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RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

AND AMERICA'S IMAGE AND POLICIES ABROAD

Working Group Report

Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

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Institute for the Study of Diplomacy
Working Group Report, 2018

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This working group was co-sponsored by Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; Center for Contemporary Arab Studies; Center for Jewish Civilization; Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding; Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement; and University Campus Ministry. In March 2018, this group convened to discuss how incidents of religious intolerance pose direct challenges to U.S. foreign policy goals.

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FOREWORD

The freedom to practice one's religion openly and without interference from the government – or to follow no faith tradition – is one of the most fundamental rights in this country. Guaranteed in our first amendment, the principle of freedom of conscience predates our Constitution. It is an individual right, and a natural right. And it is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

But freedom of religion, of conscience, is more than the granting of passive tolerance to others' practice of religion. It means accepting those who adhere to whatever faith as full citizens and members of the community, worthy of equal rights. President George Washington said it eloquently:

> *May the children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants, while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.*

In that same letter of 1790, Washington also said, "For happily the government of the United States, **which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance**, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support."

These are the values and principles upon which our country and our government rest. They have throughout our history perhaps been more aspirational than fully realized, but the aspiration was there, reaffirmed and restored. It provided the light for the city on the hill, inspiring others around the world.

Regrettably, to many it appears today that bigotry is now given sanction and persecution assistance through a rise of nativism and ethno-nationalism that seeks to deny "the children of the Stock of Abraham" – and others who do not fit within a narrow vision of "we" – that recognition as fellow citizens, or as persons worthy of dignity and equal rights.

This working group, and a public forum that followed, examined the data and explored the rise of intolerance domestically and how it has both affected and been affected by global trends and events.

Beyond a betrayal of our core values, these actions, these dimming of the lights, affect America's ability to credibly conduct diplomacy and to effectively promote peaceful solutions to global and local conflicts involving, as they often do, members of competing faith communities. This rise in bigoted rhetoric and intolerant actions can also, as we have seen, distort how we deal with a diverse world. If "they" become dehumanized enemies, policy becomes dismissive, or punitive. We have moved from occasional hypocrisy to an apparent abdication of our principles.

While current trends are grim and public discourse in some quarters coarse, divisive, and on the cusp of normalized, the group concluded that there remains a fundamental commitment in America and among Americans to our abiding values. The members concluded their work with ten recommendations to address and reverse the worrisome trajectory of intolerance and its impact on US foreign policy interests, which we hope will form solid ground to move forward.

Barbara K. Bodine
Director, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

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Executive summary

Religious Intolerance and America's Image and Policies Abroad

Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

Religion plays a key role in societies the world over. An individual's right to adhere to any faith he or she chooses, along with the right not to adhere to any, was one of the earliest foundational doctrines of the American revolutionary movement and the nation it created. The recent rise in America of nativist and xenophobic groups and their ideology puts new pressures on these centuries-old core U.S. beliefs. Americans historically have cast themselves as champions for human rights and religious freedom, but this opens the door to criticism abroad for double standards and hypocrisy when we fail to act in accordance with these ideals. The rise in domestic hate crimes against Jews and Muslims and followers of other faiths in America also tarnishes the image of the United States as a human rights champion – and this helps our aggressors to use these acts against us, from a geopolitical and propaganda perspective.

To explore the issue of how domestic religious intolerance affects U.S. diplomacy, in 2018 the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy convened a working group on "Religious Intolerance and America's Image and Policies Abroad." Experts from the diplomatic corps, academia, non-governmental organizations, and U.S.-based faith communities joined an in-depth discussion of the impact of pervasive domestic religious intolerance and bigotry on America's image and influence throughout the world.

The group also worked to identify ways for government and civil society to mitigate the dangerous consequences. With this in mind, the ISD working group produced a set of **Guiding Principles and Policy Recommendations** for policymakers, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and other relevant parties to incorporate into their daily policymaking and research priorities. Among these principles:

- **Be faithful to America's core values as such, not because of security implications.** Religious freedom is a core fundamental freedom and a basic building block of the American creed, and safeguarding that essential freedom is essential to preserving our core values as a nation.

SUMMARY BRIEF

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INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF DIPLOMACY

Founded in 1978, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, an integral part of the Walsh School of Foreign Service, brings together diplomats, other practitioners, scholars and students from across and beyond Georgetown University to explore global challenges and evolving demands of diplomatic statecraft, to better understand the nexus of theory and practice, and to enhance and expand an appreciation of the role of diplomacy as a critical tool in national policy.

Introduction

Religions and belief structures form the core of every society. They provide the context for the norms and principles that dictate social interaction and civil obligations, and they can be a driving force for social change. Freedom to practice one's religion openly and without fear – or to hold no religion – has become a hallmark of post-World War II governance. This freedom is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and remains a fundamental tenet of the American Creed. For the United States, this ideal of religious pluralism reflects the U.S. motto: *E pluribus unum*, "Out of Many, One," along with core American principles of equality, the inherent worth of the individual, rule of law, and the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion.

Historically, Americans have cast themselves as champions for human rights and religious freedom. But when we fail to act in accordance with these ideals we expose ourselves to criticism for double standards and hypocrisy. Domestic laws and politics – and an environment that welcomes or fails to welcome people from diverse religious faiths – can have a lasting impact on the credibility and effectiveness of U.S. policies abroad.

Following the end of the Cold War's ideological divisions, many observers around the world saw the emergence of religious differences as the new global fault line. In the wake of the September

11 terrorist attacks, the false notion of an inevitable and violent "clash of civilizations" gained currency. Some within the United States embrace this notion, taking up the "with us or against us" challenge, which fuels the misperception that an existential war of religions has begun. Extreme instances of bigotry committed by the hands of government officials, such as prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay or discriminatory immigration law enforcement practices, also feed a narrative that the United States is at war with Islam. This narrative is at odds with American values and constitutional protections for religious freedom – but it also undermines U.S. security and becomes a propaganda windfall for terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS, who seek to weaken America's global leadership.

The correlated rise in domestic hate crimes against Jews and Muslims in America also tarnishes the image of the United States as a human rights champion. Our values and principles – the American Creed – make us an aspiration for others, and any signs of tolerance for hate crimes call into question the uniqueness of the U.S. democratic model and limit our influence and moral standing on a range of global concerns. The trend is disturbing. Since 2017, anti-Muslim rhetoric from the White House, Supreme Court decisions that appear to condone bias, and a failure to condemn blatantly anti-Semitic and xenophobic white supremacist groups has tarnished U.S. human rights credibility, leading to increasingly strained relations with partners around the world. These types of signals from the United States, in turn, may help nativist movements around the globe justify their own xenophobic, racist, or discriminatory activities.

In an increasingly interconnected world with transnational religious communities, the mistreatment – in rhetoric and action – of members of religious populations spurs global flashpoints. Instantaneous social media sharing ensures that every potential outrage against one religion will be widely viewed and often exploited, at an unprecedented level. Online propaganda tools, meanwhile, enable foreign adversaries to fuel tension and instability within the United States – and discredit the U.S. voice on humanitarian issues.

Violent bigots in the United States can be seen for what they are. The danger lies not solely in the actions of this fringe, but in the tacit mainstream acceptance within the United States that suggests a belief that some groups, and some people, matter less than others. To the extent that we do not recognize and address the subtle and more open forms of intolerance, we provide space for the fringe and curtail our ability to engage in productive discourse or action – whether on local issues or broader global diplomacy.

How do we counter these forces? Despite America's history of intolerance toward Catholics, Jews, Mormons, Muslims, and other religions, contemporary interreligious collaboration in the United States continues to provide a positive model for resiliency and cooperation to protect and promote religious pluralism. In response to hate crimes and religion-based discrimination in the United States, various civil society interreligious initiatives, including the Shoulder-to-Shoulder Campaign and the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, have sought to reaffirm the values of dialogue and collaborative action for equality and religious freedom. These initiatives involve American religious communities and target domestic audiences.

The transnational nature of religious communities and global newsfeeds means the potential impact of a culture of tolerance extends far beyond U.S. borders. Communities outside of the United States have adopted similar tactics, reinforcing norms of religious pluralism and interreligious solidarity. While interreligious collaboration is useful, the challenge remains to change the tenor and content of the broader public conversation, focusing on identifying and addressing assumptions that devalue "the other" and feed subtle intolerance – and then scale this change to the global stage through civic and multilateral efforts.

As Americans, our national self-image can differ from how others beyond the U.S. borders perceive America. At issue is how U.S. foreign policy can effectively promote peaceful solutions to global and local conflicts involving members of different religious communities if our own society does not value and protect the rights of all. U.S. domestic laws and politics – and the overall record on tolerance – all have a tangible impact on the credibility and effectiveness of our policies abroad.

The New Global Commons – Working Group Scope

In March 2018, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy convened a "New Global Commons" working group to examine the impact of pervasive domestic religious intolerance and bigotry on America's image and policies abroad, and to identify ways for government and civil society to mitigate the dangerous consequences. The group included experts from the diplomatic corps, academia, non-government organizations, and U.S.-based faith communities. The goal was to discuss and define the connection between tolerance and acts of religious bigotry at home and the impact on America's influence abroad. The group explored the variable of transnational religious dynamics in a globalized world, and the ways in which they define the new global commons. In an inter-connected world, religious actors and leaders from one part of the globe can have great influence – positive as well as negative – in other parts of the world.

The group explored the implications of this new "battleground" for U.S. foreign policy, as well as the role civil society and religious actors can play in countering the nativist trends that look to coopt religious identity. This report reviews the evolution of religious intolerance and related hate crimes in the United States and offers key themes and recommendations identified by the working group to navigate these new "religious battlegrounds."

Background – Rise in Acts of Intolerance and Hate Crimes Related to Religion

America has a long history of religious groups facing intolerance and discrimination – and, according to Pew researchers, continues to rank high among countries with social hostilities involving religion.[1] Scholars at the turn of the 20th century lamented the growing numbers of American citizens who believed "they are serving the

1 Pew Research Center, June 21, 2018, "Global Uptick in Government Restrictions," http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2018/06/19152147/APPENDIX-B-1.pdf.

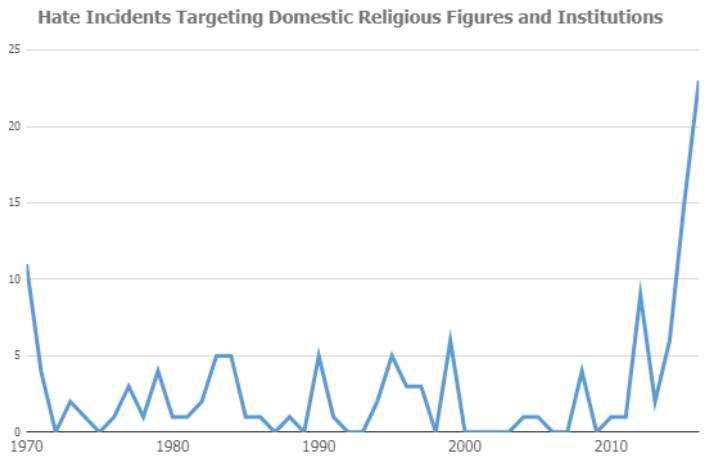
republic by fostering these [xenophobic] attitudes."[2] Since the nation's founding, Protestants often demonized Catholics for their allegiance to an "unholy and foreign" Pope. Catholics faced varying levels of discrimination – which often coincided with the arrival of Catholic immigrants from places like Ireland or Italy or Poland. It was not until 1960 that the United States felt comfortable electing a Catholic president; even then, John F. Kennedy felt the need to address the issue in a major speech during the 1960 presidential election.

Anti-Semitism also has a long and ugly history in America – playing a role in America's unwillingness to take Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Europe in the 1930s. President Richard Nixon in 1971 infamously blamed a "Jewish cabal" at the Bureau of Labor Statistics for manipulating economic data in ways that reflected poorly on his policies. Mormons, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and other religious minorities have also faced varying levels of discrimination and, usually, later acceptance.

More recently in the United States, examples of violent extremism and hateful rhetoric have been accompanied by a rise in violent crimes targeting minorities, including Muslims, Jews, and churches with racial minority congregants. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) reported that attacks against domestic religious institutions and figures increased significantly in 2016, the highest levels since tracking began in 1970.[3] (See page 6.)

2 Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work at the 52nd Annual Session, Denver, CO, June 10-17, 1925.

3 Global Terrorism Database, University of Maryland, http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=target&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&country=217.



Source: Compiled by ISD using National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Global Terrorism Database (2017), https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd June 2018.

Of those attacks between 1970 and 2016, only 14 percent targeted white congregations and religious figures. While difficult to parse, the relationship with race is a relevant variable we cannot afford to ignore in our considerations of religious intolerance.

The FBI's hate crime statistics, which are compiled through voluntary submissions by local law enforcement agencies across the country, also provide a useful means of measuring trends. These data do not comprise a comprehensive tally of overall hate crimes or incidents for a number of reasons, including victim underreporting, flaws in incident classification by law enforcement, and lack of reporting by localities.[4] According to the FBI's 2016 hate crimes data, anti-Muslim hate crimes increased 19.5 percent and anti-Jewish hate crimes increased by 3 percent, while all hate crimes rose by 4.6 percent overall that year.[5] As compared to 2014, the year with the lowest total reported hate crime incidents since the FBI began publishing this voluntarily reported data in 1996, anti-Muslim hate crimes doubled

4 See Erika Asgeirsson, "The Story Behind the FBI's Hate Crime Data," Human Rights First, November 21, 2017, https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/blog/story-behind-fbi-s-hate-crime-data; and Hailey Middlebrook, "The Fascinating, If Unreliable, History of Hate Crime Tracking in the US," CNN, November 14, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/05/health/hate-crimes-tracking-history-fbi/index.html.

5 FBI, "2016 Hate Crime Statistics Released," November 13, 2017, https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2016-hate-crime-statistics.

in 2016, anti-Semitic hate crimes increased 11 percent, and overall hate crimes went up 12 percent. For 2017, the Southern Poverty Law Center found that the number of anti-Muslim groups in the United States rose for a third straight year, up 13 chapters to a total of 114 groups.[6] Anti-Muslim assaults in 2016 surpassed the previous post-9/11 peak from 2001.[7] (See page 8.)

The United States is also witnessing some of the highest rates of anti-Semitic incidents on record. In 2017, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) found the number of reported anti-Semitic incidents (distinct from hate crimes) surged 57 percent, the greatest single-year increase and the highest number of recorded incidents since the ADL began keeping records in 1970.[8] Anti-Semitism has been a perpetual challenge to the American Creed, but the recent dramatic increase suggests an environment in which more Americans feel comfortable participating in such acts of intolerance. Since FBI hate crime records were first maintained in 1996, the number of reported incidents of hate crimes against Jews in America has remained the majority of all reported religiously motivated hate crimes, and the number of reported physical assaults due to anti-Jewish bias has steadily increased. [9] (See page 8.)

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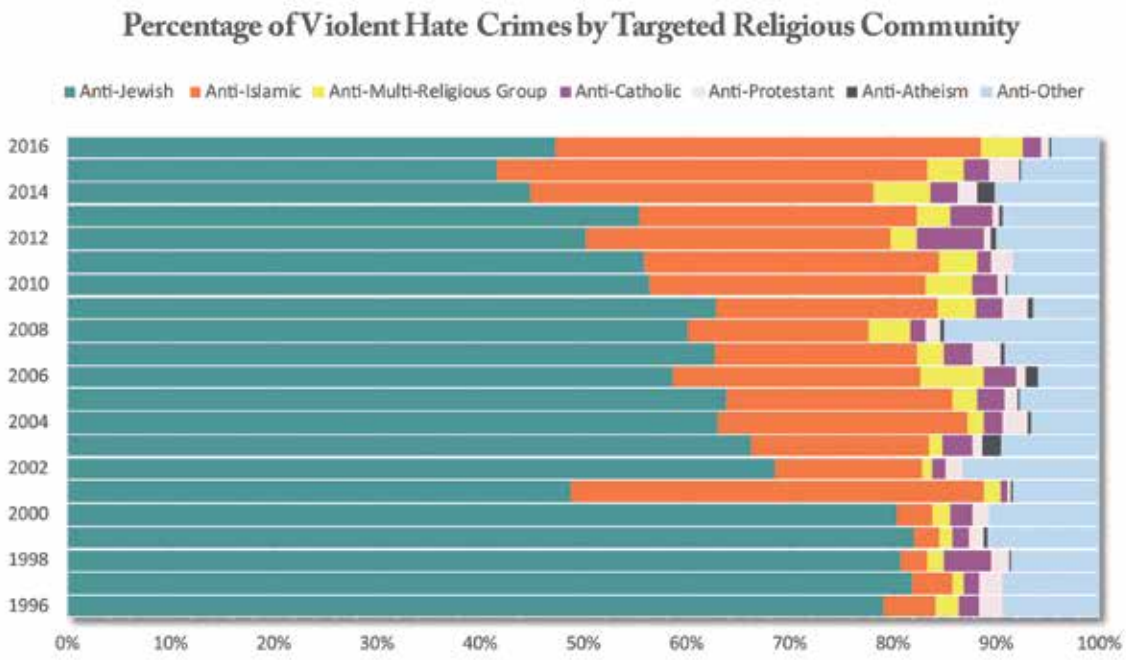
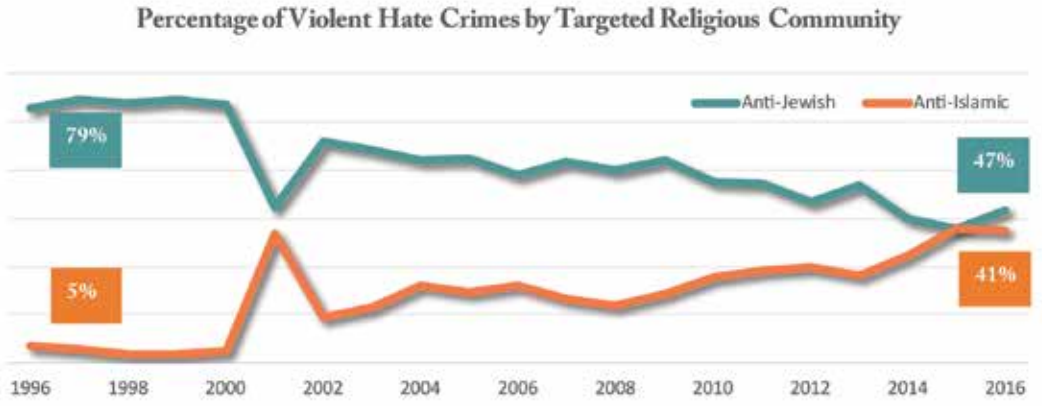
6 "The Year in Hate: Trump Buoyed White Supremacists in 2017, Sparking Backlash among Black Nationalist Groups," Southern Poverty Law Center, February 21, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/news/2018/02/21/year-hate-trump-buoyed-white-supremacists-2017-sparking-backlash-among-black-nationalist.

7 Katayoun Kishi, "Assaults against Muslims in U.S. Surpass 2001 Level," Pew Research Center, November 15, 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/.

8 Maggie Astor, "Anti-Semitic Incidents Surge 57 Percent in 2017, Report Finds," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/27/us/anti-semitism-adl-report.html.

9 FBI, Criminal Justice Information Services Division, Hate Crime Statistics - Simple and Aggravated Assaults, 2001-2016.





Source: Compiled by ISD, using FBI data, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime.

Majority groups have also been victims of intolerance. Christian denominations – both Catholic and Protestant – have faced violence and hateful rhetoric in the United States. As crimes against Protestants steadily declined, FBI statistics reveal that reported anti-Catholic incidents have slowly increased since 1996.

Lives have been lost in this wave of hate crimes based on religious xenophobia.[10] For instance, a man in Portland, Oregon, injured three men, two fatally, when they attempted to stop him from harassing a young Muslim woman and her friend in March 2017.[11] That same month, a man in Kent, Washington, shot a Sikh man, targeting this individual because of the turban and beard he wore in accordance to Sikh religious doctrine.[12] Throughout the country, dozens of religious sites have been vandalized, with a reported 952 acts of anti-Semitic vandalism in 2017[13] and an average of nine mosques attacked per month in 2016.[14] As this report was being finalized, federal prosecutors filed hate crime charges against a gunman who shouted anti-Semitic statements on October 27, 2018, as he murdered 11 worshipers attending services at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue.[15]

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10 Working group participants acknowledged that religion is only one aspect of nativist or ethno-nationalist xenophobia and those who perpetrate violent acts may not clearly delineate between religion, race, ethnicity, or perceived immigrant status.

11 "Police Suspect in Portland Stabbings Ranted about Muslims," Fox News, May 27, 2017, http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/05/27/police-identify-suspect-in-double-killing-on-oregon-train.html.

12 Artemis Moshtaghian, Huizhong Wu, and Susannah Cullinane, "Sikh Man's Shooting in Washington Investigated as Hate Crime," CNN, March 6, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/05/us/washington-sikh-shooting/index.html.

13 "2017 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents," Anti-Defamation League, https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/2017-audit-of-anti-semitic-incidents#major-findings.

14 Nancy Coleman, "On Average, 9 Mosques have Been Targeted Every Month This Year," CNN, August 7, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/20/us/mosques-targeted-2017-trnd/index.html.

15 Campbell Robertson, Sabrina Tavernise, and Sandra E. Garcia, "Quiet Day at a Pittsburgh Synagogue Becomes a Battle to Survive," *The New York Times*, October 28, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/us/pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting.html.

Key Issues and Themes

During this investigation into domestic religious intolerance and its impact on U.S. foreign policy, the working group discussion centered on the following key topics, explored further in this report: risks of the politicization of religion using the "clash of civilization" thesis; sapping of U.S. soft power; violent and copycat international reactions to U.S. religious intolerance; U.S. vulnerability to foreign interference; the rule of law and the debate about free speech; the responsibility of the media; and the potential roles of civil society to influence narrative, rhetoric, and policy.

Risks of Politicizing Religion and Sacralizing Politics

As a primary means by which human beings organize and mobilize themselves, religion is constantly involved, intertwined, and/or in tension with the political order. Following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, Europe's shift to nation-states with territorial sovereignty contributed to the declining role of organized religion in state politics. The subsequent rise of the secular state has, in many countries, displaced the role of religion in politics. For many countries, the interplay of religion and politics is now less dependent on centralized doctrine and religious institutions, and more diffuse, but no less emotionally potent.

In the post-Cold War era, some theorists felt that the triumph of the United States over the Soviet Union marked a new period in human history, one in which liberal democracy, the final evolutionary shift in political ideology, would soon spread across the globe.[16] Others argued that with the end of communism as the primary ideological challenger to liberal democracy, the world would develop new fault lines – to be formed along "civilizational" lines, according to political scientist Samuel P. Huntington.[17] In this post Cold-War

16 See Francis Fukayama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* (Summer 1989); and Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

17 Albert Camus and Bernard Lewis had adopted the term "clash of civilizations" earlier in the 20th century, but political scientist Samuel P. Huntington elevated the concept in articles and a 1996 book. Arguing that

period, the United States struggled to redefine its ideological focus and institutionalize its new global role. In this period as well, we witnessed a reversion to pre-Cold War ethno-nationalist politics in several regions of the world – a renewed tribalism.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, upended this period of transition and ushered in the era of America's "Global War on Terror." Despite President George W. Bush's positive rhetoric about Islam and Muslims, and his influential visit to a U.S. mosque shortly after 9/11, the clash of civilizations narrative gained currency in the minds of many who saw "Islamic terrorism/radicalism/extremism" as the greatest threat to the United States. Anti-Muslim hate crimes spiked to their highest recorded levels to that date. Domestic surveillance of mosques and Muslim community centers intensified with new powers under the USA PATRIOT Act.[18] The U.S. government investigated various Muslim charities for alleged links to terrorism, leading many to shut down and others to suffer under a cloud of suspicion. Immigration programs like NSEERS (the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System) placed special scrutiny on individuals from Muslim-majority countries.[19] Mirroring some of the ongoing tactics of insidious anti-Semitic campaigns in the United States, an Islamophobia industry arose, leading to the spread of overtly anti-Muslim narratives in media and popular

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future wars would be fought not for ideologies, but along cultural and religious lines, Huntington wrote that "Islamic extremism" would become a key driver of global violence. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49; and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

18 The "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001," signed into law on October 26, 2001, included provisions to expand government powers, some of which the courts later found to be unconstitutional (e.g., "sneak and peek" searches of premises without warrants; and FBI use of National Security Letters to search communication and financial records without a court order).

19 Initiated in September 2002, NSEERS required port-of-entry registration for non-citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Syria; and domestic registration (including fingerprints, photographs, and interviews) for non-citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, and Kuwait.

culture, along with the academic and policy-making communities.[20] As these domestic changes took place, America's dual invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq confirmed the suspicions of some outside the United States that America was waging a war on Islam. Terrorist groups were quick to utilize the U.S. military actions to reinforce their recruitment narrative.

After 2008, President Barack Obama sought to reframe America's relationship with Muslim-majority countries to move toward a relationship based on mutual interest and trust. In Cairo in 2009, Obama outlined a plan to expand cooperation with Muslim-majority communities in non-security related fields. At home, Obama's domestic opponents sought to characterize him as weak in confronting what they called "radical Islamic terrorism," in part through accusations that leveraged anti-Muslim stigma by attempting to link Obama to Islam. And though Obama ended various Bush administration programs, like NSEERS, many civil rights and civil liberties activists and organizations argued that government programs to "counter violent extremism" still unfairly targeted Muslim communities.

Many aspects of President Donald Trump's agenda appear to fit the "clash of civilizations" framework, and his promotion of the idea of Islam being at war with the West is his administration's most salient endorsement of the clash ideology. Trump campaigned for a "total and complete shutdown of the entry of Muslims to the United States" – because, he says, "Islam hates us."[21] In his inaugural address, Trump announced he would "unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism."[22]

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20 See Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, and Faiz Shakir, "Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America," Center for American Progress, August 26, 2011, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/reports/2011/08/26/10165/fear-inc/.

21 Jenna Johnson and Abigail Hauslohner, "'I think Islam hates us': A timeline of Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims," *The Washington Post*, May 20, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/05/20/i-think-islam-hates-us-a-timeline-of-trumps-comments-about-islam-and-muslims/?utm_term=.371435af0d28.

22 Donald Trump, "The Inaugural Address," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, January 20, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/the-inaugural-address/.

Senior Trump administration officials have chosen to limit the U.S. government's engagement with the full spectrum of American religious communities and have pursued tactics that result in a skewed portrayal of domestic threats. Federal programs aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE) now no longer address all sources of terrorist threats, including white supremacists; the White House National Security Strategy, for instance, mentions only "radical Islamic terrorism" as a security priority.[23] This approach belies the facts of domestic terrorism. According to reporting on the ideological motivation of terrorism in the United States between 2010-2016, Muslim extremists perpetrated 30 terror attacks in the United States, while non-Muslim extremists perpetrated 82 terror attacks. Targeting only domestic "radical Islamic terrorism" reduces the resources available to address far broader threats of domestic terrorism.[24]

Breaking with tradition, the Trump White House and State Department also did not host celebrations of Ramadan with the U.S. Muslim community in 2017 or 2018. And while the Obama White House had started the tradition of hosting an annual presidential Seder in celebration of the Jewish Passover holidays, the current administration ended the practice. The White House also no longer includes an Office for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which acted as a portal between religious communities and the country's leadership. Previous special envoy positions, including a congressionally mandated position aimed at monitoring anti-Semitism abroad, remained unfilled more than a year into Trump's tenure.

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23 The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf, pp. 11 and 35.
See also Julia Edwards Ainsley, Dustin Volz, and Kristina Cooke, "Exclusive: Trump to Focus Counter-Extremism Program Solely on Islam - Sources," Reuters, February 1, 2017, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-extremists-program-exclusiv-idUSKBN15G5VO.

24 National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), "Ideological Motivations of Terrorism in the United States, 1970-2016," http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_IdeologicalMotivationsOfTerrorismInUS_Nov2017.pdf.

There has been a broader shift in official rhetoric as well. Turning away from Bush and Obama reinforcement of the strength of America's religious pluralism, the Trump administration has instead increased senior government official involvement in Christian-focused initiatives. These activities include speaking at global summits to defend persecuted Christians, and the re-allocation of money from development efforts to Christian and other minority communities in Northern Iraq. President Trump also meets and confers with a new evangelical advisory group of 20 or so pastors, providing unique access to a sole religious community, to the exclusion of others. Presidents have long turned to America's spiritual leaders for guidance, but this administration's decision not to provide access or reach out to other American religious communities, and these actions of senior government officials, signal a Christian-centric interpretation of U.S. identity and values. These shifts in rhetoric, action, and access provide new fodder for international accusations of bias and an exclusive Christian sacralization of American politics. Beyond accusations of bias, these shifts encourage growing global nativist tendencies.

There have been discrete instances that lead observers to interpret the behavior of officials as supportive of the divisive clash ideology. For example, as president, Trump has tweeted anti-Muslim propaganda,[25] and was slow to condemn white supremacists and far-right violent extremists after the August 2017 violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.[26] These types of actions serve to normalize racist and fascist concepts – and risk creating a permissive environment for violence domestically and enabling a similar use of intolerance to support nativist policies and actions in other countries.

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25 Ishaan Tharoor, "There's no hiding from Trump's bigotry," *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/30/theres-no-hiding-from-trumps-bigotry/?utm_term=.199e96ee776a.

26 Glenn Thrush, "New Outcry as Trump Rebukes Charlottesville Racists 2 Days Later," *The New York Times*, August 14, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/us/politics/trump-charlottesville-protest.html.

Beyond states and politicians, terrorist groups like ISIS exploit the clash of civilizations framework to serve their interests by instigating hypocritical behavior that undermines U.S. values. For violent radical groups, this framework adds fodder to the polarizing rhetoric of good versus evil. These groups hope to provoke the United States and governments in Europe to enact intolerant nativist policies to confirm their propaganda – and recruit individuals living there to join their cause and commit terrorist acts. ISIS supporters online hailed the Trump administration's travel ban as the "blessed ban."[27] Al Shabab, an al Qaeda affiliate in Somalia, used footage of President Trump in its recruitment propaganda materials.[28] The recent rise in domestic hate crimes in the United States, combined with limited official condemnation of such attacks, feeds the narrative of Muslims under attack by the West. In embracing the clash of civilizations worldview for political gain, U.S. officials and public figures risk furthering divisions at home and a self-fulfilling prophecy of increased terrorist recruitment and violence.

These exclusionary worldviews also perpetuate anti-Semitism, identifying Jews as the "others," and therefore an enemy of American culture. White supremacist websites, including The Daily Stormer and Occidental Observer, infuse anti-Semitism into cultural debates in the United States by accusing Jews of driving "un-American" efforts at gun control, for instance.[29] Attacks on the media – increasingly common in an era where "fake news" is emerging as a synonym for unflattering news – also are often laced with the anti-Semitic stereotype of a Jewish-controlled media and financial sector.

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27 Joby Warrick, "Jihadist Groups Hail Trump's Travel Ban as a Victory," *The Washington Post*, January 29, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/jihadist-groups-hail-trumps-travel-ban-as-a-victory/2017/01/29/50908986-e66d-11e6-b82f-687d6e6a3e7c_story.html?utm_term=.30f7d75281f1.

28 Liam Stack, "Qaeda Affiliate Uses Video of Donald Trump for Recruiting," *The New York Times*, January 1, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/02/world/africa/al-qaeda-usesvideo-of-trump-for-recruiting.html.

29 "Extremists Exploit Gun Control Issue to Stir Hatred of Jews," Anti-Defamation League, March 5, 2018, https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-exploit-gun-control-issue-to-stir-hatred-of-jews-0.

Sapping America's Soft Power

America has long been seen by many around the world as a model and champion for religious liberty and tolerance. The majority of Americans identify as Christians,[30] but few other nations can match the diversity of religions and religious practice present in the United States. The first right enumerated in the Bill of Rights is the freedom of religion, and schoolchildren in America learn that constitutional rights are protected through independent, principled enforcement of non-discrimination laws. The social norms of religious pluralism and tolerance – built and reinforced over decades by the activities and leadership of both civil society and public officials – have proven to be among the most powerful guarantors of a free and inclusive environment that has allowed religious diversity and pluralism to thrive in the United States.

The ISD working group members embraced this model and those norms as powerful assets for promoting human rights and religious freedom abroad. These ideals and norms give the United States credibility to confront other states for human rights violations and repression of minority groups. But the continued politicization of religion and the increased tolerance of bigotry against religious minorities is weakening these norms. This trend risks sapping American soft power and undermining our ability to promote democracy and human rights abroad, particularly in the face of rising authoritarianism and religious freedom restrictions elsewhere in the world. The effect of such self-inflicted diminishment of soft power is particularly worrisome as America's global competitors, such as Russia and China, seek to expand their influence in various parts of the world by offering alternate models of collaboration and governance. Examples of these challenges to U.S. influence include Russia's expanding footprint in the Middle East, with uncritical support for existing autocratic regimes; and China's expanding economic relationships in Africa and Asia through the Belt and Road initiative, which help Beijing promote its economic model of

30 "America's Changing Religious Landscape," Pew Research Center, May 12, 2015, http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

growth as an alternative to liberal democratic structures. The values that have historically defined the United States – and contributed to its soft power – also form one of its greater vulnerabilities, should we fail to act in accordance with these ideals. China and Russia do not have this soft underbelly.

U.S. joint efforts to address global challenges are also at stake. Countries who helped build and enforce the international framework for human rights have looked to the United States to maintain its vocal condemnation of intolerance and to remain a model – and foil – for others. Working group participants flagged the concern that any failing in U.S. credibility would hurt the efforts of the European Union and other allies on this front. Multilateral efforts on other critical issues, to include global health and environment policies, will face increasing challenges should the United States be seen as abdicating its leadership role. The group concluded that many Americans may not be fully aware of the significant cost of domestic intolerance to their own longer-term interests abroad.

As politically empowered groups in the United States continue to demand that the U.S. government take more action to protect Christian populations and values from threats and violence – but offer no protections for other religions – the U.S. cry for international religious freedom appears less credible. Indeed, the first iteration of the executive branch's travel ban in 2017 reflected these parochial interests and included an exception to allow entry for Christian refugees and other persecuted religious minorities from the Muslim states targeted by the ban.[31] If these trends continue, the grave concern is that foreign audiences will interpret American talk on religious freedom as hypocritical and insincere – and one that addresses only Christian concerns.

31 Daniel Burke, "Trump says US will prioritize Christian refugees," CNN, January 30, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/27/politics/trump-christian-refugees/index.html.

External Consequences of U.S. Domestic Intolerance

Acts of domestic intolerance in the United States can have profound, uncontrollable, and global repercussions. In recent years, anti-Islamic actions by individual Americans have incited anti-American demonstrations around the world, putting the lives of Americans abroad and our allies in serious danger. In particular, these actions undermine and endanger the mission of America's armed forces.[1]

Terry Jones Quran Burning

In July 2010, an American right-wing activist and pastor named Terry Jones threatened the burning of 200 Qurans on the 9th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. World leaders protested and condemned Jones' pledge. U.S. officials, including President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, denounced the planned event.[2] Although the event was cancelled as a result of this global backlash, Jones' Dove World Outreach Center went ahead and burned a Quran on March 21, 2011.[3] Demonstrations around the world swiftly followed. Protesters in Afghanistan killed at least 12 people as they attacked a United Nations mission in Mazar-i-Sharif,[4] and an Afghan policeman killed two U.S. soldiers.[5]

Innocence of Muslims

In July 2012, an anti-Islamic short film titled *Innocence of Muslims* was uploaded to YouTube. The video, which depicted Islam's founder, the Prophet Muhammad, as a

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1 Jeff Muskus, "Iraq, Afghan Veterans Call for Respect for Muslims: 'America, You Gotta Have Our Back," Huffpost, May 25, 2011, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/13/veterans-muslims-respect-iraq-afghanistan_n_714646.html.

2 Christine Delargy, "Robert Gates Urged Terry Jones to Call Off Koran Burning, CBS News, September 9, 2010, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/robert-gates-urged-terry-jones-to-call-off-koran-burning/; and Julian E. Barnes and Matthew Rosenberg, "Petraeus Condemns U.S. Church's Plan to Burn Qurans, *The Wall Street Journal*, September 6, 2010, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703713504575475500753093116.

3 Chad Smith, "Dove World denies it's responsible for violence over Quran burning," *The Gainesville Sun*, April 1, 2011, http://www.gainesville.com/news/20110401/dove-world-denies-its-responsible-for-violence-over-quran-burning.

4 "Protests continue in Afghanistan against Quran burning," CNN, April 5, 2011, http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/04/05/afghanistan.protests/.

5 Alissa J. Rubin, "Obama Sends Apology as Afghan Koran Protests Rage," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/24/world/asia/koran-burning-afghanistan-demonstrations.html.

"villainous, homosexual and child-molesting buffoon,"[6] incited demonstrations and violent protests around the world. Multiple fatwas were issued against the cast and crew of the film, with Hezbollah calling on "the Muslim youth in America and Europe to… kill the director, the producer and the actors and everyone who helped and promoted the film."[7] There were angry demonstrations at U.S. diplomatic missions in North Africa and the Middle East. In Afghanistan, Taliban fighters attacked a U.S. airfield, killing two Marines and destroying six fighter jets.[8] In Libya, a group of militants attacked the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, killing U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three members of his staff.[9] This appeared to be a protest against the film, but the intelligence community later concluded the heavily armed militants carried out a coordinated attack on the U.S. Embassy.

Source: Kuala Lumpur, 21/09/2012. Wikipedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anti-Islam_Film_protests_(8009248922).jpg

6 David D. Kirkpatrick and Steven Lee Meyers, "Libya Attack Brings Challenges for U.S." *The New York Times,* September 12, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/world/middleeast/us-envoy-to-libya-is-reported-killed.html.

7 Ryan Villareal, "Hezbollah Issues Fatwa Against 'Innocence Of Muslims' Makers; Rushdie Blasts Movie," *International Business Times*, September 18, 2012, http://www.ibtimes.com/hezbollah-issues-fatwa-against-innocence-muslims-makers-rushdie-blasts-movie-790162.

8 "Fatwa issued against 'Innocence of Muslims' film producer," *The Telegraph*, September 18, 2012, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/lebanon/9549664/Fatwa-issued-against-Innocence-of-Muslims-film-producer.html.

9 Kirkpatrick and Meyers, op. cit.

International Implications of U.S. Domestic Bigotry

News travels quickly in today's interconnected world. Discrimination and hate crimes targeting Muslims, Jews, and other religious communities in the United States influence global perceptions and attitudes about America, and about U.S. foreign policy. Similarly, these actions (or lack of engagement) may be used as enabling justifications for exclusionary policies in other countries. For example, the perception of an ongoing U.S. war against Islam heightens tensions around actions undertaken by U.S. officials and citizens – actions that are sometimes interpreted abroad as insulting or demeaning to Muslims. Prime examples include the fallout after Terry Jones' Quran burnings in 2010 and the *Innocence of Muslims* film. (See page 18.)

The United States is a powerful participant in the arms race of intolerance. Political leaders across the world are increasingly employing religious nativist rhetoric, with corresponding incidents of violent crimes against religious communities deemed "the other." Indeed, according to Pew Research Center analysis, in 2016 the number of countries with government actors using nationalist rhetoric against members of religious groups nearly doubled, to 11 percent. The number of countries in which religious groups were harassed by governments or social groups also increased in 2016.[32] Muslims and Christians in India face increasingly discriminatory employment practices and targeted violence as political leaders embrace Hindutva political nativism.[33] Muslims in Burma and Sri Lanka bear the brunt of violent intolerance at the hands of violent extremist members of Buddhist communities. A Pew assessment revealed a rise in the number of countries with organized groups

32 Pew Research Center, "Key Findings on the Global Rise in Religious Restrictions," Pew Research Center, June 21, 2018, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/06/21/key-findings-on-the-global-rise-in-religious-restrictions.

33 U.S. Department of State, "2016 International Religious Freedom Report – India," https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2016&dlid=268930#wrapper.

that "seek to dominate public life with their view on religion" and that espouse positions against immigrants and religious minorities, from 27 in 2015 to 32 in 2016. Of these 32 groups, 25 were active in European countries.[34]

Other parallels have emerged between discrimination in the United States and reverberations elsewhere. An increase in anti-minority action and rhetoric in the United States correlates to a similar dynamic in Europe, which threatens multilateral efforts to collaborate constructively on shared challenges such as migrant resettlement. In a growing number of countries, parties steeped in anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant rhetoric, policies, and platforms have found increasing success at the ballot box, raising frightening comparisons to the 1930s. Many of these groups and their leaders have associated themselves with Donald Trump and his nativist, anti-immigrant platform. Indeed, most observers saw Trump's July 2017 remarks in Warsaw, Poland[35] as an endorsement of a right-wing government that has defied the European Union by refusing to accept refugees. At Poland's 2016 National Independence Day parade, slogans touting "God, Honor, and Fatherland" and flags of a pre-World War II anti-Semitic group were ubiquitous.[36] During a 2018 election rally in Hungary, crowds cheered Viktor Orban's declaration that Europe and Hungary stood "at the epicenter of a civilizational struggle" in a battle for Christian European culture. Condemning the openness of the European Union to mass migration, Orban cautioned that Africans and Middle Easterners threaten to "kick down the door" and destroy the European way of

34 Pew Research Center, "Global Uptick in Government Restrictions," June 21, 2018, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2018/06/27121723/Restrictions-IX-FULL-REPORT-WITH-APPENDIXES.pdf, pp 10-11.

35 Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump to the People of Poland" (speech in Warsaw, Poland, July 6, 2017), The White House Office of the Press Secretary, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-people-poland/.

36 Mega Specia, "Nationalist March Dominates Poland's Independence Day," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/11/world/europe/poland-nationalist-march.html.

life.[37] Echoing supporting sentiments, President Trump lamented in a July 2018 interview that Europeans were permitting immigrants to change the "fabric of Europe."[38] Similar worldviews in Germany, Italy, Austria, and France have also made electoral and social inroads.

This atmosphere and the transnational character of religious identity and communities makes local actions increasingly global. Incidents that might normally have only a local impact, and that should be understood in their local context, can easily perpetuate a broader, global narrative of clashing cultures and civilizations. Those local events blend together with acts by government officials in a way that often blur distinctions between government and private stances.

Vulnerability to Foreign Interference

Other countries have long used U.S. societal divides to undermine the United States. During the Cold War, Soviet propaganda exploited U.S. discrimination against African Americans to discredit capitalism and to challenge U.S. leadership abroad, arguing that America's treatment of its black minority was indicative of its treatment of people of color around the world.[39] (See page 23.)

We see the same tactics occurring in 2016, when Russia reportedly exploited divisive issues and rising nativism in America to exacerbate divisions and weaken American unity and governance. America's treatment of minorities continues to be one of those ongoing issues. Investigations have demonstrated that Russian online propaganda efforts to interfere with the 2016 election included social media

37 "Viktor Orbán's ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848," Website of the Hungarian Government, March 18, 2018, http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/orban-viktor-s-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848.

38 Lukas Mikelionis, "Trump Says Immigration into Europe has 'Changed the Fabric' of the Continent," Fox News, July 13, 2018, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/07/13/trump-says-immigration-into-europe-has-changed-fabric-continent.html.

39 Rebecca Onion, "How the Soviets Used Our Civil Rights Conflicts against Us," *Slate*, July 9, 2013, http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2013/07/09/civil_rights_coverage_how_the_soviets_used_evidence_of_racial_strife_against.html.

Soviet Exploitation of U.S. Civil Rights Crises

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union employed crises in U.S. race relations as effective propaganda, undercutting America's claims that its democracy offered inherent equality – in turn weakening American soft power.[1] In a period in which America promoted its brand of democracy around the world, domestic stances on race remained an Achilles heel that American allies found baffling and impossible to defend. U.S. foreign policy officials were aware of this weakness. In a 1963 letter, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research Thomas Hughes wrote, "Moscow asks, 'If America's rulers can act like slaveholders towards millions of their own people, what can the nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America expect of them?'"[2] Two poignant examples serve to illustrate this reality.

Fall 1957, Little Rock Crisis

The governor of Arkansas' refusal to integrate Little Rock Central High following the U.S. Supreme Court Brown v. Board of Education ruling prompted President Dwight Eisenhower to send the Army to enforce desegregation at the high school. Press reports around the world referenced the harm to the American image. The *Times* of London wrote about the pictures that "touched and shamed millions," while the Swiss voiced their consternation that Little Rock had done "incalculable harm" to "the Occidental position throughout the non-European world."[3] The Soviet government republished pictures and reports from American outlets. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles lamented the impact of Little Rock, stating "it was ruining our foreign policy" and "the effect of this in Asia and Africa will be worse for us than Hungary was for the Russians."[4]

Spring 1963, Birmingham Marches

In the spring of 1963, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. led a protest campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, to highlight integration efforts. In response, the Birmingham police commissioner arrested many protesters, including King. On May 3, the jails were filled, and police deterred marchers using fire hoses. The USSR used these images in a propaganda campaign to erode American credibility, particularly in Africa. African leaders, gathering at the time for a conference in Ethiopia, drafted a resolution that stated the U.S. government's actions in Birmingham "could lead to a break in relations between the United States and African countries."[5]

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1 Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race, and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2002) pp. 37, 46.

2 John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, National Security Files, June 1963: pp. 11-14.

3 Dudziak, pp. 120-121.

4 Julie Ioffe, "The History of Russian Involvement in America's Race Wars, *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/russia-facebook-race/542796/.

5 Dudziak, pp. 170-173.

Source: Civil Rights leaders Dr. Ralph David Abernathy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. march with their families, leading the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abernathy_Children_on_front_line_leading_the_SELMA_TO_MONTGOMERY_MARCH_for_the_RIGHT_TO_VOTE.JPG.

Source: Rally at the Arkansas state capitol, protesting the integration of Central High School. Library of Congress, U.S. News & World Report Magazine Photograph Collection, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Little_Rock_integration_protest.jpg.

activities designed to play on fears of "the other," with the ultimate goal of deeper domestic polarization.[40] Some of those efforts included impersonating an actual Muslim American organization, spreading anti-Muslim messages to right-wing audiences, and disseminating divisive messages to inflame Muslim American and Evangelical groups.[41]

Russia is targeting other countries using the same social wedge tactic. In Latvia, Russian-deployed stories aimed to amplify social divisions around issues like LGBT rights and Latvia's Russian-speaking minority. The Latvian state secretary of defense recognized the challenge, noting "what we need to change is our attitude and see that this isn't just about Russia. It's about us."[42] With arguably greater existential urgency, Baltic countries are addressing the challenge through efforts like emphasizing media literacy and critical-thinking skills in school curriculums to help inoculate citizens against the threat of misinformation. In Finland, officials have focused on citizen education and combating income inequality to deter outside exploitation of internal divides.

While the full domestic political impact of Russia's interventions remains unclear, Russia's efforts suggest that foreign adversaries see America's religious intolerance as a clear vulnerability that can be exploited to weaken America at home and limit its foreign policy success abroad.

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40 Julia Ioffe, "The History of Russian Involvement in America's Race Wars," *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/russia-facebook-race/542796/.

41 Ben Collins, Kevin Poulsen, and Spencer Ackerman, "Exclusive: Russians Impersonates Real American Muslims to Stir Chaos on Facebook and Instagram," *The Daily Beast*, September 27, 2017, https://www.thedailybeast.com/exclusive-russians-impersonated-real-american-muslims-to-stir-chaos-on-facebook-and-instagram.

42 Reid Standish, "Russia's neighbors respond to Putin's Hybrid War," *Foreign Policy*, October 12, 2017, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/12/russias-neighbors-respond-to-putins-hybrid-warlatvia-estonia-lithuania-finland/.

The Rule of Law and Free Speech

The working group highlighted the importance of adherence to the rule of law in preserving American soft power. The perceived neutrality of the American justice system, and the ability to obtain redress for wrongs through the courts, is necessary to protect democratic institutions in the long term and to defend against efforts – foreign and domestic – to undermine public trust in the American system of government. This discussion also identified a need for strategic and planned outreach to explain more fully America's system of judicial and legal protections, especially as it relates to controversial topics like hate speech.

Clear and strategic communication related to the U.S. justice system has both a domestic and foreign audience, given the transnational communities involved and speed at which the world learns of domestic events. Incidents like the 2011 burning of a Quran highlight the importance of public affairs campaigns to explain the U.S. singular protection of all speech, including hate speech, short of inciting imminent violence. While such acts may be protected by the First Amendment, they do not reflect the views of the majority of American citizens or the U.S. government.

The U.S. approach to this universal freedom is not well understood or accepted in the rest of the world, including among our allies. Moreover, those who live in countries where the state has a heavier hand in dictating expression may consider the speech of U.S. citizens and politicians as words condoned by the state, and therefore representative of an official stance. The public affairs efforts on this front face increasing challenges as the world becomes more and more interconnected.

In light of this increasing interconnectedness, the question of which speech merits protection is an ongoing debate at the international level. Facing pressure from diverse audiences, leaders with global responsibilities are compelled to question the wisdom of the U.S. standard for free speech globally. With the 2012 release of *Innocence*

of Muslims, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon concluded that "when some people use this freedom [of expression] to provoke or humiliate some others' values and beliefs, then this cannot be protected."[43]

These differences notwithstanding, the international community has found areas of consensus in responding to expressions of religious intolerance that do not involve restrictions on speech. In 2011, by working with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the United States successfully helped to end the OIC's controversial "defamation of religions" resolution,[44] a text that provided cover for dangerous blasphemy laws, and replaced it with a consensus resolution focused on combating religious discrimination while protecting free expression.[45] In essence, by adopting this text, the United Nations endorsed the U.S. model, including our free speech standard.[46] (See page 28.)

Despite intensifying challenges such as the release of the *Innocence of Muslims*, for six consecutive years – from 2011 to 2016 – the United States collaborated on holding annual meetings to review best practices for implementing UN Resolution 16/18, which is modeled after U.S. legal and policy approaches to protect religious freedom and free speech.[47] In 2017, however, this meeting did not take place.

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43 Press conference by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, September 19, 2012, https://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sgsm14518.doc.htm.

44 "USCIRF Welcomes Move Away from 'Defamation of Religion' Concept," United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, press release, March 24, 2011, http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/press-releases/uscirf-welcomes-move-away-defamation-religions-concept.

45 United Nations Human Rights Council, Sixteenth Session, Resolution 16/18, Combating Intolerance, Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization of, and Discrimination, Incitement to Violence, and Violence against Persons Based on Religion or Belief, A/HRC/16/18, March 21, 2011, http://geneva.usmission.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Resolution16-18.pdf.

46 Ufuk Gokcen, "The Reality of Freedom of Expression in the Muslim World," *The Hill*, October 19, 2012, http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/262855-the-reality-of-freedom-of-expression-in-the-muslim-world.

47 Article 19, "UN HRC: 6th Session of Istanbul Process Focuses on Practical Measures to Implement UN HRC Resolution 16.18, September 12, 2016, https://www.article19.org/resources/un-hrc-6th-session-of-istanbul-process-focuses-on-practical-measures-to-implement-un-hrc-resolution-16-18/.

Constructive Approaches by Governments and International Organizations

In addition to efforts by various civil society groups, top-down efforts by governments and international organizations play an important role in promoting religious tolerance. Governments have an interest in fostering cohesion, promoting inclusion, and preventing violence through unilateral or collaborative action for social, political, economic, and national security reasons.

Build Up

The Build Up organization works to amplify citizen participation in peacebuilding through technology, arts, research, and strategic communication. In 2017, funded in part by The Hague, Build Up launched *The Commons,* a program to address polarization on Facebook and Twitter in the United States. The program uses social media bots to engage users displaying certain behaviors in pre-identified "polarization bubbles" and directs trained volunteers to help move these users toward constructive engagement.[1] Build Up is engaged in a number of projects with partners in the United States and Europe.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18

In April 2011, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution committed to "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief." UN Resolution 16/18 effectively replaced the "Defamation of Religions" resolution – a text that called for speech restrictions on insults to religion – with one that promoted actions to combat discrimination that was also consistent with U.S. free speech standards. This was a major shift at the United Nations on the issue of religious freedom. The Council condemned religious hatred and encouraged "the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action toward shared goals with tangible outcomes." The resolution also encourages projects in the fields of education, health, peace, integration, among others. It solicits governments to create mechanisms to identify, address, prevent, and mediate potential areas of interreligious tension.[2]

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1 Helena Puig Larrauri, "Automatic for the peaceful," Medium, September 8, 2017, https://medium.com/@howtobuildup/automatic-for-the-peaceful-52d24d1d23e and Build Up, https://howtobuildup.org/ourwork/.

2 Resolution 16/18 Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief, UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Sixteenth Session, April 12, 2011, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A.HRC.RES.16.18_en.pdf.

Marrakesh Declaration

In January 2016, more than 300 Muslim religious leaders, heads of state, and scholars – Sunni and Shi'a alike – adopted the Marrakesh Declaration during a summit in Morocco. This was a unique approach, using Islamic history and practice, namely the Medina Charter, to argue that Islam demands equality of citizenship and equal protection of rights, including religious freedom, for all citizens. Formulated by top Muslim leaders, this was "a clear rejection of religiously legitimated persecution and discrimination."[3] The Marrakesh Declaration calls upon Muslims to be the champions of a multi-religious environment of brotherhood and mutual understanding. The declaration condemns atrocities committed by ISIS against religious minorities, and urges Muslims in Muslim-majority nations to "protect the minorities, their religions, their places of worship, and other rights."[4]

Source: Universal Rights Group. Combatting religious intolerance (Resolution 16/18), https://www.universal-rights.org/programmes/in-focus-human-rights-and-religion/combatting-religious-intolerance-implementation-of-resolution-1618/.

3 "The Marrakesh Declaration: A Muslim call for protection of religious minorities or freedom of religion?" LSE Religion and Global Society, May 26, 2017, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionglobalsociety/2017/05/the-marrakesh-declaration-a-muslim-call-for-protection-of-religious-minorities-or-freedom-of-religion/.

4 Marrakesh Declaration, January 27, 2016, http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/about.html.

Traditional and Social Media – Ambiguous Tools

How do the varied roles and influences of the media factor into the promotion of dangerous nativist rhetoric and politics? The working group noted that this complex issue requires greater examination. In a profit-oriented and "breaking news" industry where sensationalism sells, the media has helped feed negative assumptions and "otherization" of those with different religious identities by overemphasizing some behavior. Violence and bad news sell papers; law-abiding, peaceful communities tend to generate little "news." For example, a dearth of positive news stories about the tremendous contributions of the sizeable Somali community in Minnesota gives greater visibility to a handful of bad actors in the community. When reading only about fringe figures spotlighted by the media, the average media consumer may come to inaccurate and dangerous conclusions about a broader population.

Social media has facilitated the spread of this skewed or inaccurate information far beyond the edited word, and can be more easily exploited by other countries and non-state actors intent on using contentious domestic issues, such as views on religious communities, as wedges to weaken the United States. As an amplification tool, social media broadcasts U.S. dirty laundry to a very observant audience globally. While history and numbers make clear these nativist tendencies are not new, social media has made them far more exploitable and easier to broadcast. The working group also raised the role of technology companies, including Facebook and Google, in addressing the challenge of dangerous misrepresentation, false narratives, and the presence of incendiary hate speech online. While unclear if U.S. legal limitations might compel action, the group explored the question of whether tech companies have a moral obligation to limit the reach of extremist voices.

Role of Civil Society – Preserving and Reviving America's Interfaith Model

As religious minority communities in America continue to cope with these challenges, many have turned the crisis into an opportunity to stand in solidarity with other vulnerable communities and reinforce their shared commitment to the American Creed. This reaction has in many ways demonstrated the source of America's soft power strength – the power of universal ideals and the freedom to act on them.

In airports and cities across America, the unprecedented protests against the initial travel ban the White House announced on January 27, 2017, revealed the extent to which Americans from all backgrounds are prepared to mobilize to defend the vision of a pluralistic America. Interfaith coalitions, like the Shoulder to Shoulder organization, came out loudly at the national and local level in defense of religious freedom for all. In response to the reduction in government funds to support refugees entering the United States, and the lower number of refugees being allowed entry in general, religious communities have worked together to support refugees across the country. (See Appendix.)

Jews and Muslims have rallied together in opposition to the rising bigotry targeting their communities, forming alliances like the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council and expanding initiatives like the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom to fight hate crimes and bigotry. Religious communities have contributed to efforts to repair sites damaged by hateful acts – one example is the effort of Muslims in America to raise over $100,000 to repair vandalized Jewish cemeteries, and contribute to efforts to help rebuild black churches that were burned down. These acts of solidarity reflect the very best of American values and represent one of the most powerful means of combating bigotry.

Although civil society may be setting the best example of the American Creed, the extent to which that example is seen and understood abroad is unclear. Many foreign audiences will always see

government policy and action as the key barometer for assessing a country's attitudes on particular issues. Furthermore, while effective public diplomacy would seek to project the positive example of American civil society abroad, the effectiveness of such efforts may be limited when the government's official policies, statements, or tweets are perceived as contrary to that example.

While individuals have the right to assert their opinion, no matter how bigoted, civil society and religious communities have a key role in maintaining American values and norms. Collective action and new partnerships will allow for the corrective checks by the majority of Americans who do not engage in or support religious intolerance, and will ensure the extremist or fringe voices remain on the margins, and less in the mainstream.

Intolerance and nativism presuppose the superior value of the status quo, reacting to the perceived threat to venerated "old ideals" during societal change. Such an approach is inherently counter to the ideals and idea of the United States, threatening the potential for innovation and progress. Not only does intolerance threaten innovation and progress, but it fails to allow for the safety valve of open discussion for the resolution of social tension. Coupled with the danger domestic religious intolerance poses to our foreign policy and national security, the path forward will rely on the conviction and role of civil society, the justice system, and the media to preserve the lines of civil discourse and fact-based discussions.

Recommendations and Guidelines

The working group developed the following recommendations and guidelines for action for policymakers and civil society.

Be faithful to America's core values as such, not because of security implications

America's strength and appeal lies in its foundational commitment to the universal values of liberty, equality, and justice. Our nation, even with its faults, is built to continuously seek a more perfect union, a more perfect system of self-governance to secure the individual's liberty and equal rights in a just society committed to the rule of law. Religious freedom is a core fundamental freedom, and safeguarding that freedom and tolerance for any and all religions is essential to preserving our core values as a nation.

There is clear evidence indicating that intolerance at home can be weaponized by America's adversaries to limit our influence and even attack our personnel abroad. But security should not be the reason to act – securitizing our core values degrades them and makes them subservient to the goal of security. America and Americans must be faithful to our core values because that is who we are, not because failing to do so actually makes us less secure.

Speak out and condemn intolerance, bigotry, and hate crimes

Everyone has a role in speaking out and condemning intolerance. The collective actions of individuals establish and reinforce social norms, affecting the enjoyment of individual rights in people's daily lives. When hatred and intolerance are condoned, discrimination and hate crimes ensue. Public officials have a particular duty to condemn hate speech and bigotry to reinforce the freedoms and liberty that they have sworn to uphold. Civil society leaders play a key role as well, and even more so when public officials are derelict in their duty to speak out. In the age of social media, every individual voice can make a difference in shaping how society reacts to acts of bigotry and intolerance.

Engage more closely with communities affected by intolerance as well as the purveyors of such messages

For those working to combat bigotry and intolerance, robust engagement with the actors involved is essential, including both the communities affected by intolerance and those who spread such views. Close engagement with communities affected by intolerance is important to ensure that individual rights are protected, that communities receive any necessary support to protect themselves from threats, and to demonstrate that their concerns are being heard and addressed. At the same time, in addition to prosecuting anyone who commits a crime, it is important to engage with those who spread intolerance in order to learn possible motivations for the actions, dispel misunderstandings and sources of fear, confront hateful ideologies, and build bridges of dialogue. In some cases, those who espouse intolerant perspectives about a minority community may share the same fears as the community, to include the fear of violent extremism. Identifying these shared fears can open doors to collaborative engagement on these specific issues.

Create space and an enabling environment for interfaith dialogue and collaboration

Interfaith collaboration to resolve shared challenges can be particularly powerful forms of cooperation, both in terms of achieving success in addressing the area of need and in demonstrating the lived reality of partnership. Governments also have a role in ensuring that the laws and regulations provide for an enabling environment for civil society to operate and achieve goals.

Reinvest in civic education, a true bulwark against intolerance and extremism

Civic education – the effort to teach and train students to be active citizens and understand our system of government – can serve as a bulwark against intolerance and extremism, and strengthen an understanding of and respect for our institutions. Learning about America's fundmental values and the ongoing struggle to achieve equality and justice for all Americans reinforces a sense of civic

nationalism and unity, and may dispel ethnic or racial nationalism, and also helps build empathy for those in the United States and elsewhere in the world who do not yet fully enjoy America's promise of equal rights and freedoms. Many have expressed concern over a decline in civics education in primary and high schools. Both governments and civil society can focus on ensuring that civics remains in curricula across the country, and that students are equipped to distinguish between news and opinion pieces when it comes to matters of government.

Enhance religious literacy to promote understanding and to develop more effective policies

Religious literacy – a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of religion, religious teachings, and the role and impact of religion in society – is essential for policymakers as well as members of civil society and the media. Understanding the religious landscape of a country, and being empowered to engage with diverse religious actors, is important for policymakers seeking a fuller understanding of that country and its social dynamics. This is certainly true for the United States, which has very active and diverse religious communities across the country. Religious literacy can also help in understanding why domestic incidents involving religion can have such a dramatic effect on communities in other parts of the world. Teaching about the diverse religions of the world is an important education for all students, and should be a standard part of school curricula.

Media organizations may also need assistance in gaining broader religious literacy and training on how best to report on issues involving religion. This should include the use or misuse of certain religious terminology, and the practice of inviting guests from the religious communities that are the subjects of media reports. Civil society organizations are best positioned to engage in this type of activity.

Amplify positive stories of tolerance and partnership

The best counter to hateful or intolerant speech is positive speech, particularly stories that reflect the lived reality of interfaith coexistence and partnership across the country and the world. However, disseminating these stories is challenging because it reflects a more mundane reality than stories of violence – "man bites dog" is always a more interesting and profitable story than "dog bites man." Civil society organizations can focus efforts to share such stories more widely through various channels, including through potential partnerships with media and technology companies. Government officials also can more frequently cite examples of positive stories in remarks.

Expand the tools and strategies to combat hate speech

Technology and social media have facilitated an unprecedented level of global communication, but they have also made it easier for hateful speech and divisive ideologies to spread. Governments, civil society, and technology companies should work together to build more robust strategies to combat hate speech online, in accordance with local laws. Social media platforms, for instance, should ensure that foreign adversaries and hate groups cannot utilize these platforms for nefarious purposes. Technology companies have a responsibility to enforce terms of service that limit the dissemination of hate speech, and they should use their platforms to assist civil society organizations seeking to disseminate more positive, unifying messaging. Governments should ensure that effective means of oversight and regulation are in place to prevent the misuse and abuse of these platforms.

Prepare to respond to provocative and destabilizing incidents

In our interconnected world, it is inevitable that future provocative and destabilizing incidents and actions will occur, seeking to exploit social divisions along religious and other lines. Government officials should learn from past incidents – like the Quran-burning episodes and the *Innocence of Muslims* film – to develop and implement preventative measures to ensure that such incidents do not escalate.

For operations abroad, open and respectful engagement and communication with local stakeholders can help to build trust, prevent misunderstandings, and develop lines of communications in advance of crises. Condemnation by public officials of such provocative acts – even if they cannot be legally prosecuted – can help to distinguish the acts of an individual from the endorsement of a government. Overt demonstrations of cultural respect and understanding can build relationships characterized by mutual respect, rather than suspicion.

Address the disparity in treatment of foreign and domestic terrorism

There is a wide disparity of media coverage of foreign versus domestic terrorism. This imbalance in reporting can diminish the public's understanding of the threat that homegrown hate speech and domestic terrorism pose to the country. Such unbalanced reporting can also contribute to the development of stereotypes, e.g., the flawed association of Muslims with acts of terrorism. Part of this imbalance can be traced to the language that government officials use in regards to domestic terrorism incidents. Although there is a definition of domestic terrorism in federal law, there is no federal crime of domestic terrorism. Thus, federal prosecutors often do not use the term "domestic terrorism" – instead, if the crime was motivated by certain forms of bias, the term "hate crime" will be used.

In addition to working with media to address issues of biased coverage, government officials should consider the language that they use in labeling certain incidents as domestic terrorism. This could include more frequently labeling certain hate crimes as acts of domestic terrorism, or referring to any act of terrorism as an act of mass violence, to avoid the term terrorism altogether. Elected officials might also consider legislation establishing the crime of domestic terrorism.

Appendix

Examples of Organizations Engaged in Inter-religious Collaboration *

International Organizations

- **Arigatou International**

  https://arigatouinternational.org/en/

  Arigatou International is a non-profit organization focusing on children's issues. The group works to ensure children are treated with dignity, have their rights respected, and can pursue their full human potential. Initiatives include interfaith child rights advocacy, promotion of ethics and values-based education, and a public-private international effort to end child poverty. Arigatou holds special consultative status with UN ECOSOC and consultative status with UNICEF.

- **Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions**

  https://www.parliamentofreligions.org/

  The Council works to promote interfaith cooperation and harmony. Respecting the individuality and unique identities of the world's religions, it sponsors a number of multi-faith task forces focusing on global issues such as climate change, female empowerment, engagement with indigenous groups, and countering hate crimes.

- **Global Working Group on Faith, SSDDIM, and HIV (GWG)**

  https://globalworkinggroup.wordpress.com/

  GWG is an interfaith organization composed of over 150 delegates from 17 countries that is spearheading a faith-based social movement against HIV and AIDS. One of the group's driving motivations is to eliminate HIV-related stigma, shame, denial, inaction, and mis-action – social factors that hinder prevention and treatment, contributing to higher levels of infection and death.

- **International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF)**

  https://iarf.net/

  Founded in 1900, IARF is a UK-based charity working for the freedom of religion and beliefs. The organization promotes tolerance and interfaith dialogue and social justice projects.

****This appendix is not intended to be comprehensive; it is intended to provide examples of groups engaged in these efforts.***

- **International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD)**

  https://icrd.org/programs/asia/pakistan/#program-477

  The ICRD uses religion to strengthen communities and recognizes its potential to help resolve current and future threats to global peace. The ICRD focuses on using religion to preclude the need for military intervention in ethnic, tribal, and religious-based identity conflicts. It currently has projects in Afghanistan, Iran, Kashmir, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the United States. ICRD holds consultative status with UN ECOSOC.

- **Religions for Peace**

  https://rfp.org/

  RFP brands itself as "the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition." RFP, a multi-faith coalition of religious leaders from around the world, works to address universal moral concerns such as conflict transformation, establishment of just societies, advancement of human development, and environmental protection. It holds consultative status with UN ECOSOC, UNESCO, and UNICEF.

- **Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding**

  https://tanenbaum.org/

  The Tanenbaum Center is a secular nonprofit whose primary mission is combating religious prejudice through education. It prepares trainings and educational resources to promote respect and fight intolerance in schools, health care settings, corporate workplaces, and conflict zones.

- **United Religions Initiative**

  https://www.uri.org/

  URI is a global grassroots organization operating in 85 countries. Its mission is to promote daily interfaith cooperation to cultivate peace and end religiously motivated violence. It operates through 685 Cooperation Circles—groups made up of at least 7 people from at least 3 different religions, spiritual orientations, or indigenous traditions. Its focus areas include the arts, community building, education, the environment, healthcare, human rights, conflict transformation, poverty alleviation and economic opportunity, female empowerment, and youth.

- **Traditional and Religious Peacemakers**

  https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org

  The Network of Traditional and Religious Peacemakers works to connect religious peacemakers with national and international peacebuilders such as the United Nations and its member states, regional bodies, and civil society groups. It advocates inclusion of religious leaders and collaborative action in peacebuilding discussions and processes. It also provides data and studies to inform the design of peacebuilding programs.

US National and Regional Organizations

- **ADAMS Center Interreligious Efforts**

  https://www.adamscenter.org/interfaith-advocacy/

  The ADAMS Center is an active and engaged advocate for a number of churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship in the Washington, D.C. area. In an attempt to continuously build and strengthen positive relationships with its neighbors and community, the ADAMS center has pursued close relationships with other interfaith organizations, including Cornerstones, Fairfax County Faith Communities in Action, and the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington.

- **Interfaith Worker Justice**

  http://www.iwj.org/

  IWJ works to advance the rights of workers through engaging faith communities in joint action. Faith-labor allies work at the local, state, and national levels to ensure living wages, safe working conditions, and freedom from discrimination, among other objectives. IWJ publishes free resources aimed to help workers educate themselves and to organize and advocate for worker justice.

- **Interfaith Youth Core – USA**

  https://www.ifyc.org/

  IFYC is an American non-profit whose mission is to make interfaith cooperation the norm. It identifies college campuses as an important starting point where the values of future leaders are shaped and conversations steer broader cultural trends. Its programs include Interfaith Leadership Institutes and "Better Together" community service projects. It works on over 200 U.S. campuses, and on campuses around the world.

- **Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council – USA**

  https://www.muslimjewishadvocacy.org/

  MJAC is a collaboration between the American Jewish Committee and the Islamic Society of North America. It is led by 42 business, religious, and political leaders in the United States. The group's advocacy focuses primarily on countering the recent rise in hate crimes and highlighting the important contributions of religious minorities to America.

- **Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign**

  http://www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org/

  Founded in 2010, Shoulder to Shoulder is an interfaith organization working to end-Muslim intolerance and bigotry in the United States. Shoulder to Shoulder emerged from an interfaith summit of over 40 religious leaders in the fall of 2010. Its steering committee is comprised of 35 faith groups. The organization is working at the grassroots and national levels to address anti-Muslim sentiment.

Entities That Monitor Hate Crimes

- **Anti-Defamation League**

  https://www.adl.org/

- **Capital and Main**

  https://capitalandmain.com/

- **Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)**

  https://www.cair.com/about_us

- **EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**

  Hate Crimes Monitoring Working Group (Croatia)

  http://fra.europa.eu/en/promising-practices/hate-crimes-monitoring-working-group

- **FBI**

  https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes

- **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Hate Monitor (BiH)**

  https://www.osce.org/hatemonitorbih

- **Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) Digital Terrorism and Hate Project**

  http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=8776547&ct=14827597

- **Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) HateWatch**

  https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch

- **US Department of Justice (DoJ) Civil Rights Division**

  https://www.justice.gov/crt

Entities That Promote Religious Diversity and Tolerance

- **American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee**

  http://www.adc.org/

  ADC is an organization committed to protecting the civil rights of Arab Americans, promoting mutual understanding, and preserving Arab American cultural heritage. Its other objectives are to combat stereotypes and discrimination affecting Arab Americans, to serve as a voice for the Arab American community on both domestic and foreign policy issues, and to educate Americans on Arab history and culture.

- **American Jewish Committee (AJC), Department of Interreligious Affairs – USA**

  https://www.ajc.org/

  AJC partners with Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain groups to combat anti-semitism and religious extremism. These interfaith connections are aimed at promoting democracy, pluralism, and freedom of worship.

- **Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion – Canada**

  https://ccdi.ca/

  The Canadian Center for Diversity and Inclusion is a national organization with the goal of promoting inclusivity and ending prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. One of its driving principles is to present diversity as an asset rather than an obstacle for corporations. It works through campaigns, reports, professional development, and diversity data analytics.

- **International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)**

  http://www.iccj.org/

  The ICCJ is an organization comprised of 38 groups in 32 countries engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue. Its mission is to promote understanding, cooperation, and respect between the two faith groups, and to counter prejudice and discrimination. It achieves this through activities, conferences, and educational initiatives.

- **KAICIID Dialogue Center**

  http://www.kaiciid.org/

  The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue partners with UN agencies, governments, and international interreligious organization to promote interreligious dialogue. Its mission is to prevent and resolve conflicts, build sustainable peace and social cohesion, promote mutual respect, and counteract the abuse of religion as a justification for oppression, violence, and conflict.

- **Kids 4 Peace – Israel and the United States**

  http://www.k4p.org/faq/

  Kids 4 Peace is a youth-oriented movement. It aims to empower youth to be agents of change and to build peace in their communities. In 2017, the group received the IIE Goldberg Prize for Peace in the Middle East.

Additional Resources

- **Cambridge Institute for the Religion and International Studies**

  http://ciris.org.uk/

- **Harvard Project Implicit**

  https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

- **PEW Research Center**

  http://www.pewresearch.org/

The New Global Commons Working Group
Religious Intolerance and America's Image and Policies Abroad

List of Participants
March 22, 2018

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*Not participating in an official capacity or as a representative of any U.S. government agency.

- **Speak out against intolerance, bigotry, and hate crimes.** From public officials, to civil society leaders, to individual citizens, everyone has a role in condemning intolerance. When hatred and intolerance are allowed to flourish, further discrimination and hate crimes ensue.
- **Engage more closely with communities affected by intolerance – as well as those who spread such messages.** We must ensure that we work with those affected by intolerance to ensure their rights, protect them from threats, and demonstrate our concerns. Meanwhile, we must also work with those perpetrating intolerance to learn their motivations, dispel misunderstandings, confront hateful ideologies, and build bridges to a safer and more peaceful world.
- **Reinvest in civic education, a true bulwark against intolerance and extremism.** Learning about America's fundamental values and the ongoing struggle to achieve equality and justice for all Americans reinforces a sense of civic nationalism and unity, and may help dispel ethnic or racial nationalism. Embracing the American creed also helps to build empathy for those in the United States and elsewhere in the world who do not yet fully enjoy America's promise of equal rights and freedoms.
- **Enhance religious literacy to promote understanding and to develop more effective policies.** A nuanced and sophisticated understanding of religion, religious teachings, and the role and impact of religion in society are essential for policymakers as well as members of civil society and the media. The increasingly interconnected world places even greater importance on an appreciation for all forms of diversity, as well as an understanding of how our domestic actions can have such a dramatic effect on communities abroad.
- **Create space and an enabling environment for interfaith dialogue and collaboration.** Interfaith collaboration can have a profound dampening effect on incidents of intolerance and this type of collaboration should be expanded when applicable. Governments, too, need to play a role by providing an enabling environment for collaboration.
- **Amplify positive stories of tolerance and partnership.** Positive speech is one of the best antidotes to hate speech, but may not provide the breaking news story that the media wants to highlight. Civil society and government officials must work to promote examples of positive speech.
- **Expand other tools and strategies to combat hate speech.** Technology and social media can be a double-edged sword, and allow hate speech to masquerade as "free speech." Policymakers and tech companies must work together to build more robust strategies for combating hate speech online.
- **Prepare to respond to provocative and destabilizing incidents.** Acts of religious intolerance may never completely disappear. With this in mind, government officials should learn from past events to develop and implement preventive measures to ensure that protests and acts of desecration or violence do not escalate, both domestically and abroad.
- **Address the disparity in treatment of foreign and domestic terrorism.** The volume of media reporting on foreign terrorism diminishes the public's understanding of the threat of domestic terrorism, and creates a flawed association of Muslims with terrorism. Interested parties should work with the media to address this biased coverage. At a minimum, government officials and reporters should use the term "domestic terrorism" when talking about **all** acts of domestic mass violence, or refer to any act of terrorism, domestically or internationally, as "mass violence."

"We hold these truths to be self-evident:
that all men are created equal; that they are endowed
by their Creator with certain unalienable rights;
that among these are life, liberty,
and the pursuit of happiness."