword: it can been a terribly divisive force as well as a unifying feature. An excellent assessment of the world’s religions in terms of their potential for conflict/conflict resolution concluded that “…each contains within itself an internal tension with respect to how conflicts among human beings can best be resolved: there are both harmonizing and confrontational elements in each tradition.”  

Religious differences have been a highly divisive factor of conflicts in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. They are not the only cause of such conflicts, yet are a contributing, often decisive, factor in their continuance, and even in current scholarship they are given a mere side note. In an otherwise excellent volume, Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a complex World, there is no index listing for “religion” or religious factors. One almost has to read between the lines to discover that major church organizations were involved in several of the cases, most notably in Burundi.

As part of the millennial celebrations, world religious leaders have increasingly recognized, by action as well as words, the message that we share a world, despite differences. At a gathering of several hundred leaders from 15 faiths in Amman in January at an assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the focus was on the “role of religion in resolving conflicts, healing intolerance, and more effectively raising the moral issues pertinent to economic and social change.”

The more perceptive theologians recognize that religion has its dark side. Serious efforts have been made to ease this within most faiths in recent years -- as well as between faiths. Progress may not seem so broad because this has occurred at a time when religious conflict has been growing, often in connection with ethnic disturbances.
One of the key issues is how we view "others." Is the “other” a child of God, or the "evil enemy?" History illustrates that horrors have been perpetrated by all faiths when they have tilted toward the dark side of otherness. For example, Christianity has much to answer for with respect to the Crusades and the Inquisition. Moslems, Hindus, and Buddhists all have their historical tragedies as well. The emergence of radical extremisms in political life from all faiths has increased concern on this point.

On the other hand, religious beliefs underlying foreign policies, have had very positive effects in history as well. The Allied willingness to “forgive” Japan and Germany at the end of World War II laid the basis for over 50 years (and still counting) of peace. Contrast this with the results of the vengefully draconian peace imposed upon Germany in 1919-20. We take it for granted that the Cold War ended peacefully, but such historic confrontations have not always ended as benignly--Athens vs. Sparta, Rome vs. Carthage, for example. It might be fairly argued that the absence of a Western revenge-motivated foreign policy, coupled with the open hand held out to Russia and the other states of the ex-Soviet Union, made possible the peaceful dissolution of the "evil empire," rather that a desperate struggle which could have precipitated a nuclear conflict. The West’s Judeo-Christian tradition was an important factor in the emergence of such a policy.

To enter into interfaith dialog, people need to know their own faith deeply, and be able to apply it appropriately. Concurrently learning about other faiths gives a necessary comparative perspective almost totally lacking in many places today. Understanding about, and communicating with, other faiths helps significantly in avoiding or minimizing demonization of “the other.” Religious hostility is NEITHER inevitable NOR historically mandated. Many communities have interfaith committees where this sort of dialog is already underway. Similar discussions are growing between regional and national levels of different faiths. Of course, theologians have been at it for years, and the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago prepares excellent material for study groups and serves as a venue for
religious leaders to deal with ecumenical issues and the interaction of religious groups.

Fr. Bede Griffiths, an English Benedictine who ran an ashram in India for 30 years until his death in 1993, spoke of a "Perennial Philosophy" which is present in all religions. In his 1990 landmark book, *A New Vision of Reality: Western Science, Eastern Mysticism, and Christian Faith*, he asserts that the world's religious traditions are interrelated, and that each has its own insights. Commenting just before his death in 1993, Fr. Bede said, "The deeper you go, the more all religions are alike." Such common ground as respect for the individual soul, certain (but not all!) moral prohibitions and exhortations, and respect for God underlie diplomacy's efforts. As a basis for planetary co-existence, Griffiths' work provides an excellent starting point, particularly for de-demonizing the "other" as well as exploring bases of common interest and agreement.26

In fact, much practical work has already been done in this area across religious lines, particularly among Middle Eastern groups. Some practical implications are spelled out in the case chapters of *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*.27 These show that certain moral and social characteristics of religious communities uniquely equip them to promote religious peace.

Interfaith dialog is often aimed at an ecumenical outcome, bringing churches together. But this tends to water down doctrine to the point that it looses the sacred authority behind it, as the World Council of Churches tends to do.28

**Contemporary World Views**

Contemporary views of international affairs deserve a little analysis also. With some exceptions, religion is not dealt with in a particularly sophisticated manner, nor extensively. Thomas Friedman posits religion as one of the principal driving forces behind opposition to globalization, but gives it little other than a nod for positive contributions to the values discussion. Robert Kaplan described the
blossoming of chaos in the world, but says little about how religion contributes or impedes that process.29

Perhaps the most widely known world analysis, Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, suggests that future struggles will be fought out between civilizations based on religion, equating religion with civilization, and hence the principal source of endemic conflict.

This has a certain ring of truth, but a closer, deeper look at world religions suggests that his broad brush fails to deal with some important differences. For example, Christianity is not confined to his "West;" Islam is not confined to "the Middle East;" nor are Confucianism and Buddhism limited to a single area. Max Singer and Aaron Wildavsky, in *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil*, posit a much more pluralist, less platonic world, one less centralized with more scope for individual and national initiative. Aside from a comment on the return of religion to Russia, however, these authors do not even deal with the larger issues posed by religious clashes—in fact, part of their point is to suggest that these may be irrelevant.

These studies, however, may be useful in providing a general look at the world to those of faith who are not International Relations specialists. For if the diplomats, politicians, and many citizens know little about religion, Many of those deeply occupied with religion are similarly uninformed about the world of politics. Many of us in academia encounter this when speaking before church groups, and are seldom invited to address theological conclaves. What is clear is that we need a higher level of understanding and interaction all around.

One's views determine how one is likely to apply one's faith and whether and how one is likely to attempt in, and succeed at, diplomacy. In the U.S. and some other places, Christians have had particular difficulty coming to reasonable grips with the role of force in international affairs and this has distanced them from mainstream public understanding. Following Christ's admonition, "blessed are the peacemakers," some Christian pacifists have either sought to exclude force from international affairs or taken a perfectionist view of ethics which leads to a
fanaticism that distances them from reality. Example of this can be found in most other religions as well.

For example, at the onset of the Gulf War, both U.S. national Catholic and Protestant leadership strayed into ideological fields, some distance from general religious opinion, the Christian realism espoused by Reinhold Niebuhr and the contextualist approach to statecraft/force driving contemporary Western statesmen.. The Niebuhrian view of situationalist ethics may simply (and very roughly) be described as "If you argue for a given position, you must be prepared to argue for, or at least accept, the likely consequences." A good short review of these issues is found in George Weigel’s opening essay in Just War and the Gulf War. A broader and more diplomatically focused treatment can be found in Force and Statecraft, by eminent historian Gordon Craig and distinguished political scientist Alexander George.30

Since the end of the Cold War, there are more discussions of these matters in American churches, especially with respect to potential interventions, and disaster relief for poor countries.

**Just War/Just Peace**

High on the list of issues that any reconnecting of religion, diplomacy and international relations will have to deal with will be the ancient doctrines of Just War and Just Peace, and in the Islamic world, the question of Jihad. Over the past few years, a combined team of theologians and scholars have taken a renewed look at earlier doctrines of Just War and Just Peace. A group of theologians who have been meeting periodically for about six years summarized the outcome of their work in Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War.31 It is a working document, at the cutting edge of contemporary discussion, yet written for a general audience as well as theologians and academicians and paying serious attention to Christian understanding of key diplomacy/foreign affairs concepts.
Stassen and his colleagues have undertaken this work in order to clarify the choices for all faiths in an era when “humanitarian interventions,” rather than wars, have become a primary element of concern. Christians, and others as well, have led the way in support of peacemaking as an activity and the application of conflict resolution techniques to try and avoid violence. They, more than secular thinkers, have pushed the notion of "justice" into the equation of calculating the just use of force. Weigel’s classic Christian formulation of true peace as "rightly ordered and dynamic political community in and among nations, in which legal and political institutions provide effective means for resolving the inevitable conflicts that will define public life until the End of Time," would be familiar and acceptable to mainline Islamic thought as well.

Similarly, Christian (and of course other’s) concern for the poor and desire to build community relate very closely to the issue of combating chaos and building a just world order. Christians accept (to varying degrees, of course) John Donne’s famous statement, "ask not for whom the bells toll; they toll for thee," This concern has supplied one of the strongest motives for Western assistance to those in need over the past 40 years (despite the fact that “Christian” America has sunk to the bottom of the list of industrialized countries in terms of per capita foreign assistance sent abroad). In the current international environment, the opportunities for constructive religious involvement abroad have multiplied significantly, individually and independently as well as collectively, through non-governmental organizations, a fact not always recognized in the chanceries of the world.

[Take out if desired, beginning here]The following list of Stassen and his colleague’s ten practices are interesting, because unlike many theological lists, they are keyed to “real world” problems and are easily linked to diplomatic and other political issues:

PEACEMAKING INITIATIVES
1. **Support nonviolent direct action** – boycotts, strikes, marches, civil disobedience, public disclosure, accompaniment, safe space.

2. **Take independent initiatives to reduce threats** -- decrease threat, stand-alone, series best—if reciprocated can continue (arms reduction)

3. **Use Cooperative Conflict Resolution (CCR)** – active co-working of parties to conflict. Arab Israeli peace example; Trust in Yugoslavia. Issues: Cultural Barriers, degree of damage/pain, problems of scale, power inequities. Alter perceived reality even in irreducible conflict.


**JUSTICE**


6. **Foster just and sustainable economic development**. Environmentally constructive development. Development to promote end of poverty, measure of justice. Injustice in debt structure, conflicts in needs, resources (oil, water). Sustainability vs. greed.

**LOVE AND COMMUNITY**

7. **Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system**. International System is BOTH cooperative AND conflictual. Tension among governmental goals. Trend in system to decline in utility of war, rise of trading state, dramatic increase in volume, density of international exchanges, increase in democracy. “Free rider” problem in concerts.

8. **Strengthen UN and international efforts for cooperation and human rights**. Collective action. Peace keeping, Peace building and peace enforcement – even if sovereign rights are abridged in egregious cases.


10. **Encourage Grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary association**. Network of NGO's, build sense of community. People, not just leaders.
The elements of the above list have some interesting implications for "diplomacy," if they are taken seriously, including inclusion of NGO’s and other non-traditional forms of diplomacy such as Track II and public diplomacy. [End section to remove]

Organizational Issues

Effective foreign and diplomatic policy also requires serious attention to the mechanisms for conducting it. Perhaps it is not too egregious to note that a faith-full approach to governments is needed as well. Over the past ten years, the diplomatic budget of the U.S. Government as well as those of most other Western countries have been under substantial pressure, and remains so today. Individuals of faith seeking to minimize the use of force, provide assistance to the less fortunate, and protect human rights, for example, do and should give serious attention to mechanisms and ways to fund adequate diplomatic, informational and assistance establishments -- as well as maintaining a military establishment sufficient to keep the peace. Even intelligence gathering deserves proper funding. C. S. Lewis put the case best for effective involvement in such worldly matters in Mere Christianity:

The proper motto is not "Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever," but "Be good sweet maid, and don't forget that this involves being as clever as you can." God is no fonder of intellectual slackers than any other slackers.32

In God/Allah’s eyes, it would be no better to be a Bishop or an Ayatollah than a secretary of state or a foreign minister who failed to condemn nuclear or chemical/biological terrorism or refused to act against it.
Similarly, when confronting issues of policy such as support for the United Nations, trade regulation, humanitarian relief or military intervention, it is important to consider organizational needs over time.

In the U.S., for example, the individual who calls for a dramatic reduction in military force will have little credibility if he or she later insists that the nation intervene militarily. The senator, whether Christian or not, who votes consistently to cut the State Department's budget has little complaint if the United States becomes incapable of exercising consistent great power diplomacy and persuasive conflict resolution. One may seek to change the State Department, reform it, make it more sensitive to different values, but he or she can not shrink or eliminate it without being guilty of gross hypocrisy or dereliction of duty. Extremists of the American Christian Right who oppose abortion to the point of blocking policies which may save live may not accept such a characterization of their narrow view of foreign affairs, but if it walks and talks like a duck....

History also tells us that one danger in an active religious focus of the wrong kind would be to press sectarianism so far as to provoke the religious fanaticism that has and still can prevent effective diplomacy. From the ancient Crusades to more recent Iranian terrorism there are examples of religion producing sordid rather than sublime results in diplomacy and international politics. Alternatively, however, diplomacy in its negotiation and conflict resolution modes offers patterns of behavior that may mute or resolve religious conflict, and some have been noted above.

In a sense, that returns us to the infancy of diplomacy, and those who argue for effective diplomatic practice and organization do so to minimize the world’s difficulties. An excellent example of this is retired U.S. Ambassador Monteagle Stearn’s Talking to Strangers: Improving American Diplomacy at Home and abroad. Stearns argues that the best way to maintain a friendly world order is for American Diplomacy to be competent and well supported organizationally. Stearns identifies religion as a badly-misunderstood area, and urges more and
better training to enable professionals to better identify and understand forces of change.

This writer would go further and insist that not only diplomats and politicians, but journalists, business and religious leaders need to know more in this area. From the standpoint of professional utility, this writer found that his faith connections were more important to the Iranian officials he dealt with in 1978-9 than his embassy status or academic attainments. Moreover, the only U.S. Embassy officials the provisional revolutionary government really trusted during this period were the three U.S. officers who had regularly attended Christian worship services during their time of service in Tehran. It may be even more necessary in the future for diplomats to be familiar with religious issues and their intermixture with politics if they want to be effective.

What Next?

‘Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

--Matthew 10:16

To be “wise as serpents” requires effort. Better understanding of international affairs and foreign policy making will help any person of faith comprehend and activate an important public dimension of his or her personal understanding. Undertaken by many, such attention also encourages nations to come to grips with their own Niebuhrian failings and darker sides, rather than ignoring or passing over them as we are all wont to do with varying frequencies. The books listed in the footnotes would make a solid beginning for such training.

If the populace at large becomes more interested in these issues, politicians will gradually, if slowly, follow. To actively educate politicians and government officials, however, is a different matter. As a newly elected American government takes office next January, appointees will swarm Washington with a mixture of joy,
relief, anticipation, and not a little hubris. Indeed, as new governments take office in any democratic society, there are always residual problems of educating the “new kids on the block.” Most have learned about their own political system from practice, some are competent administrators, others are not. There will be few who even approach the requisite knowledge of the interplay of religion and diplomacy to begin laying out effective policies.

As part of the “education” of new government officials, particularly in the foreign affairs, foreign commerce, assistance, intelligence and defense communities, major foundations and councils of foreign relations as well as the U.S. Institute of Peace should support awareness training and education in the area of religion and diplomacy. Ideally, this would be part of an overall training program, called perhaps (and only partly tongue-in-cheek), “The First Hundred Days: Path to Greatness or Oblivion?” Such a program or programs would also assist in developing coordination within the new administration team. After all, as former Baltimore Orioles Manager Earl Weaver said, “It’s what you learn after you think you know everything that really counts.”

As a consequence, perhaps diplomatic understanding, conflict resolution, cross cultural understanding and peacemaking will come to be applied more regularly to diplomacy and within religions themselves, both within the structure of each faith and between faiths--thus helping to diminish the sum total of deadly and debilitating conflict in our world. We already have conceptual breakthroughs; what we need now are perceptual breakthroughs on a much larger scale.

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ENDNOTES

1 Barry Rubin, “Religion and International Affairs,” chapter 3, in Religion and Statecraft, Douglas Johnson and Cynthia Sampson, eds.


7 Carey Pieratt-Seeley, “The Development of the Public Sphere Within the Protestant Church in the German Democratic Republic, 1950-89,” paper presented at the International Studies Association southern Regional meeting, Lexington, KY Nov.12-14, 1999 (adapted from her Duke University PhD dissertation); Religion and Statecraft, op cit., ch. 7.


17 “U.S. Envoy on Faith Not Welcome,” Pioneer News Service, New Delhi, Sept. 13, 1999. An Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said there was “no plan or intention to invite such an official or to engage in discussion,” and added “The Government and people of India reject any intrusive exercise into how we conduct our affairs.”

18 McDougall, op. cit., p. 2.

19 Falk, op. cit.; Friedman, op.cit., chs. 17,18; Mazur, op. cit.


22Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft. op cit., p. 280; and ch. 12.


27 Religion: The Missing... op cit., chapters 4-10.


29 Friedman, op cit.; Kaplan, op cit.

30 Just War and the Gulf War. James Turner Johnson and George Weigel, Ethics and Public Policy


Interaction of Diplomacy and Religion. How diplomats define the common interest, especially regarding religious issues, depends to some extent on their perspective toward the world along the spectrum of realism to idealism. General books edited or authored by Douglas Johnston and the activities sponsored by the Center for the Strategic and International Studies and the United States Institute for Peace. Among governments, Iranian President Khatami launched a Dialogue of Civilizations in the 1990s that, for a time, became a platform to improve U.S.-Iranian relations.