

ABSTRACT

From Separationism to Theocracy: How the Domestic Relationship between Religion and State Conditions the Salience of Religion in Foreign Policy

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The study of international politics has undergone a profound re-consideration of disciplinary assumptions about religion since the end of the Cold War. From Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* to Peter Berger's *Desecularization of the World*, scholars are attempting to identify and explain the re-emergence of religion globally and decipher its meaning and ramifications for the conduct of international politics. Unlike power and economics, which are constant pressures in the international system, religion is not present everywhere at all times but in some circumstances and often erratically. This dissertation asks how it becomes possible—under what situations or circumstances—for religion to be a salient feature of a nation's foreign policy. It hypothesizes that the domestic religion-state relationship affects the salience of religion in a state's foreign policies and the ways in which religion is salient in a state's foreign policies.

This dissertation takes a comparative approach, selecting three cases that differ in their domestic religion-state relationships: the United States, Russia and Iran. A historical

account of the domestic religion-state relationship in each case is provided as well as the ways in which religion has functioned as a salient feature in each state's foreign policies historically. The comparative analysis focuses on the two-decade period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The comparative analysis reveals that religion performs at least one function (legitimation, mobilization, or identity creation/delineation) at the foreign policy level in all three case studies. Religion is a more salient feature of Iranian foreign policy than of the foreign policies of either Russia or the United States. With some caveats, the ways in which religion functions in each state's foreign policy is conditioned by the domestic religion-state relationship, such that American separationism limits the functionality of religion at the foreign policy level, the Russian symphonic relationship with religion at the domestic level enables a partnership model at the foreign policy level, and the Iranian theocratic model is consistent across the domestic policy-foreign policy divide.

From Separationism to Theocracy:
How the Domestic Relationship between Religion and State
Conditions the Salience of Religion in Foreign Policy

by

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DEDICATION

To my fellow students at the Dawson Institute
For our shared experience
And for your contribution to my interdisciplinary learning.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Methodology

On August 21, 2010, Russian diplomats and technicians joined their Iranian counterparts in a ceremony officially opening Iran's first nuclear power plant.¹ The controversial plant had been a point of contention between Iran and many Western governments, which suspect the true goal of Iranian leaders to be the development of nuclear weapons. The issue was further complicated by the fact that the uranium to be used in the nuclear power plant would be managed by Russia's state nuclear power corporation, Rosatom. The relationship between Russia and Iran poses both risks and opportunities for the Russian government, which is attempting to strengthen its geo-political influence by solidifying its position as a "power broker" in the region. Russian leaders must maintain a meticulous balance between developing Iranian trust and business, and maintaining its working relationship with Iranian foes, including much of the West, Israel and Saudi Arabia. In accordance with this balancing act, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev publicly questioned Iran's motives leading up to the opening of the facility, which Russia was clearly facilitating.²

In the midst of this high-level posturing over security-related international concerns, the Iranian Ambassador to the Russian Federation, H.E. Mahmoud-Reza

¹ William Young and Andrew E. Kramer, "Iran Opens its First Nuclear Power Plant" August 21, 2010, *New York Times Online*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/22/world/middleeast/22bushehr.html> (accessed 12 May 2013).

² Pavel Felgenhauer, "The 'unraveling' relationship between Russia and Iran," July 24, 2010, *BBC News Europe*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-10684110> (accessed May 12, 2013).

Sajjadi, met with the “ambassador” of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.³ The reasons for the meeting are unclear, though the work of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Dialogue between Orthodoxy and Islam was discussed. In this meeting, the Iranian ambassador reportedly stated “Contacts between our religions are of fundamental importance since we can use other other’s [sic] great experience and oppose secularism together”.⁴

The first scenario is an expected one and, indeed, illustrates the typical story of international relations: that of nation-states involved in power struggles to strategically advance their own security and economic interests vis-à-vis others. The second scenario, in which diplomats court and consult with domestic or regional religious leaders, is perhaps more unexpected and would have been unthinkable fifty years ago—especially regarding the two states involved. Yet far from being an anomaly, the religious priorities of Iranian leaders are an overt component of their foreign policy, and the involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church in the state’s foreign affairs has been an increasing occurrence, albeit at primarily lower, soft-power levels. The purpose of this dissertation is to better understand this second scenario which, unlike the first, is not happening everywhere at all times but among some states, in some situations, and often erratically.

³Metropolitan Hilarion’s official title is Chairman of the Department of External Affairs for the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church and Bishop of Volokolamsk, Vicar to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

⁴ “DECR Chairman Meets with Iranian Ambassador in Russia” July 30, 2010, DECR Communication Service, Russian Orthodox Church, <https://mospat.ru/en/2010/07/30/news23393/> (accessed 14 May 2013).

Level of Analysis and Theoretical Perspective

Assumptions about Russia have undergone drastic changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the resurgence of religion domestically has not gone unnoticed by observant scholars.⁵ Similarly, the study of international politics has undergone a profound re-consideration of disciplinary assumptions about religion since the end of the Cold War. From Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* to Peter Berger's *Desecularization of the World*, scholars are attempting to identify and explain the re-emergence of religion globally and decipher its meaning and ramifications for the conduct of international politics.⁶ Studies have emerged at all three Waltzian levels of analysis – the individual, the state, and the international system—though, until recently, no frame has existed for these studies to engage each other and together build a coherent literature.⁷

Because religion can emerge in both domestic and transnational forms, can be dissected as both ideology and institution, and is simultaneously natural in its observance by man and supernatural in its orientation, it is a uniquely challenging social phenomenon. Yet these characteristics also dictate both the level of analysis and the theoretical perspective from which I approach the relationship of religion and world politics in this dissertation. Because religion is present domestically, internationally, and

⁵ See: Christopher Marsh, ed. *Burden or Blessing: Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy* (Boston, MA: Boston University, Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs, 2004); James Billington, *Russia in Search of Itself* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent: Faith and Power in the New Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁶ Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49; Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); among others.

⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

transnationally, I chose to position this investigation of the relationship between religion and politics at the critical juncture of states' foreign policies, which allows me to consider religious pressures on two levels and states' responses to those pressures on two levels. Because religion manifests in more forms than just the institutional, I have chosen a constructivist theoretical perspective, which provides better tools for assessing religion's more intangible aspects.

Foreign Policy Analysis

When foreign policy analysis began to constitute a separate field from (or at least a subfield within) international relations under the purview of "comparative foreign policy" in the 1950s, scholars were seeking to find and explain sub-structural factors that might influence the conduct of international relations.⁸ The emergence of this scholarship, which was highly behavioral and led to a host of new methodologies for studying international interaction, was a key factor in the agency-structure debates of the 1960s and 1970s within the larger discipline.⁹ By the 1980s, the agency-structure debate seemed to have stagnated with much of the field heavily favoring structure.¹⁰ Yet, with the end of the Cold War, whose bi-polarity leant itself to structural evaluation, domestic and individual factors again appeared relevant to the conduct of international relations.

⁸ Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck, Burton Sapin, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954).

⁹ James Rosenau, ed. *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Free Press, 1967); James Rosenau, *Linkage Politics; Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems* (New York: Free Press, 1969).

¹⁰ This was true for both realists, such as John J. Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz, and liberal institutionalists, such as Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, who both tended to emphasize the structural pressures on policy making, though the emphases on *which* structural pressures and processes differed.

The contemporary field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) provides a key link between the structurally-dominant theories of international relations and the human actor-focused disciplines of the other social sciences. Consequently, recent FPA scholarship features multiple levels of analysis and is often interdisciplinary. In a 2005 article, political scientist Valerie Hudson argued that because foreign policy analysis requires the examination of domestic and individual factors below systemic concerns such scholarship presupposes that the state is not a “black box”.¹¹ Instead of the unitary nation-state, then, the unit of analysis for FPA becomes “human decision makers acting singly or in groups”. By focusing on the actors that are actually making foreign policy decisions, Hudson asserts that FPA becomes the cross-roads between IR theory and empirical reality. Abstractly, this is really a link between IR systems theory and the social sciences, which means that FPA is a field that is both “multifactorial” (in the sense of examining variables at multiple levels of theory) and “interdisciplinary” (in the sense that it welcomes perspectives from sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology, etc).¹²

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, plus its acknowledgement of the importance of both agency and structure, FPA emerges as a natural place to evaluate phenomena such as culture and national identity in the context of international relations. According to Hudson, “Only a move towards placing human decision makers at the center of the theoretical matrix would allow the theorist to link to the social constructions present in a

¹¹ Valerie Hudson, “FP analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1, no. 1 (2005): 1-30. Allison and Zelikow demonstrated the error of treating states as “black boxes” in his evaluation of U.S. policies during the Cuban Missile Crisis in Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971). Jerel Rosati then established theoretical principles of the “bureaucratic politics approach” in Jerel Rosati, “Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective,” *World Politics* 23 (1981): 234-252. Rosati argues that presidential dominance exists when an issue is more critical and bureaucratic or local dominance exists when an issue is less critical.

¹²Hudson, 2.

culture.”¹³ While she does not specify religion *per se* as an aspect of culture open to evaluation, she specifies multiple conduits of cultural influence that may influence foreign policy decision makers. These include the impact of societal groups, conceptions of national identity and a nation’s role in the international arena.¹⁴

Indeed, because this dissertation is aimed explicitly at understanding the interaction between state policy and a societal force that exerts pressures from both the domestic and international/transnational levels, it is my contention that foreign policy analysis is a particularly appropriate level at which to investigate this relationship. With a strong history of encouraging a “two-level” approach to politics, foreign policy analysis allows for a holistic perspective that I expect to produce more nuanced conclusions than an approach from either the domestic or international realms might allow.¹⁵

Constructivism

“Constructivism” is a word and concept without clear definition across the disciplines. In their groundbreaking work, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967), Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann laid out an epistemological theory of social constructivism.¹⁶ According to their theory, social reality is essentially composed of the structures, roles and typifications that humans use to order and make sense of their world. This reality is “constructed” in a three-step continuous process whereby an individual externalizes himself to the world, his actions then become objectified by society as

¹³Ibid., 4.

¹⁴Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁵Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427-460.

¹⁶ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1967).

observable shared reality and finally internalized by the individual. This is not to say that reality is somehow false or subjective, but the authors do argue that social institutions do not exist independently from their human creators.¹⁷ Even so, Berger and Luckmann insist that this is a dialectic process, such that the roles, norms and institutions that make up social reality work back on the individuals who constructed them. Thus, both agents and structure influence and construct each other.

Constructivism has come late to the international relations discipline but has taken a hold of its imagination. Alexander Wendt's "Anarchy is What States Make of It" is perhaps the most well-known version of constructivist IR theory, but it is by no means representative of the scholarship as a whole.¹⁸ David Patrick Houghton helpfully breaks down contemporary social constructivism into a series of things that all constructivists hold or oppose.¹⁹ According to Houghton, all constructivists make a "distinction between 'brute' and 'institutional' facts," and highlight those aspects of international relations, such as the concept of sovereignty, that are really social constructions. Second, constructivists acknowledge the importance of agency in international politics and in social reality in general, while still seeing agency and structure as mutually constitutive or, in Berger and Luckmann's term, dialectic. Third, because scholars and policy-makers are part of the social world they are analyzing, constructivists recognize the possibility that their own theories could affect social reality and are thus particularly attuned to instances of self-fulfilling prophecies. Finally, constructivists tend to emphasize the

¹⁷Ibid., 52.

¹⁸Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics" *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1993): 395.

¹⁹David Patrick Houghton, "Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making" *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3 (2007): 24-45.

importance of ideas, collective norms and identity. In doing so, they tend to look for the socially constructed meanings, symbols and rhetoric behind particular policies.

Two important dividing lines exist, however, across the constructivist literature. First, is a tendency among some constructivists to stress the importance of either agency or structure, rather than taking a balanced account of the influence of both.²⁰ Wendt, for instance, tends to be structure-heavy, emphasizing the ways in which socially constructed structures influence state behavior, while Peter Katzenstein's work often favors agency. The second division is epistemological: the positivist/post-positivist split.²¹ Constructivists disagree as to whether we can really know and explain social phenomena in the same way we can know and explain natural phenomena. Some constructivists, therefore, avoid searching for causality in international politics, seeking only to "understand" not "explain" social phenomena.

Generally, constructivism is typically considered an "approach" to studying international relations rather than an alternative paradigm to the realist and liberal camps of International Relations (IR) theory. By using a constructivists lens, my dissertation will actually be in line with many FPA scholars who, without necessarily intending to do so, naturally took a constructivist, or at least subjectivist, approach. Snyder, Bruck and Sapin's *Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, for instance, evaluated the "constructions of foreign policy elites, showing how 'of all the phenomena which *might* have been

²⁰Ibid., 30.

²¹This has also been referred to as a split between "hard" and "soft" constructivists. Arguably the most influential post-positivists or "hard" constructivist work is Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making. Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989). See also, Vendulka Kubalkova, ed., *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001).

relevant, the actors (the decision makers) finally endow only some with *significance*’.”²² Snyder, Bruck and Sapin famously defined this as an agent’s “definition of the situation.” This is similar to contemporary constructivist Roxanne Doty’s division between “why” questions and “how-possible” ones. She states “What is explained is not *why* a particular outcome obtained, but rather *how* the subjects, objects, and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible.”²³

My approach to religion and foreign policy is constructivist in a similar sense. I ask how it becomes possible—under what situations or circumstances—for religion to be a consideration in foreign policy making; under what conditions does the situation arise where the two convene? Another way of defining such a situation is the notion of the “salience” of religion in foreign policy—how does it become possible for religion to be a salient feature of a nation’s foreign policy and in what ways is that salience manifested in policy?

Research Design

Hypothesis

This dissertation attempts to demonstrate that this question cannot be answered without considering the salience of religion in a state’s domestic politics. This is generally referred to as the church-state relationship, but as this dissertation considers non-Christian religions, I use instead the terminology of the domestic religion-state relationship. My null hypothesis may be stated: The domestic religion-state relationship

²²Snyder, Bruck Sapin, eds. quoted in Houghton, 31.

²³Roxanne Doty, “Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines,” *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (1993): 298; qtd. in Houghton, 35.

does not affect the salience of religion in a state's foreign policies. My hypothesis, then, may be stated: The domestic religion-state relationship does affect the salience of religion in a state's foreign policies. A second hypothesis may be stated thus: The domestic religion-state relationship affects *the ways in which* religion is salient in a state's foreign policies.

Methodology and Definition of Terms

Taking a constructivist approach dictates my methodology in that I will not be attempting to establish causality as much as context. Here, a constructivist approach parallels such important historical comparative works as Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* and Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.²⁴ Moore explains the benefits of the historical comparative method:

In the effort to understand the history of a specific country a comparative perspective can lead to asking very useful and sometimes new questions. There are further advantages. Comparisons can serve as a rough negative check on accepted historical explanations. And a comparative approach may lead to new historical generalizations. In practice these features constitute a single intellectual process and make such a study more than a disparate collection of interesting cases.²⁵

The variance of religious salience in a state's foreign policy is the dependent variable or outcome this dissertation seeks to understand. Existing scholarship that measures religious salience tends to focus on the salience of religion in society, or the salience of religion in the life of an individual. Studying the relationship between religion and foreign policy, for example, sociologist Lynn Nelson measured religious salience by the

²⁴Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: a Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

²⁵Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1966): xix.

number of church workers in a society, the percentage of the population that believed in an afterlife, and weekly church attendance.²⁶ Similarly, in a study of American religious beliefs and attitudes towards Islam and the invasion of Iraq, Corwin Smidt measured religious salience in terms of church membership, church attendance and the importance of religion in an individual's life.²⁷

This dissertation, however, investigates religious salience in state policy, not in an individual's life or public opinion more broadly, making standard measures of personal religiosity inappropriate. I instead emphasize the function or role religion plays in each state's foreign policies.²⁸ In this dissertation, religion will be determined to have been a "salient" feature of a state's foreign policies if it contributed to the implementation of that policy in any of the following ways.

- 1) Providing legitimacy to a state's foreign policies
- 2) Mobilizing political actors and groups on behalf of or to implement a state's foreign policies
- 3) Constructing state identity so as to enable alignment with or differentiation from another state's foreign policies.

Defining the independent variable (domestic religion-state relationship) across three disparate cases requires some flexibility. For this reason, I strive for functional equivalency, meaning two or more measures must have the same value, importance, use,

²⁶Lynn Nelson, "Religion and Foreign Aid Provision: A Comparative Analysis of Advanced Market Nations," *Sociological Analysis* 49 (Summer 1988): 49-63. See also James Guth and John Green, "Salience: The Core Concept?" in *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, David Leege and Lyman Kelstedt, eds., (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993); and Peter Bensen and Dorothy Williams, *Religion on Capitol Hill: Myths and Realities* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

²⁷Corwin Smidt, "Religion and American Attitudes Toward Islam and the Invasion of Iraq," *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 3 (2005): 243-261.

²⁸By emphasizing functionality, I am intentionally following a Bergerian model, which emphasizes religion's functional role in society, while also considering its ability to provide individuals with subjective meaning, thus blending the best of Durkheimian and Weberian theory. The following chapter discusses these three theorists' conception of religion and society at length.

function, result or relationship across the case studies. Jan van Deth has defined functional equivalence as “the requirement that concepts should be related to other concepts in other settings in more or less the same way.”²⁹ In this dissertation, the domestic religion-state relationship is assessed according to Jose Casanova’s tri-partite definition of secularization, with an emphasis on the institutional differentiation of religion and government, determined primarily by the state’s legal/constitutional arrangement.³⁰

A final methodological concern is the issue of time span. The comparative analysis conducted in this dissertation will be limited to the post-Cold War era. While considerable historical background prior to this period is provided, the analytical focus is limited to the religious salience in the states’ foreign policies during a two-decade period following the end of the Cold war. This timeline is somewhat flexible so as to incorporate significant case-specific events. The U.S. study focuses on the Clinton and Bush administrations (1992-2008), the Russian analysis picks up immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and continues through the end of Putin’s second term as president (1990-2008), and the Iranian analysis begins with the death of Khomeini and continues through President Ahmadinejad’s first term (1989-2009).³¹ In all three cases, this time span includes multiple administrations that varied in their political policies and—to varying degrees—in the administration’s relationship with religion in both domestic and foreign policy. This variance across administrations in a

²⁹Jan W. van Deth, “Equivalence in Comparative Political Research,” in *Comparative Politics: The Problem of Equivalence*, (New York: Rutledge, 1998): 6.

³⁰Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Casanova’s definition of secularization is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

³¹In all three cases, analysis ends no later than 2009 to allow for space between foreign policy implementation and analysis, and to avoid as much as possible complications from ongoing current events.

limited time span is expected to yield more specific conclusions than an analysis of the full histories recounted in the case studies would allow.

Case Studies: The United States, Russia and Iran

In selecting the United States, Russia and Iran, I have chosen three cases that, in a supposedly secularizing modern era, have a dynamic religious scene domestically. As Berger notes, it is probably the non-religious states of Europe that need an explanation, not the religious ones.³² In this sense, the majority of the world's nation-states could be included in this analysis. The three I have chosen fit within the "Most Different Nation" paradigm, in their histories, political systems and religious traditions.³³ Most importantly, clear differences exist in their domestic religion-state relationships. If imagined on a continuum of religion-state relations, with laïcité representing a non- or even anti-religious position on the part of the government and theocracy representing a state that is subservient to or governed by religious principles or authorities, each case study represents a distinctly different point on that continuum. Iran is the closest example of theocracy in the modern world and thus represents one extreme on the continuum. Post-Soviet Russia could arguably be considered a modern *symphonia* in which church (i.e., the Russian Orthodox Church) and state act as dual pillars of society and political partners.³⁴ The United States occupies a separationist/public-square position, left of neutral. While legally separationist, the United States has a history of vibrant public

³²Peter Berger, "Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview" in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Peter L. Berger, ed., (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999): 2.

³³Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (NY: Wiley-Interscience, 1970).

³⁴I acknowledge that none of these cases embody this typology exactly and identify in following chapters where each differentiates from this rudimentary classification.

religiosity and exhibits accomodationist tendencies domestically.³⁵ It is expected that religious salience will be greatest in Iranian foreign policy and weakest in United States foreign policy.

Though dissimilar, each case is a modern, developed state and a regional power. Social and political theorist Barrington Moore has argued for the benefits of comparing such countries. In *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, he argues that comparing large, innovative countries to each other is superior to including second and third-world countries which, though they may exhibit similar attributes to a larger country in a case study, make political decisions that are too often determined by forces and situations outside of their borders or beyond their control.³⁶

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is structured with a literature review preceding three case studies, followed by a comparative analysis of the case studies. In Chapter Two, I establish the literature on religion in the modern world, focusing on secularization theory and its effect on the study of religion in international politics. I supplement the political science literature with scholarship from the sociology of religion, which has a much more robust understanding of religion and the processes of secularization. I trace the recent emergence of scholarship in the field of religion and international studies, including

³⁵A fourth point on the continuum would be a secularist state that is avowedly atheistic or anti-religious. Modern examples might include France, Turkey, the Soviet Union, and The Peoples Republic of China. The decision was made *not* to include a case study of a secularist state for the simple reason that it is difficult if not impossible to prove a negative. It was determined that a comparative analysis of states with some positive association between state policy and religion would be most fruitful, though the secularist model is clearly an opportunity for further research.

³⁶Moore, xix.

foreign policy analysis. I establish this dissertation within a framework for the study of religion and foreign policy laid out by other foreign policy analysts.

Chapters Four, Five and Six include my three case studies in the following order: the United States, Russia, and Iran. Each case study follows a similar structure whereby I first provide a synopsis of the religion-state relationship at the domestic and foreign policy levels historically. I then present the domestic religion-state relationship during the time-period under scrutiny (roughly 1989-2009), followed by an analysis of the salience of religion in that state's foreign policy during that same time frame. I conclude each chapter with initial thoughts on the way in which that case's domestic relationship with religion conditions, if at all, the way that religion functions in its foreign policy.

In Chapter Seven I conduct a cross-country analysis, delineating points of similarity and contrast between the case studies. I first categorize each state's domestic religion-state relationship according to Casanova's definition of secularization. I then evaluate the religion's legitimation, mobilization and identity creation functions in each state's foreign policies. I compare and contrast the ways that the domestic religion-state relationship conditions religion's ability to achieve those three functions in each states' foreign policies. I also discuss potential intervening variables and other trends that the comparative analysis brought to light. Chapter Eight includes conclusions and opportunities for future research.

Preview of Conclusions

The proceeding case studies and analysis have revealed that religion performs at least one function (legitimation, mobilization, or identity creation/delineation) at the foreign policy level in all three case studies. As expected, religion is a more salient

feature of Iranian foreign policy than the foreign policies of either Russia or the United States. With some caveats, the ways in which religion functions in each state's foreign policy is conditioned by the domestic religion-state relationship, such that American separationism limits the functionality of religion at the foreign policy level, the Russian symphonic relationship with religion at the domestic level enables a partnership model at the foreign policy level, and the Iranian theocratic model is consistent across the domestic policy-foreign policy divide.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Modernization, whatever else it involves, is always a moral and religious problem.

—Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief*¹

For most of the discipline's modern history, academic studies of religion and politics have been lacking in political science, with International Relations being perhaps the guiltiest of all political sub-fields.² This situation is attributable, in part, to the development of the discipline against the realities of twentieth century world politics, which were dominated by the World Wars and the Cold War. During the latter in particular, the struggle between ostensibly secular superpowers framed a half-century's worth of scholastic effort on essentially areligious topics, such as fascism, communism, military power, economic modeling, advanced weapons technology and the threat of mutual annihilation.³

The lack of sufficient scholarship on religion in international relations, however, has much deeper roots. Beyond the political realities that subordinated religious studies were the intellectual assumptions guiding the bulk of social scientific inquiry leading up to the Cold War. As scholars in the various social science disciplines grappled with the

¹Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970): 64.

²Jonathan Fox and Schmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

³Of course, all of these topics pose important moral questions, but the study of how distinct religious beliefs, personnel and institutions affect international politics certainly was not at the forefront of twentieth-century scholarship.

meaning and forms of modernity, the resultant theories of modernization and democratization were built upon a core assumption of the inevitability or necessity of secularization, i.e. the decreasing importance of religion in the personal, public or governmental spheres as societies modernize. Although events of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century have called this core foundation of social theory into question, turning around the ship, so to speak, is a difficult task. As sociologist Grace Davie notes, “There remains... a deep-seated resistance to the notion that it is entirely normal in most parts of the world to be both fully modern and fully religious.”⁴

Assumptions of a Secular Modernity

Defining Secularization

“Secularization” is a term that has been used by philosophers, theologians and social scientists as a catch-all for various religious or irreligious processes evident in modern and modernizing (mainly Western) societies. The most commonly referenced definition of secularization in post-Cold War scholarship was developed by Jose Casanova in 1994.⁵ Casanova identified three distinct, though potentially overlapping, processes of secularization: first, the process of differentiation between religious and non-religious institutions; second, the decline in religious belief and meaning in the modern world; and third, the privatization of religion, that is, its removal from the public sphere.⁶

⁴Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Sage Publications, 2007): iv.

⁵Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁶“Secularism”, by contrast, is defined in this dissertation as an ideology that values the decline of religion in the modern world.

According to Casanova, the central thesis of secularization theory is the first definition:

the conceptualization of the process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres – primarily the state, the economy, and science – from the religious sphere and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere.⁷

This understanding of secularization as differentiation is rooted in the canonical term for the process by which a priest left the clergy and rejoined the “secular” world.⁸ After the Protestant Reformation and resulting wars of religion, secularization came to describe the transfer of wealth, land and social functions of the Church to the state. The process of differentiation and transfer of roles between Western European institutions coincided with the formation of modern nation-states. Upon the end of the wars of religion with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the religion of a territory was determined by the religion of the ruler, embodied in the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*.⁹ This act subordinated religion to temporal authority, with the further implication that the legitimacy of the state was henceforth based on a ruler’s ability to provide security within territorial boundaries, rather than allegiance to a unified Christendom.¹⁰ The Protestant Reformation, the formation of modern-nation states, the rise of capitalism and development of modern science all contributed to the process of institutional differentiation and, as Casanova notes, quite a bit of evidence exists to support the contention that this first form of

⁷Casanova, 19.

⁸Casanova, 13.

⁹Also spelled “*cuius regio, eius religio*,” which means “a territory’s religion [is] that of its prince.” *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion*, volume A-E, s.v. “Cuius Regio, Eius Religio,” (1979).

¹⁰Fox and Sandler, 22-23.

secularization as differentiation has occurred in most modern and in all Western countries.¹¹

Casanova finds the second and third secularization theses, however, to be more problematic. The idea that religious belief and meaning would necessarily decline as society progressed—a belief clearly rooted in the Enlightenment—and the related idea that religion would be so marginalized in modernity as to be irrelevant to the public sphere, became so taken-for-granted that these assumptions remained essentially unquestioned and untested until the 1960s. These variations on the secularization thesis were developed most fully in the early twentieth century by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, and expounded upon later by Peter Berger.

Classic Iterations of Secularization Theory

In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Emile Durkheim attempted to explain the origins and purpose of religion by studying the most primitive religious system known to exist at the time – Australian totemism.¹² From his study, Durkheim concluded that there is no “origin” of religion – rather, there are ever-present causes of the most essential religious thoughts and acts. One of these ever-present causes is the act of living socially, by which we transcend ourselves as individuals, collectively gather knowledge and pass that knowledge along generations – creating, in effect, society’s collective consciousness. According to Durkheim, “religion is something eminently social. Religious representations are collective representations which express collective

¹¹ Casanova, 212.

¹² Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 3, 9-10.

realities....”¹³ For Durkheim, religious rites or behaviors performed in solitude were essentially magic, not religion proper, since only in a community could religion perform its essential role of providing collective meaning.

Just as his definition of religion was essentially functionalist – that is, defined by its role or function in society – Durkheim’s vision of secularization was similarly functionalist. He argued that the religious nature of the “collective consciousness” would decline as societies progressed, with science replacing much of religion’s social functions, especially its speculative role. The secularization-as-privatization thesis identified by Casanova is clearly Durkheimian, in that it assumes that modernity is characterized by religion’s declining public (social) utility.

Max Weber stressed instead the importance of religion in providing subjective meaning and motivation for individuals, concerning basic existential and complex metaphysical questions, as well as how religious ideas undergird the ways in which society operates.¹⁴ In his magisterial work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, for instance, Weber argues that Calvinism introduced new theological ideas about wealth and poverty, which provided religious legitimacy for capitalism.¹⁵ Yet in modernity, Weber argued, the importance and influence of religious ideas would give way to science and rationalism, and the economic system would no longer need the religious support of its foundations. Across his work, Weber constructed a grand argument for secularization – captured by Casanova’s second definition – that the rationalization of thought, of the economy, and of society, developing out of the

¹³Durkheim, 22.

¹⁴Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion* (London: Methuen, 1963).

¹⁵ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958).

Reformation, through the Enlightenment, and cemented in the Industrial Revolution, fatally undermined religion, leading to the decline of religious belief.

Following the scholarship performed in the century prior, both sociologists built into their theories the idea that modern societies would likely shed their religious systems as they progressed. Durkheim and Weber also were influenced by the evolutionist literature of their day, which assumed society necessarily progressed or “evolved”, and as it did so old ideas and systems would die out in favor of more complex and advanced ideas and systems.¹⁶ Both authors believed that religion would decrease in importance as societies modernized, though their reasons varied according to their differing understandings of what purpose religion served in the first place.

Bergerian Secularization Theory

In his 1967 work, *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter Berger provided the most thorough articulation of secularization theory, encompassing all three processes identified by Casanova. Like his predecessors, Berger developed his secularization arguments on the basis of his understanding of the purpose of religion.¹⁷ Building on the foundation of his earlier work in phenomenology with Thomas Luckmann, Berger blended the Weberian and Durkheimian understandings of religion by arguing that religion plays both a functional role in society and also provides subjective meaning for individuals.¹⁸

According to Berger, “to live in the social world is to live an ordered and meaningful

¹⁶ This is evidenced, for instance, by Durkheim’s case selection of a “primitive” religion to provide clues to the more complex and “advanced” great religions developed in later stages of history.

¹⁷ Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967).

¹⁸ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966).

life.”¹⁹ Like Weber, Berger recognized the importance of meaning to individuals, and he argued that humans attempt to extend order and meaning not only to the material and social world, but to the entire cosmos. Because religion both transcends man and specifically refers to man, it is able to locate man in an “ultimately meaningful order” while escaping the problems that temporal processes of socialization encounter, especially in facing death.²⁰

Like Durkheim, however, Berger also acknowledged religion’s important social role. According to Berger, religion is the most effective tool for legitimizing the institutions of a particular society because it grounds the tenuous social constructions of reality in an order that is inherently beyond our ability to question it. By linking the sacred cosmos with the profane temporal realm, religion provides humankind with a stable and coherent social order in which an individual’s social roles, imposed upon him by birth, chance, and choice, are also seen as “realizing the deepest aspirations of their own being and putting themselves in harmony with the fundamental order of the universe.”²¹

Berger initially defined the process of secularization as one of differentiation, saying “by secularization we mean the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.”²² Yet he later extended this definition to encompass a decline in religious belief and the privatization of religion. Not only the progress of science, according to Berger, but also the plurality of

¹⁹Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 21.

²⁰Ibid, 22-23, 36.

²¹Ibid, 33.

²²Ibid., 107.

religions in the modern world undermines the taken-for-grantedness that religious systems previously enjoyed. This results in an overall decline of religious belief as well as to the privatization and relativization of religion where it remains. As Berger stated,

What was previously taken for granted as self-evident reality may now only be reached by a deliberate effort, an act of 'faith,' which by definition will have to overcome doubts that keep on lurking in the background...the old religious contents can only be maintained in consciousness as 'opinions' or 'feelings'...the pluralistic situation described above *ipso facto* plunges religion into a crisis of credibility."²³

For Berger, the crisis of credibility introduced by religious pluralism, and the resultant transformation of religious belief from a taken-for-granted social institution to an individual choice in the modern world, would ultimately lead to secularization in all three formulations of the term.

Assumptions of Secularization in Political Science and International Studies

In the foundational literature on political modernization, published in the 1950s and 1960s, scholars analyzed a multitude of variables thought to have brought about modernity in many Western countries and that might also advance modernization—and with it democratization—in other parts of the world. The variables deemed most necessary for modernization included advancements in science and technology, economic development, urbanization, literacy and the development of a mass media. An often understated but certainly key assumption of political modernization theory was also the declining importance of religion in a nation's politics and the rise of a secular political culture. Typically, modernization theorists attempted a distanced consideration of the changing tides of moral authority rather than a distinct effort, paralleling sociology, to build a theory of secularization or a serious study of religion and modernity. Still,

²³Ibid, 150-151.

political scientists built theories of modernization and democratization upon very similar ideas and assumptions as those put forth by Durkheim, Weber and Berger.

This is evident in the work of political modernization theorist David Apter, for instance, who argued that the split between pre-modern and modern societies relied, in part, on the changing moral basis of social and political authority. And as the foundation of moral authority changed, so did the legitimacy of the political system.²⁴ Like Berger, Apter argued that modernization entails the movement of the moral authority undergirding society being taken-for-granted to something being preferred or chosen. Indeed, choice is a key characteristic of modern society for Apter; he stated “to be modern means to see life as alternatives, preferences and choices.”²⁵ Apter argued that pre-modern societies could not make choices about their cultures, which were “set within the frameworks of religion and kinship.” He contrasts this with modern societies, which make choices about the type of moral society they want to become; for Apter, a moral intentionality exists in modern societies that is lacking in pre-modern ones. Apter also utilized the language of differentiation, again paralleling a key concept in the sociological literature, saying modern politics is “the business of coping with role differentiation while integrating organizational structures.”²⁶

Seymour Martin Lipset’s early work on modernization and democratization, which was both foundational to and representative of thinking within the discipline,

²⁴David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 16.

²⁵Ibid., 10.

²⁶Ibid., 3.

reflects Apter's emphasis on legitimacy and choice.²⁷ He argues that the stability of a democratic or democratizing state relies on the legitimacy of the political system, defined as "the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society."²⁸ For Lipset, a necessary basis for sustained legitimacy of a modern political system was the development of a secular political culture. Lipset went so far as to argue that crises of political legitimacy were themselves an attribute of modernity, since mass communication enables divergent groups within a society to mobilize around new values for society, essentially challenging the taken-for-grantedness of the existing basis of society's moral and political legitimacy.²⁹

Lipset also argued that those states in which religious identities and institutions were directly tied to important political conflicts were less stable democracies. Lipset argued "as long as religious ties reinforce secular political alignments, the chances for democratic give-and-take, and compromise, are weak."³⁰ Reflecting Apter's emphasis on choice, Lipset argues further that those religious traditions that allow more choice among theological precepts, such as Protestant Christianity, will ultimately nurture democracy while those that are less tolerant of theological divergence, like Catholicism, would inhibit democratization.

²⁷Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (March, 1959): 69-105. Differentiation of political structures is also a key element of Lucian Pye's definition of modernization. See Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).

²⁸Lipset, 86.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 82.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 93.

Donald E. Smith provided perhaps the most thorough analysis of secularization and modernization of the mid-century political modernization theorists.³¹ Smith stated frankly the shared assumption in the discipline that “Political modernization includes, as one of its basic processes, the secularization of polities, the progressive exclusion of religion from the political system.”³² Yet he also acknowledged that most of the political modernization literature paid little attention to the specifically religious aspects of traditional society they all assumed were fading away as modernity progressed. Smith suggested a five-point categorization of secularization ranging from the mere differentiation of religion and political institutions to the radical forced secularization programs implemented by revolutionary regimes.³³ He suggested the framework be utilized to judge and compare countries’ progression towards modernization, such that, he implied, the more secular a nation’s institutions, political process, political culture and general social institutions like education become, the more the nation has modernized. Smith allowed for the continuing presence of traditional religions in political processes, especially as religious ideas merged with nationalism. In the long run, however, Smith argued that secular politics would prevail, since the religious movements and institutions that continue to affect political processes must adapt themselves to modern forms of mass political mobilization and so further contribute to the ultimate modernization – and thus necessarily secularization – of the polity.³⁴

³¹Donald E. Smith, *Religion and Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970); and Donald E. Smith, *Religion and Political Modernization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

³²Smith, 4.

³³Ibid., 8.

³⁴Ibid., 10.

The De-Secularization of the Social Sciences

Questioning Secularization Theory

Ironically, just as secularization theory was itself achieving “taken-for-granted” status in both sociology and political science, new scholarship emerged to challenge its most basic claims. Starting in the late 1960s sociologist David Martin published multiple works questioning the utility of secularization theory.³⁵ Similarly, in 1972, sociologist and catholic priest Andrew Greeley published his doubts of the evidentiary basis of secularization in *Unsecular Man*.³⁶ Over the next forty years, an entire alternative scholarship in the field of sociology of religion was established, called rational choice or religious economies theory, which turns Bergerian secularization theory on its head. Rather than pluralism being the cause of religious decline, rational choice theorists like Rodney Stark, Roger Finke and Laurence Iannacone, among others, use a series of market metaphors to argue that pluralism encourages religious growth.³⁷

Rational choice theorists start from the assumption that human religiosity is inherent, but varies over time and between societies. This is not because religiosity itself (i.e., “religious demand”) is waxing or waning, but instead because changes have occurred within religious institutions, among the religious institutions in a given society (i.e., the “religious marketplace”), or to the relationship between the religious institutions and the state, any or all of which can affect “religious supply.” According to religious economies theorists religious monopolies, in which only one religion is available to a

³⁵See especially, David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular* (London: Routledge, 1969); and David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978).

³⁶Andrew Greeley, *Unsecular Man: The Persistence of Religion* (NY: Schocken Books, 1972).

³⁷A thorough overview of the entire approach is given in Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

whole population and is usually supported or enforced by the state, encourage free-loading. Individuals are not incentivized to commit money or time to the religion since its services will be available to them regardless of their individual participation; as such, religious vitality in such markets declines.³⁸ Theorists typically proffer western European countries, such as Sweden, as prime examples of states with religious monopolies resulting in extremely low levels of religious vitality.

Conversely in a free religious market de-regulation and pluralism is the norm. This produces competition between religious firms (churches) and encourages individuals to actively participate in the life of the church, thereby committing more time, effort and finances to that church's progression and survival. Furthermore, in free religious markets a variety of religious forms emerge, which is more likely to satisfy diverse religious needs and again increase religious adherence and vitality. The typical example of a "free" marketplace of religion is the United States, with its strict legal separation between church and state, great variety of religious denominations, and high levels of religious belief, relative to other modernized states.

The application of economic models to the study of religion by rational choice theorists has altered indelibly the literature on secularization and modernization in two ways: first, their work divorces the trajectory of religious belief from the assumed trajectory of modernity and, second, by shifting the frame of reference from Europe to America they have exposed the consequences of using any particular historical experience as a frame of reference. This second point is one of the most common

³⁸Rodney Stark and Laurence R. Iannaccone "A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the 'Secularization' of Europe," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33, no. 3 (1994): 230-252.

criticisms of the rational choice approach as a whole.³⁹ Religious marketplace scholars rely heavily on U.S. evidence and critics argue that the level of freedom in the U.S. marketplace, along with the high numbers of diverse religious groups, is historically and culturally unique and unlikely to be repeated in other societies. Critics also dispute religious marketplace theorists' assumption of the rationality of religion, arguing instead that there are important aspects of religion – such as faith in the unknown – that are by definition non-rational. Because the rationality of religious behavior provides the foundation for an economic model of religious behavior, rational choice theorists tend to study those aspects of religion that are easily quantifiable, such as numbers of denominations and church attendance records, while the more subjective heart of religion—beliefs—are less explored.

Still, it is clear that a paradigm shift has taken place in the sociological literature. Not only have rational choice theorists disputed the traditional secularization theory formulations, but so have some of its main proponents. In 1999, Peter Berger issued a dramatic recantation of his earlier work, saying “The world today...is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken.”⁴⁰ Berger now agrees that the secularization-as-privatization that has occurred in Western Europe cannot be extrapolated to other countries and contexts, and argues that secularization is not a uni-directional teleological

³⁹Steven Warner, “Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm,” *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 5 (March 1993): 1044-93. Tony Gill applied religious marketplace theory outside of the U.S. context to Latin America in Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁴⁰ Berger, “Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview” in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Peter L. Berger, ed. (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999): 2.

phenomenon that presupposes religious decline. He now argues that modernity does not necessarily entail secularization, but that it does result in pluralization, the effects of which still include the loss of taken-for-grantedness of traditional religious systems and the rise of the voluntary nature of religion in modernity. Furthermore, Berger contends that modern individuals and groups are attempting to restore their lost certainty through neo-fundamentalism, meaning that modernity can actually stimulate religiosity rather than necessarily diminishing it.

Political Science Re-discovers Religion

Despite clear signs from actual world events – most notably the Iranian Revolution in 1979 - the realization that religion remains a potent and relevant political force in world politics did not emerge in the political science literature until the 1990s.⁴¹ The rapid and unexpected dissolution of the Soviet Union produced an ideological void for citizens in formerly communist nations and a confusing absence of an ideological framework for national decision makers as well as for scholars of world politics. Religion again appeared to be relevant in at least three ways: first, to citizens of formerly communist countries seeking meaning in their lives and a sense of authenticity about their identity; second, to political leaders—both of recognized nation-states and of ethnic groups seeking independence—who legitimize their political authority or specific political platforms/actions by referencing religious ideals and histories; and third, to political scientists who suggested religion could be an important aspect of how nations and groups of nations would interact in a post-Cold War world.

⁴¹Some questioning of the necessary relationship between secularization and modernity by political scientists had commenced earlier than the 1990s, however. See Terrance G. Carroll, “Secularization and States of Modernity” *World Politics* 36, no. 3 (April, 1984): 362-382.

In 1991, French political scientist Gilles Kepel identified the influence of resurgent and energized strands of the Abrahamic religions on domestic and world politics from below, that is, from communities of believers intent on reshaping their nations' politics.⁴² Though each movement Kepel identified differed according to the particular circumstances of the nation in which each was based, and the particularities of their visions differed according to each movement's underlying theology, the contemporary resurgent religio-political movements all shared a common rejection of secularism. According to Kepel, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim in nature, the groups all decried secularism as "man's forgetting about God" or "man's idol being man", and the overarching goal of each was the same: to restore the public role for religion in society.

Kepel also made the important observation that contemporary anti-secular movements were not simply replicating the arguments and strategies of earlier generations of religious leaders who had opposed the rise of secularism. Though conservative in nature, contemporary religio-political movements are more accurately described as "neo-Orthodox" or "neo-Fundamentalist". Kepel observed that none of the resurgent religious movements he studied aimed to turn back modernity *per se*, but rather they wanted to sacralize it. This observation is significant as it implies the same underlying contention of the sociological literature on de-secularization: modernity and secularity are not identical, such that modern political movements and institutions can incorporate a public religious element and still be considered "modern".

⁴²Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

While Kepel focused on resurgent religion among individuals and communities, Mark Juergensmeyer analyzed resurgent religion on the state level, investigating the rise of religious nationalism in the Middle East, South Asia and Eastern Europe.⁴³ Juergensmeyer agrees that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the decline of American economic power and cultural influence have left an ideological void for many polities worldwide, especially those undergoing social or political turmoil.⁴⁴ He argues that religious nationalists build their movements on a theological (and often ethnic) basis because religious systems are stable, proven, culturally authentic, and in most cases non-Western in nature. They reject the vision of *secular* nationalism in both its liberal and socialist forms as being a “spiritually insufficient” way to conduct affairs of state; politics should serve religious goals and religion should solve political problems.⁴⁵

Notably, however, in the debate over whether secular or religious principles should govern a state, religious nationalists have in effect legitimated the nation-state as a valid way to organize and govern a polity.⁴⁶ This again shows the assumption that modernity requires secularity to be incorrect, though Juergensmeyer does argue that by rejecting the secularism of modernity, the “modernity” that religious nationalists accept is more superficial, “largely defined as the acceptance of bureaucratic forms of organization and the acquisition of new technology.”⁴⁷

⁴³Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 194.

⁴⁵Juergensmeyer, “The Worldwide Rise of Religious Nationalism” *Journal of International Affairs* 50, no. 1 (1996): 11-12.

⁴⁶Juergensmeyer, “The New Religious State,” *Comparative Politics* 87, no. 4 (1995): 387.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 388.

Perhaps the most debated publication on religion in world affairs is one that attempted to incorporate religion into the theoretical lens by which scholars should view the post-Cold War World: Samuel Huntington's 1993 article "The Clash of Civilizations?" later expanded into book format.⁴⁸ In both works Huntington proclaimed the death of the wars of ideology and the beginning of the predominance of civilizational conflicts. Huntington primarily identified civilizations according to their dominant religious traditions and predicted the most dangerous conflicts in the post-Cold War world would be across civilizational lines. He agreed with Kepel that the rest of the world is rejecting Westernism, not modernity, and went even further in his argument that modernization reinforces civilizational divisions in two ways. At the societal level, modernization enhances the economic, military, and political power of the society as a whole and encourages the people of that society to have confidence in their culture and to become culturally assertive. At the individual level, modernization generates feelings of alienation and anomie as traditional bonds and social relations are broken; this leads to crises of identity to which religion provides an answer.

Criticisms of Huntington's civilizational approach range from the realist (power and economics matter, not religion), to the liberal (in an age of globalization/transnationalism there are no identifiable civilizations), to the constructivist (Huntington's work is a self-fulfilling prophecy), to the practical (Huntington's theory is not empirically viable). There is no doubt, however, that Huntington's article, published about the same time as Juergensmeyer's *The New Cold War* and the English translation of Kepel's *Revenge of God*, signaled the returning relevance of religion to political

⁴⁸Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2006).

science scholarship. The terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, cemented this trend, such that academic publications on religion in world affairs are numerous and new institutions and journals dedicated to the topic have been founded.⁴⁹

New Parameters for Studying Religion-State Relations

The growing consensus that modernity does not necessitate secularization and that secularization is actually a multi-dimensional concept that may materialize in very different ways in discrete cultural settings has been accompanied by a larger body of literature questioning the legitimacy and utility of the concept of modernity.⁵⁰ The real experiences of modernizing societies have dispelled the notion that Western-style modernity can be applied in a hegemonic way to non-Western societies with any real accuracy. Instead, scholars have gravitated towards the idea that there are “multiple modernities” or perhaps “varieties of modernity”.⁵¹ Similarly, contemporary conceptualizations of secularization, and with it secularism, are multi-dimensional and allow for cultural particularity. Casanova’s definitional construction referenced earlier admits three processes of secularization, while more recently authors have argued for as many as five.⁵² Political scientists have begun to explore the theoretical categorization of

⁴⁹See, for instance, *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, by the Institute for Global Engagement, which began publication in 2003. Also, Georgetown University established the Berkeley Institute for Religion, Peace & World Affairs in 2006.

⁵⁰It is important to note that not all scholars accept the demise of the Secularization Thesis. See Steve Bruce, *Politics and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press and Blackwell Publishing, 2003); Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵¹ S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities” *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1-29. Volker H. Schmidt, “Multiple Modernities or Varieties of Modernity?” *Current Sociology* 54, no.1 (2006): 77-97.

⁵² Vyacheslav Karpov, “Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework,” *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 2 (2010): 232-270.

contemporary religion-state relations while comparative studies on religion and politics in particular nation-states put on display the many “varieties” of secularity that exist.⁵³

Jakobsen and Pelligrini, for instance, explore the concept in *Secularisms*. They helpfully establish that the categories of “religion” and “secular” were developed together and so constitute a binary; this binary does not reflect reality, however, and limits and frames our “social and political possibilities”.⁵⁴ The authors call for a breaking of the binary to flesh out more fully varieties of secularism, which the authors argue are conditioned by the historic or predominant religion in a particular culture. For Jakobsen and Pelligrini, then, Indian secularism is characterized by its development in relation to Hinduism while Turkish secularism is unique in its relation to Islam.

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd argues for two distinct forms of secularism, both developed in the West.⁵⁵ The first is laicism, most visible in France, which demands the exclusion of religion from the public sphere. Laicists believe secularism to be a universal principle which can be replicated anywhere regardless of culture. Conversely, Judeo-Christian secularism, practiced in the United States, assumes there will be an overlap of religion and politics but wants to keep any one particular religion from dominating the others. Judeo-Christian secularists assume secularism is unique to the Judeo-Christian experience and do not believe it can be replicated elsewhere. Hurd argues that both forms

⁵³Karel Dobbelaere, “Secularization: a multi-dimensional concept”, *Current Sociology* 29, no. 2 (March 1981): 3-153; and Warner, Van Antwerpen and Calhoun, “Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age,” Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁵⁴ Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pelligrini, eds. *Secularisms* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2008): 17.

⁵⁵Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008). Talal Asad similarly argues for secularism as a social construct in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity (Cultural Memory in the Present)*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

of secularism constitute a socially constructed form of political authority, which has real and observable consequences for international affairs. Laicist secularism conditions the relationship and points of conflict between the European Union and Turkey, for instance, while Judeo-Christian secularism affects relations between the United States and Iran.

Ahmet Kuru also describes two forms of secularity: passive/inclusionary secularism and assertive/exclusionary secularism.⁵⁶ These divisions are similar to Hurd's, without being tied to specific religious histories, as Hurd's "Judeo-Christian" secularism and Jakobsen and Pelligrini's foundation of the varieties of secularism are so tied. Passive secularism, as practiced by the United States and India, is an attempt by the state to stay neutral among various competing "comprehensive doctrines", which results in the continued public visibility of religion.⁵⁷ Assertive secularism is a comprehensive doctrine in itself and results in policies proactively restricting religion to the private sphere, out of the public square. Kuru argues that the form of secularism adopted by a state reflects the dominant political ideology of the state, and because ideological struggles are nearly always present within a state both forms of secularism may co-exist within a state. This results in a range of state policies towards religion, some of which are blatantly contradictory. He also posits that the presence or absence of an *ancien regime*, and the particular state-religion relationship that existed within that regime conditions the dominant form of secularism present in the modern state.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ahmet Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies Toward Religion: The United States, France and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷ Kuru relies upon Rawls's notion of comprehensive doctrines for his definitions of assertive and passive secularism. Kuru, 11. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

⁵⁸ Kuru provides a helpful continuum of state-religion relations. Kuru, 31 (Figure 2).

Religion and Foreign Policy: Getting Beyond Power and Morality

Like the rest of the social sciences, of course, the bulk of foreign policy literature suffers from the secularist assumption of the declining importance of religion in the modern world. Where religion and foreign policy are addressed by scholars, the resulting work is overwhelmingly devoted to discussions of morality or ethics, not religious actors or movements *per se*. Studies that do address the relationship between religion and foreign policy more overtly tend towards three topical categories: biographical or psychological profiles of the religious beliefs of political leaders, often during times of foreign policy crisis; studies of religious rhetoric by political leaders during war time, including campaign rhetoric; and studies of the American electorate through voting patterns or surveys, including regression analysis of the relationship between foreign policy views and religious beliefs.⁵⁹

Judged against Kenneth Waltz's tri-partite division of political theory, however, this literature only manages to cover the first theoretical paradigm well (i.e., the individual level of analysis), while dabbling in the second, domestic, level of analysis, and utterly ignoring the third structural level of analysis.⁶⁰ This is to say nothing of the

⁵⁹For an example of the first, see Malcolm D. Magee, *What the World Should Be: Woodrow Wilson and the Crafting of a Faith-Based Foreign Policy* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); for an example of the second, see Robert Jewitt and John Shelton Lawrence, *Captain American and the Crusade Against Evil: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003); for an example of the third see Robert Wuthnow and Valerie Lewis, "Religion and Altruistic U.S. Foreign Policy Goals: Evidence from a National Survey of Church Members," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 47 no. 2 (2008): 191-209. See also Guth, et al, "Faith and Foreign Policy: a View from the Pews," *Faith and International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 3-9.

⁶⁰Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: a Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

fact that this literature historically has been devoted almost entirely to American foreign policy.⁶¹

Hurd explains that one long-term effect of scholars' secularist assumptions is that they do not know what questions to ask about religion.⁶² Fortunately, contemporary foreign policy scholars are exploring some of the more under-examined but still relevant questions, such as: what does the legal separation of church and state in the United States mean for American provisions of foreign aid to religious non-profits?⁶³ How much power do religious interest groups wield in regard to actual foreign-policy making and on which issues is their influence strongest?⁶⁴ How should U.S. policy-makers deal with religiously-motivated nation-states and non-state actors, especially potentially or actually violent religious groups?⁶⁵ Still, this literature is in a nascent stage and suffers from a lack of recognized theory.

Acknowledging that the sub-field of Foreign Policy Analysis could benefit from a conceptual framework for generating and testing hypotheses regarding the interaction between religion and foreign policy, political scientists Carolyn Warner and Stephen

⁶¹Exceptions exist. See, for instance, William C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1970* (NY: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1973).

⁶²Hurd, "Political Islam and Foreign Policy in Europe and the United States," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 4 (2007): 362.

⁶³For an early look at this question, see J. Bruce Nichols *The Uneasy Alliance: Religion, Refugee Work and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); for more recent analysis, see Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

⁶⁴Elliot Abrams, ed., *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. and the Ethics and Public Policy Center, 2001).

⁶⁵Much work has been done on this subject since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. See, for instance, Kate Ivanova and Todd Sandler, "CBRN Attack Perpetrators: An Empirical Study," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 4 (2007): 273-294.

Walker began the effort.⁶⁶ The authors draw on four schools of thought in International Relations—realism, liberalism, constructivism, and institutionalism—to assemble a framework. The authors contend that both structure/environment and agents are necessary for the formation and implementation of foreign policy, but since policy leaders ultimately need to make the requisite decision to enact a particular policy, agents are the immediate sources of foreign policy. The authors contend that if religion affects foreign policy at all, it must do so through policy decision makers, that is, “[religion’s] causal impact must be reflected in the beliefs and intentions of the agents of foreign policy.”⁶⁷

Warner and Walker conceptualize religion as influencing agents’ beliefs and intentions both directly and/or through several environmental sources, including interest groups, institutions, or cultural ideas and norms.⁶⁸ For instance, religion influences through cultural ideas by delineating identities that can strengthen alliances and enmities, or can influence the expected set of behaviors for persons within a religious group (including foreign policy decision makers). Religion also can be a source of foreign policy influence through interest groups, which frequently adopt identities defined by religious ideas and advocate to decision makers for a set of activities that would benefit the group. Finally, religion can influence foreign policy through institutions when religious norms and identities take on political roles. According to Warner and Walker, “collectively, these processes have a ‘framing effect’ that either passively constrains or

⁶⁶Carolyn M. Warner and Stephen G. Walker, “Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy: A Framework for Analysis,” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 7 (2011): 113-135.

⁶⁷Warner and Walker, 117.

⁶⁸For easy visualization, see Warner and Walker’s conceptual map, “Figure 1: A Macroscopic Map of Religion and Foreign Policy,” 117.

actively directs the conduct of Foreign Policy...depending on the capacities of Agents...to exercise leadership at the microscopic level of analysis in different historical situations within a particular research triangle.”⁶⁹

This dissertation intends to add to the literature on religion and foreign policy in several ways. It builds upon the recent work in the field on the social construction of secularisms, but applies this work specifically to the intersection of domestic and international relations at the point of states’ foreign policies. It differs from existing works examining the relationship between a state’s level of secularization (i.e., the religion-state relationship) and its foreign policy in its comparative approach. The three case studies evaluated are also unique. This dissertation intentionally chose case studies that exhibited a positive religion-state relationship domestically, whereas Kuru’s comparative study includes a laicist case (Turkey), but not a theocratic one (Iran).

This dissertation evaluates religious functions at the foreign policy level in a way that parallel’s Warner and Walker’s framework. The authors identify religious ideas as a source of foreign policy; this dissertation evaluates more specifically the ability of religious ideas to provide legitimation for foreign policy. The authors identify religious interest groups as a source of foreign policy; this dissertation evaluates more specifically, religion’s ability to mobilize political actors on behalf of or to implement foreign policy. Warner and Walker identify religion’s institutional influence when religious roles are incorporated into the identity of the state; this dissertation similarly evaluates religion’s identity creation ability at the foreign policy level.

⁶⁹Warner and Walker, 128.

CHAPTER THREE

Case Study One: Religion and State in the United States of America

America seems at once to be the most religious and the most secular of nations.

—Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*¹

Since the first colonists landed on the shores of North America, the United States has had a religion-state dynamic unique in history. Some notion of religious liberty has been championed by its people and government since its founding, though interpretations of that concept have varied. The United States government is fundamentally secular and legally separationist; at no time in its history has the federal government supported a national church, while U.S. policies, domestic and foreign, are guided overwhelmingly by secular national interests.

Still, the United States permits a dynamic role for religious individuals and groups in the civic life of the nation, and the vast majority of the American population is religious.² Religious groups are capable of influencing particular U.S. domestic and foreign policies by maintaining a strong presence in public discourse and by engaging in political advocacy efforts. Additionally, the legal separation of religion and state does not prohibit political leaders from invoking religious rhetoric or personal tenets of faith to

¹Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: an Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1960).

²According to the 2006 Baylor Religion Survey, 89.2% of Americans are affiliated with a religious group. Bader, et al, *American Piety in the 21st Century: New Insights to the Depth and Complexity of Religion in the US* (Waco, TX: Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion, 2006): 7-8.

justify or garner public support for domestic and foreign policies. Nor does constitutional law prohibit the government from engaging with religious groups in other countries.

This case study first recounts major historical trends in the American religion-state relationship from the colonial period through the end of the Cold War. In each major historical era—Colonialism and Revolution, Early Nationhood, and Modernity and the Cold War—this chapter establishes the domestic legal relationship between religion and state before assessing the role of religion in key administrations’ major foreign policy decisions. This historical framework is followed by a closer assessment of religion in both the domestic and foreign policies of the administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, roughly 1992 – 2008.

Historical Framework: Religion and State in the United States, 1620-1991

Colonialism and Revolution, 1620-1789

Religious movements, groups, and beliefs are an integral part of the founding of America. Many early immigrants settled in the American colonies to escape religious persecution in Europe. The wars of religion that engulfed Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries resulted in an agreement between political rulers on the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*, meaning a territory’s ruler would determine the religion of his state. While this principle was useful for ending international warfare, it in no way theorized or ensured tolerance for religious minorities within a territory. Puritans, Quakers, Huguenots, Moravians, Catholics and others established or settled in the

American colonies to worship as they believed correct without government interference or harassment.³

Religion-government relations varied by colony. Paradoxically, many early American settlements did not understand religious liberty to entail religious tolerance, even given settlers' own experiences with religious intolerance in the Old World. More commonly, religious freedom or "freedom of conscience" was understood as religious volunteerism—meaning the free will of the individual to accept or reject God's covenant—with little to no tolerance of divergent views on what that covenant entailed.⁴ This understanding of freedom of conscience—particularly prominent in New England—resulted in the persecution and banishment of dissenting members of the community; in such settlements, church establishment was the norm.⁵ Early colonial governments often provided the church with land and monetary subsidies, laws to protect church tenets, and enforcement of punishments for religious dissension. Still, church and state were typically understood as separate entities with legally distinct clerical and political offices.⁶

Outside of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut, religion and the state were less integrated. Rhode Island, for instance, was founded by Roger Williams in reaction to the strict establishment enforced in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, from

³Religious causes were among a number of reasons for early American immigration, along with economic opportunity and adventurism.

⁴John Witte, Jr., *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*, 2nd Ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2005): 25.

⁵Robert T. Miller, "Religious Conscience in Colonial New England," in *Readings on Church and State*, James E. Wood, Jr., ed. (Waco, Texas: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Baylor University, 1989): 9-13.

⁶Miller, 14-21; Witte, 23-25.

which he was banished. Rhode Island's colonial government never established an official church, did not enforce Sabbath laws, did not require church membership for voting rights, and admitted Quakers—and later Catholics and Jews—into the community.⁷

Like Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Delaware never featured established churches and officially recognized some form of religious freedom in their founding statutes. Pennsylvania, in particular, attracted diverse communities of believers due to the breadth of its religious toleration.⁸ Founded by William Penn as a haven for Quakers, the colonial constitution granted all monotheistic Pennsylvania settlers the freedom to worship. Penn's first law regarding religion allowed for the free exercise of religion while also prohibiting religious coercion – two dictates that foreshadow the ultimate wording of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Law 35, included as an addendum to the 1682 Frame of Government of Pennsylvania, states:

That all persons living in this province who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall in no ways be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion or practice in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled at any time to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.⁹

By the American Revolution, colonial immigration resulted in a religious pluralism that forced many colonies to observe religious tolerance as a practical matter of law. So many different religious communities had settled in New York by the 1770s, for

⁷ Miller, 21-23.

⁸After just three years of settlement, Pennsylvania was home to English, Irish, Dutch and German settlers. Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000* (New York: Viking, 2005): 74.

⁹William Penn, "The Frame of the Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America: Together with Certain Laws Agreed Upon in England," reprinted in *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684: A Documentary History*, Jean R. Soderlund, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983): 118-133.

instance, that none wielded enough power to implement church establishment.¹⁰ Religion and law scholar John Witte, Jr. notes that even the Puritans had embraced religious toleration by the American Revolution.¹¹ In the period between the American Revolution and the ratification of the U.S. Constitution (i.e., 1776 – 1789), New York, Virginia, and North Carolina all discontinued their support of established churches.¹²

It was during this period of relative liberalization around questions of religious liberty that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was drafted and ratified. The framers of the Constitution did not hold monolithic views about the church-state relationship most appropriate to the new nation, but Witte describes four major influences surrounding the debate: Puritanism, Evangelicalism, the Enlightenment, and republicanism. According to Witte, the Puritans left the lasting impression that both religion and government should serve the community – an ideal reflecting symphonia and realized, in practice, as church establishment. The Evangelical Great Awakening of 1720-1780 countered the Puritan ethic with a strong support for separationism. Wary of government support of religion, Evangelicals like Isaac Backus preached that God, not the government, should determine which faiths thrive and which fail.¹³ Above all else, evangelical denominations sought the autonomy to govern their own affairs.

The Enlightenment also influenced the framers' understandings of church-state relations. In his 1689 "Letter Concerning Toleration," Enlightenment writer John Locke

¹⁰Derek Davis, *Religion and the Continental Congress 1774-1789; Contributions to Original Intent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 30.

¹¹Witte, 25-26.

¹²Davis, 15 and 253n31.

¹³Witte, 26-29. See also William G. McLoughlin, "Isaac Backus and the Separation of Church and State in America" *American Historical Review* 73 (June 1968): 1392-1413.

argued for the church as a voluntary society—that religion is an individual choice first and a communal or corporate association second.¹⁴ For Locke, such a voluntary religious community has no need for the force of the state, and one’s liberty in religion, as in other spheres, extends until it imposes on another’s liberty. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and James Madison, among others, embraced Locke’s views. Madison’s *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments* expands on these Enlightenment ideals and stresses the greater purity of religious and governmental bodies the less they are intertwined.¹⁵

Finally, Witte contends that church-state relations in the founding era were marked by republicanism, that is, an emphasis on common values and Anglican ideals of a Christian commonwealth. Republicans, including George Washington and John Adams, agreed that the state should refrain from establishing an official religion but argued that a polity should hold to a common religious ethic. For republicans, a moral populace was necessary for a democracy to function successfully, and religion offered clear utility in fostering a healthy civic life. An accommodationist viewpoint, republicanism allowed for taxes to fund churches and for prayer in the Congress. The state constitution of Massachusetts, drafted largely by John Adams, is an example of republican ideals, stating “...the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality.”¹⁶

¹⁴Frederick C. Giffin, “John Locke and Religious Tolerance,” *Journal of Church and State* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1967): 378-390.

¹⁵James Madison, *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*, 1785.

¹⁶Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Part I, Article III.

These four influences or themes on church-state relations (Puritan, Evangelical, Enlightenment and republican) informed the debate surrounding a constitutional amendment to articulate the federal government's role in religious matters. According to Davis, the religion clauses were ultimately drafted into the Bill of Rights due to concerns among the states that the Constitution only mentioned religion in its prohibition of religious tests to hold public office.¹⁷ As with other civil rights protected and prohibitions articulated in the Bill of Rights, the constitutional framers felt no such additions were necessary, since all powers not specifically granted to the federal government in the constitutional text were reserved for the states. In fact, several statesmen warned of enumerating a list of rights for fear that any rights not explicitly protected would later be assumed to be unprotected.¹⁸ Yet, because the states were wary of the new centralizing powers of the Constitution – compared with the failed Articles of Confederation – nearly half of the original states approved ratification of the constitution only if it were amended to include the Bill of Rights.¹⁹

After several drafts of a religious amendment were proposed in both the House and Senate, a two-pronged statement on the constitutional relationship between religion and the state was agreed upon for inclusion in the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”²⁰ The precise meaning of these first two clauses of the First Amendment are

¹⁷Davis, 14-15.

¹⁸Witte identifies James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and Pennsylvania statesmen James Wilson among those raising such concerns. Witte, 76-77. See in particular, Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist Paper No. 84*.

¹⁹Davis, 14-15.

²⁰ The Constitution of the United States of America, Amendment I.

still debated by American legal scholars today, but have the effect of limiting the federal government's ability to prescribe religious adherence to a particular faith or proscribe an individual's ability to practice the religion of his or her choosing. They removed religion as a legislative responsibility of the federal government such that most domestic questions of religion and state in the early United States were decided at a state or local level.

From a foreign relations perspective, the founding era was naturally dominated by the colonies' relations with Great Britain and the planning and execution of the American Revolutionary War. The war was waged from both sides for political and economic reasons, not for overtly religious causes.²¹ Instead, religion played a salient role in the Revolutionary War in two ways. First, the Continental Congress attempted to leverage the distinctive and sweeping religious freedom that was now characteristic of America as a diplomatic advantage. In its attempts to attract German mercenaries to the Revolutionary forces, for instance, the Continental Congress promised that the Germans' freedom of religion would be respected by all states.²² Similarly, Congress promised Catholic Quebec religious freedom should it separate from Britain and join the American union.²³ Language ensuring religious freedom for citizens of other nations was also included in early American treaties with Sweden, Prussia and the Netherlands.²⁴

²¹U. S. Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776, reprinted in Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, eds., *The Founders' Constitution*, vol. I (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 9-11.

²²Witte, 74.

²³By the time the Continental Congress made this offer, however, the British had already granted the Quebecois authority over their own religious affairs in the Quebec Act of 1774, thus making the American's offer of the same less compelling.

²⁴Witte, 73-76.

Second, political leaders relied on religious rhetoric to justify the cause of American liberty and rally support for the war domestically. Of course, the ability of political leaders to appeal to specific religious tenets or groups was limited by the religious pluralism of the American colonies by this period, as well as by the need for the military to recruit volunteers from all possible religious backgrounds. Political leaders instead argued from a common, usually Protestant, Christian perspective that the revolutionary cause was ordained by God or an inevitable part of divine history. Thomas Paine's persuasive essay *Common Sense*, for instance, argued that the colonies should separate from Britain because "Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other was never the design of Heaven."²⁵ In August 1776, Samuel Adams gave a speech on the statehouse steps in Philadelphia declaring, "the hand of Heaven appears to have led us on to be, perhaps, humble instruments and means in the great providential dispensation which is completing."²⁶ These are but two of many examples of prominent politicians and propagandists asserting divine providence for the revolutionary cause.

Historian Catherine Albanese recounts several recurring themes of religious rhetoric used by American statesmen during the revolutionary era: ancestor worship/reverence for early pioneers escaping the tyranny of the Old World, the justice and righteousness of battle, and themes of sacramentality and new covenant in the birth

²⁵Thomas Paine, "Common Sense" 10 January 1776, reprinted in Kurland and Lerner, 103-107.

²⁶Samuel Adams, "Oration on the Steps of the Continental State House," Philadelphia, August 1, 1776, qtd. in *Sons of the Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution*, Catherine L. Albanese (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976): 83.

of a new nation.²⁷ All of these themes were echoed in the many sermons preached and printed on behalf of the revolutionary cause by clergy from various denominations and regions. According to historian Kevin Phillips, the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s set a tone of religious fervency and anti-establishment attitudes that played into colonial resentments against the British.²⁸ Religion scholar Thomas Kidd adds that the evangelical style of preaching outdoors directly to the masses using common language was adopted by revolutionary political leaders, such as Patrick Henry and John Adams.²⁹ Yet, even though a majority of American evangelicals supported the Patriots, Evangelicalism was diverse and its influence varied regionally; many Evangelicals stayed neutral during the war, or supported the British.

From colonization through revolution to nationhood, the early relations between religion and state in the U.S. were marked by experimentation and set the course for a legal separation of church and state. Even as all colonies moved towards disestablishment, religion remained a frequent and ardent voice in the public square, lending spiritual justification for state policies. Political leaders also made use of common religious beliefs and powerful, but theologically vague, religious rhetoric to advance American policies. The next century would test the meaning of this new separationist model in a maturing, modernizing country.

²⁷ Albanese. For an early account of the use of religious propaganda in the Revolutionary War see Philip Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941).

²⁸ Kevin Phillips, *The Cousins' War: Religion, Politics and the Triumph of Anglo-America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999): 91-92.

²⁹ Thomas Kidd, *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution*, (New York: Basic Books, 2010): 11-35. Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007): 288-307.

1790 to 1940: Early Nationhood

By 1833, all states with established churches had adopted new or modified constitutions to separate religion and government at the state level and allow for full religious toleration.³⁰ The legal relationship between religion and the federal government was relatively stable in this period and consistently separationist, though primarily in so far as it was federalist. That is, the separation between religion and the federal government appears to be quite strict largely because religious matters would continue to be decided at the state level until the 1940s.

The Morrill Anti-Polygamy Act of 1862 is one notable exception. In response to public outcry over Mormon practices far outside the Protestant Christian mainstream, the Act outlawed the practice of polygamy in U.S. territories, over which the federal government had jurisdiction. In *Reynolds v. U.S.*, a Mormon appealed his bigamy conviction on the grounds that the First Amendment protected his religious freedom and, therefore, his freedom to exercise his essential religious belief in polygamy.³¹ The Supreme Court heard the case and held for the government. Chief Justice Waite argued, “laws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with religious beliefs and opinion, they may with practices;” to permit exceptions for every sect would make “religious belief superior to the law of the land.”³² The effect of the Court’s finding was twofold. First, it established firmly that civil law takes precedence over sacred law. Second, it established the precedent that the federal government can

³⁰Davis, 33.

³¹*U.S. v. Reynolds*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

³²*Ibid.*

regulate religious action, but not belief, as long as the law in question is “generally applicable” to all citizens, i.e., not targeted at any one group.³³

As in the Revolutionary era, the lack of a national church and dearth of federal legislation on religion does not mean religion was politically irrelevant. Religious ideas, groups and rhetoric were politically salient in the nineteenth century in three ways: first, religion served as both a divisive and unifying factor before, during and after the Civil War; second, religious motives and rhetoric were used by political and religious leaders to justify the expansion of U.S. influence and borders in North America and globally; and third, religious missionaries became both lobbyists and unofficial scouts for particular U.S. foreign policies.

According to American history scholar Charles Reagan Wilson, religious rhetoric, ideas, writings and clergy largely played the same role on both sides of the Civil War: they dealt with the suffering and loss of warfare, legitimated the cause for fighting, and promoted moral regeneration.³⁴ However, neither the established Christian Protestantism nor the protections of religious freedom were threatened by the victory or defeat of either party. Furthermore, the extent of religious pluralism was such within and across state borders that religious affiliation was not a marker of territorial boundaries. While the dominant denominations of the era – Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians – all split into North and South factions over the issue of slavery, none were contiguous with territorial

³³Catharine Cookson, *Regulating Religion: The Courts and the Free Exercise Clause* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 6-12.

³⁴Charles Reagan Wilson, “Religion and the American Civil War in Comparative Perspective,” in *Religion and the American Civil War*, Miller, Stout and Wilson, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 385-407. On religion in the Civil War, see: Mason I. Lowance, Jr., ed. *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debates in America, 1776-1865* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Thorton Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of the Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery* (New York, 1841).

borders. For example, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians and even two Roman Catholics were among the delegates to the Mississippi Convention of 1860, which voted for the state's secession from the union.³⁵

Lincoln's views on religion and the war were complex. Unlike others, he did not insist God was on the Union's side but hoped, instead, that "the Union might be on God's side."³⁶ He acknowledged the role faith had played on both sides of the war, but allowed for doubt in man's understanding of God's will. In his Second Inaugural Address, he stated, "Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other... The prayers of both cannot be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."³⁷ According to Paludin, Lincoln was able to sustain a diverse coalition of groups (abolitionist and others) on the Union side precisely because his political and religious rhetoric – characterized by a humble uncertainty of God's plans – allowed for differing opinions and enabled a coalition to emerge to support the Union.³⁸

While invoked by all major players domestically, religion *per se* was not a factor in the Union's foreign policies during the Civil War. The Union's top diplomatic priorities were to prevent the British and French from intervening on the Confederacy's behalf. Neither foreign power was very much concerned with religion in America; their interests were overwhelmingly economic in nature, particularly regarding the availability

³⁵Ralph A. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 30.

³⁶Phillip Shaw Paludan, "Religion and the American Civil War," in Miller, Stout, and Wilson, 29.

³⁷Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" March 4, 1865, reprinted in *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, Conrad Cherry, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 195-196.

³⁸ Paludan, 21-40.

of Southern cotton.³⁹ But Lincoln, Secretary of State Seward and Union diplomats abroad did make numerous appeals to a shared morality with the British on the subject of slavery. According to foreign affairs scholar Walter Russell Mead, Lincoln considered freeing the slaves as the best prevention of European intervention, as it would “secure the sympathy of Europe and the whole civilized world.”⁴⁰ Seward sent word of the Emancipation Proclamation to U.S. diplomats and consular offices overseas on the same day it was issued. While the Proclamation was not the sole factor preventing British interventionism, historians note that the prospect of intervention on behalf of the Confederacy waned further after the Emancipation.⁴¹ Notably, the appeal to shared morality as a foreign policy would become a staple of U.S. foreign policy in future decades.

Along with the Civil War, the United States’ territorial expansion was the most significant factor in domestic politics and foreign relations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Religion was not the primary factor in the treaties negotiated and wars waged to expand American territories to the west and south. The expansion of U.S. borders was overwhelmingly governed by economic interests, the territorial demands of a booming population, and security concerns. With British-owned Canada to the north and Spanish-owned Florida and Mexico to the South, American security was best served by

³⁹Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Shaped the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001): 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁴¹Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1994): 204.

removing foreign claims to adjacent lands.⁴² Moreover, as the nineteenth century progressed, the American economy grew ever more dependent on foreign markets, so that from 1869-1893 foreign trade accounted for an average of 13.4% of the GDP.⁴³ In fact, foreign affairs scholar Walter Russell Mead argues that nineteenth-century U.S. foreign policy was distinct from European foreign policy in that trade and global finance was the foundation of the U.S. concept of its national interest compared with an overwhelming concern about security and the balance of power among continental Europeans.⁴⁴

Yet, according to Witte, the growing religious diversity in America helped to fuel the move west. The frontier acted as a “release valve” for the new -- and often controversial -- Protestant denominations that grew out of the Second Great Awakening, as well as the massive numbers of new Catholic immigrants.⁴⁵ Furthermore, U.S. expansionism was often justified in religious terms. According to Anders Stephanson, the success of the Revolution cemented in the minds of U.S. politicians and the populace the proposition that America was, indeed, divinely ordained.⁴⁶ Post-Revolution, American politicians routinely reached into the colonial past to connect the Puritan sentiment of being a chosen people who undertook an exodus to the promised land of North America with nineteenth-century American political efforts to expand westward. In 1845, John O’Sullivan coined the term “manifest destiny” to describe the common understanding

⁴²Jeremy Black, *Fighting for America: The Struggle for Mastery in North America, 1519-1871* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011): 120 – 159.

⁴³By contrast, foreign trade accounted for an average of only 7.3% of U.S. GDP from 1948-1957. Mead, 14.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 3-29.

⁴⁵Witte, 117-121.

⁴⁶Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995): 3-27.

that the United States had the right “to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self-government entrusted to us.”⁴⁷

Congressmen used rhetoric similar to O’Sullivan’s to argue for the annexation of both Oregon and Texas.⁴⁸ Politicians and frontiersman also appealed to Manifest Destiny to justify dispossessing Native Americans of their lands.⁴⁹ Later in the century, statesmen supported the American acquisition of the Philippines under similar pretexts, adding to it the belief that the U.S. should be a civilizing – and Christianizing – force for heathen nations. Indiana Senator Albert J. Beveridge, for instance, after returning from a tour of the Philippines, argued that “God marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world.”⁵⁰ President McKinley expressed a similar sentiment when he reportedly remarked to a visiting delegation of Christian ministers that, in annexing the Philippines, the U.S. must “educate the Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them, and by God’s grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ died.”⁵¹

Anderson and Cayton note that the wars and treaties that expanded the U.S. territorially were pursued on offensive terms, as an expansion of freedom to peoples and lands not yet liberated. This stands in stark contrast to the Revolutionary and Civil Wars

⁴⁷John L. O’Sullivan, “The True Title,” re-printed in Cherry, 128-130.

⁴⁸Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963): 31-32.

⁴⁹William Earl Weeks, *Building the Continental Empire: American Expansionism from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996): 80-83.

⁵⁰Qtd. in Cherry, 116.

⁵¹Qtd. in William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 7.

which were justified as defensive necessities, whether defending against tyranny or defending the Union's existence.⁵² While U.S. territorial expansionism largely ended by the early twentieth century, a divinely-ordained ideological expansionism continued into the Wilsonian era.

Political scientist Tony Smith summarizes Wilsonian liberalism as consisting of three essential principles: promotion of democracy abroad, open global markets, and the formation of international institutions to regulate conflict.⁵³ The first of these three draws from two sources: Immanuel Kant's democratic peace theory, and the American tradition and ideology of a special divinely-ordained mission. Kant argued that democratic governments will be less likely to engage in warfare because, unlike autocratic governments that can command subjects and subjects' resources to war, the citizenry of a republic must decide to deprive themselves of life and wealth in order to conduct warfare – a situation Kant views as unlikely at best.⁵⁴ For Wilson and other liberals, then, the U.S. national interest would directly benefit from the spread of democratic principles and institutions abroad.

Added to this was Wilson's own faith-infused internationalism, which like others before him, included an assurance in America's divine mission to spread democracy and civilize other nations. While campaigning in 1912, Wilson asserted: "I believe that God planted in us the vision of liberty...I cannot be deprived of the hope that we are chosen, and prominently chosen, to show the way to the nations of the world how they shall walk

⁵² Anderson and Cayton, xviii.

⁵³ Tony Smith, "National Security Liberalism and American Foreign Policy," in *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays 4th ed.*, G. John Ikenberry, ed. (New York: Longman, 2002): 258-274.

⁵⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939).

in the paths of liberty.”⁵⁵ Foreign affairs historian Michael H. Hunt recounts an example of how this translated into particular policies when Wilson shifted American Pacific strategy away from Japanese appeasement and towards an independent China that the U.S. could help Christianize and democratize.⁵⁶

Building on both the tradition of American mission and liberal democratic peace theory, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany:

for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.⁵⁷

Many leading Protestant clergy of the time were like-minded. In the lead-up to World War I, sixty church leaders issued a statement urging the United States to join the war in support of the allies, saying God “would not look with favor upon a people who put their fear of pain and death, their dread of suffering and loss, their concern for comfort and ease, above the holy claims of righteousness and justice and freedom and mercy and truth.”⁵⁸

Finally, U.S. missionaries influenced particular U.S. policies as well as the overall vision of U.S. foreign policy under some administrations. U.S. churches began sending missionaries abroad in 1806, and by the end of the century an estimated 5,000 full-time American Protestant missionaries served abroad.⁵⁹ As missionaries became more

⁵⁵Qtd. in Inboden, 11.

⁵⁶Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987): 133.

⁵⁷Woodrow Wilson, “War Message to Congress,” 2 April 1917.

⁵⁸Qtd. in Inboden, 11.

⁵⁹Mead, 142.

involved in the politics of their new homelands, they also became more politically active in U.S. foreign affairs. Christian missionaries in China, for instance, succeeded in lobbying the U.S. to modify the terms of a railroad agreement with Chinese president – and baptized Christian—Sun Yat-sen.⁶⁰ Missionaries also played a leading role in U.S. relations with the Hawaiian islands: their desire to break the polytheistic traditions of the native Hawaiian population and introduce self-government weakened the Hawaiian monarchy and helped pave the path for Hawaii’s eventual annexation.⁶¹

Mead argues that missionaries affected U.S. foreign relations in three ways.⁶² First, they were successful in convincing the U.S. government to afford them the same protections abroad as were afforded American merchants; treaties with far-eastern nations in particular afforded missionaries protected status. Second, American missionary efforts and property became, at times, important diplomatic concerns; during World War I, for instance, American missionaries convinced President Wilson *not* to declare war against the Ottoman Empire so that missionary schools and property would not be confiscated. Third, Mead argues that missionaries’ visions of a global civil society forms the basis of the international human rights agenda today.

1940 to 1990: Pluralism, Modern America and the Cold War

In the mid-twentieth century, religion-government relations experienced major shifts. In the 1940s, the Supreme Court began to apply the Fourteenth Amendment’s due

⁶⁰Mead, 132-134.

⁶¹Norman Meller, “Missionaries to Hawaii: Shapers of the Islands’ Government” *The Western Political Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (December, 1958): 788-799.

⁶²Mead, 139-162.

exercise clause to the religion clauses of the First Amendment.⁶³ As a result, the 150-year precedent of deferring to the states over religious matters was reversed; the Supreme Court began asserting its authority over religious matters. In both free-exercise and establishment clause cases, the Supreme Court's rulings had the effect of requiring all levels of government to go to greater lengths to accommodate the rights of religious minorities.

In rulings related to the First Amendment's free-exercise clause, two cases are particularly significant. In *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940), the Court ruled that Jehovah's Witnesses should not have to apply for a government license to solicit for a religious cause. In a diversion from the *Reynolds* Court, which held that government can regulate religious action, but not belief, the *Cantwell* Court decided that regulations should not "unduly...infringe" on religious action either.⁶⁴ In the 1963 case *Sherbert v. Verner* the Court went further: not only must a law not touch religious belief and not be discriminatory, but it must also allow for exemptions to the law be made for individuals whose free exercise of religion might be unduly burdened by the law.⁶⁵

In *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947), the Court applied for the first time the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the states directly.⁶⁶ While the Court ruled that the particular regulation in question—the reimbursement of parents for transportation to and from school, including religious schools—was indeed constitutional, the Court's interpretation of the establishment clause, which was strictly

⁶³Witte, 139, 143.

⁶⁴*Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296 (1940).

⁶⁵*Sherbert v. Verner*, 374 U.S. 398 (1963).

⁶⁶*Everson vs. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947)

separationist and included instructions that no federal aid could be given to religious institutions directly, was very influential in future cases. Subsequent Courts, continuing the strict separationism of the *Everson* Court, struck down laws that required prayer in school, Bible reading in school, tax exemptions for tuition at private religious schools, displays of the Ten Commandments in schools, and the teaching of creationism.⁶⁷ According to Witte, the height of the Supreme Court's separationism was reached in 1985 when, in *Wallace v. Jaffree*, the Court outlawed mandatory moments of silence in schools.⁶⁸

The Court's movement towards strict separationism and expanded protections for religious minorities – and for atheists – reflected demographic and societal shifts in the U.S. After World War II, the U.S. experienced a revival in religious membership and the growing political power of minority religious groups. In his seminal work, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, Will Herberg argued that Catholics and Jews claimed American identity in mid-century America not despite their religious identities but through them. Being Catholic or Jewish was now an authentic way of being American. Ironically, the rising visibility of religious minorities resulted in the further secularization of American jurisprudence. This domestic religious situation led Herberg to remark, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that “America seems at once to be the most religious and the most secular of nations.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962); *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); *Sloan v. Lemon*, (1973); *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39 (1980); *Edwards v. Aquillard*, 482 U.S. 578 (1987).

⁶⁸ Witte, 207-208. *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38 (1985).

⁶⁹ Herberg, 3.

This is an apt description of religion and U.S. foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II, as well. American foreign policy decision making during the Cold War was dominated by security concerns, particularly concerning the threat of nuclear weapons. Both super powers engaged militaristic (proxy wars) and economic (foreign aid) foreign policy tools to check the other's growth or secure allegiances. Yet many scholars recognize a significant role for ideology during the Cold War as well.⁷⁰ Because liberal democratic capitalism and Marxism-Leninism are distinct and antagonistic ideologies, each side drew upon its ideology to unify its base, attract allies, motivate its troops, and justify both foreign and domestic policies. U.S. policy makers – particularly the Truman and Eisenhower administrations—used religious groups and rhetoric as both a cause and a tool in foreign policy making.

To understand Truman's foreign policy approach, it is instructive to briefly consider Franklin D. Roosevelt's use of religion during World War II. Like Wilson, President Roosevelt had utilized religious rhetoric and notions of America's special mission to support the war cause. In his Annual Message to Congress less than a month after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, for instance, Roosevelt appealed to religious sentiments in distinguishing the U.S. and its allies from the Axis powers, saying:

Our enemies are guided by brutal cynicism, by unholy contempt for the human race. We are inspired by a faith which goes back through all the years to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: 'God created man in His own image.' We on our side are striving to be true to that divine heritage. We are fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God. Those on the other side are striving to destroy this deep belief and to create a world in their own image – a world of tyranny and cruelty and serfdom.⁷¹

⁷⁰Mark Kramer, "Ideology and the Cold War" *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 4 (October, 1999): 539-576.

⁷¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Annual Message to Congress," January 6, 1942, reprinted in Cherry, 295-302.

Still, Roosevelt had to strike a cooperative tone with the Soviet Union during the War. In fighting fascism, Roosevelt emphasized human equality, a core tenet of communism as well.

Upon Roosevelt's death, Truman initially continued the U.S. policy of cooperation with the Soviets. But in 1946, George Kennan's Long Telegram established the Soviet Union as bent on world domination and built upon values antithetical U.S. values; thereafter, the Truman administration's policy towards the Soviets turned towards firm opposition and containment.⁷² With this new posture between the super powers, and the beginning of the Cold War, religion would be used by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations as both a cause for anti-Soviet foreign policy as well as a foreign policy tool.⁷³

Truman's foreign policy outlook was reminiscent of Wilsonian internationalism. Upon assuming the presidency, Truman declared his disappointment in the U.S.'s isolationism following World War I, and the Senate's refusal to join the League of Nations by declaring, "I believe, I repeat, I believe honestly – that Almighty God intended us to assume the leadership which he intended us to assume in 1920, and which we refused."⁷⁴ Truman was wary of the possibility that, following the cessation of hostilities, the U.S. public and politicians could again retreat into isolationism. Cold War historian Dianne Kirby argues that Truman used religion to "persuade the American people to abandon isolationism, embrace globalism and world leadership, and roll-back

⁷²Dianne Kirby, "Harry Truman's Religious Legacy: The Holy Alliance, Containment and the Cold War," in *Religion and the Cold War*, Kirby, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 83.

⁷³Inboden, 2-3.

⁷⁴Qtd. in Kirby, 86.

communism.”⁷⁵ By engaging religion, Truman could widen anti-communism’s appeal; opposing communism was not just a matter of political maneuvering or only of vital concern to wealthy capitalists – anti-communism was legitimate on religious grounds as well.

Truman also actively courted domestic and global religious leaders in the anti-communist cause.⁷⁶ The president attempted to build an alliance of religious leaders against the Soviet Union on the basis of shared values, though he likely underestimated the depth of historical and theological divisions between religious groups.⁷⁷ Truman was particularly bold in his diplomatic relations with Pope Pius XII and was the first president to appoint a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.⁷⁸ Though Truman was forced to withdraw the appointment due to critical public reaction and lack of Senate support, he sent Myron Taylor as his personal representative instead. Truman supported Pope Pius XII in the Vatican’s relations with Italian communists, and tried to leverage his relationship with the Vatican in U.S.-Latin American relations.⁷⁹

Under the Truman administration, the State Department also convened an advisory council of prominent Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious leaders who helped the agency draft guidelines on how to best use religion as a propaganda tool in

⁷⁵Kirby, 77.

⁷⁶Ibid., 78-79.

⁷⁷Inboden, 119-156.

⁷⁸Marie Gayte, “I Told the White House If They Give One to the Pope, I May Ask for One”: The American Reception to the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and the Vatican in 1984,” *Journal of Church and State* 54, no. 1 (March 2012): 33, 36-37.

⁷⁹Kirby, 89.

U.S. foreign policy.⁸⁰ Upon the council's recommendations, the U.S. Psychological Strategy Board instructed the CIA, NSC, Defense Department and State Department to consistently publicize the threat of communism to religion, to encourage religious leaders to oppose communism whenever possible, and to continue to seek policy guidance from religious leaders.

According to Inboden, Truman may have embraced religious rhetoric, but Eisenhower institutionalized it.⁸¹ Like Truman, Eisenhower relied on religion as both a cause and tool in his Cold War foreign policy. Eisenhower was the first president to have written and recited his own prayer before his inauguration speech, which itself was entirely devoted to foreign policy.⁸² In 1954, Eisenhower signed into law the insertion of the words "under God" into the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon doing so, the President declared that the country was "reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource, in peace or war."⁸³

Just as notable was the religious rhetoric adopted regularly by Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Dulles grounded his foreign policy outlook in a firm belief in American mission and saw a very bright dividing line between the superpowers, which built their ideologies, alternatively, on a spiritual (U.S.) or materialistic (U.S.S.R.) understanding of human nature and society. Like Eisenhower,

⁸⁰Inboden, 117.

⁸¹Inboden, 6.

⁸²Dwight D. Eisenhower, "First Inaugural Address," 20 January 1953. The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, (accessed 29 March 2013); available from http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisen1.asp.

⁸³Qtd. in T. Jeremy Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons: The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009): 2.

Dulles fostered relationships with American religious leaders, including Francis Cardinal Spellman and Billy Graham.⁸⁴ In his speeches and writings, Dulles called for spiritual renewal in the U.S. to strengthen the nation; he also predicted the Soviet Union would ultimately collapse due to its “internal contradictions and moral failures.”⁸⁵ Notably, Dulles credited the missionary efforts of previous generations for laying the groundwork of moral civilization, which would help the third world resist communism.⁸⁶

The Eisenhower administration attempted to push beyond rhetoric and made strategic efforts to leverage religious groups and propaganda as foreign policy tools. With the President’s support, Eisenhower’s pastor convened an interfaith organization, the Foundation for Religious Action in the Social and Civil Order (FRACO), with the core goal of opposing atheistic communism. According to Inboden, the proceedings of FRACO’s first conference—including a speech from President Eisenhower—were recorded and played abroad by the propaganda agency, the United States Information Agency (USIA).⁸⁷ The Eisenhower administration also created a new “Chief of Religious Policy” position at USIA, though not without some protest at this seeming breach of separation between church and state. Eisenhower’s National Security Council also drafted several guidance documents calling, specifically, for greater support of anti-

⁸⁴Inboden, 241-245.

⁸⁵Ibid., 236.

⁸⁶Ibid., 235. According to Mead, 52,000 American Protestant missionaries served abroad by the end of the 1970s. Mead, 142

⁸⁷Ibid., 279-283.

communist clergy within the Orthodox Church, and more generally for the need to mobilize religious groups and spiritual propaganda.⁸⁸

According to political scientist James David Fairbanks, Eisenhower was the last president to use civil religion skillfully; others since have had trouble authentically communicating transcendent principles or doing so without a sense of arrogance.⁸⁹ Moreover, the domestic divisions caused by the social upheavals of the 1960s and American involvement in the Vietnam War undermined the efficacy of religious appeals. Many religious groups led protests against U.S. foreign policy, particularly in regard to nuclear weapons, Vietnam and U.S. activities in Latin America. According to religion historian Paul E. Pierson, even religious missionary activities declined as American religious groups (particularly mainstream Protestant groups) turned their focus to domestic affairs.⁹⁰

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee J. William Fulbright's public questioning of U.S. involvement in Vietnam exemplifies the disillusionment with America's divinely ordained sense of mission among many policymakers and a growing segment of the public. In his 1966 work, *The Arrogance of Power*, Fulbright wrote, "power tends to confused itself with virtue and a great nation is peculiarly susceptible to the idea that its power is a sign of God's favor, conferring upon it a special responsibility for other nations..."⁹¹ At the same time that Fulbright was questioning America's

⁸⁸Ibid., 299-302.

⁸⁹James David Fairbanks, "Religious Dimensions of Presidential Leadership: The Case of Dwight D. Eisenhower," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 265.

⁹⁰Paul E. Pierson, "The Rise of Christian Mission and Relief Agencies," in Abrams, 159.

⁹¹J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*, excerpt reprinted in Cherry, 332-346.

Providential foreign policy, important religious leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., were making theological arguments not to lift the country up as a model of morality, but to highlight the nation's moral failings. The Watergate scandal and President Nixon's resignation only intensified the public's criticism of the nation's self-assured notion of providential choosing.

Scholars attribute the election of Jimmy Carter, a devout Southern Baptist, at least partially to American's desire for spiritual rejuvenation. Carter incorporated his religious beliefs into his foreign policies, though in a drastically different way than did Truman and Eisenhower. According to Hook and Spanier, Carter rejected the power politics that had dominated the Cold War era and instead based his foreign policy on a fundamental respect for human rights.⁹² Like his predecessors, he spoke to American ideals and desire to be a moral model in the world, but he did not elevate American religiosity to differentiate the nation from its godless enemy. Instead, Carter stressed cooperation in an increasingly interdependent world. He also increased foreign aid to "third-world" governments and religious groups doing humanitarian work, and tied foreign aid to the recipient nation's human rights record.⁹³ Carter's personal piety also reportedly played a significant role in negotiations between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli

⁹²Steven W. Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, 15th ed., (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2000): 175-177.

⁹³ This is a departure from previous administration's foreign aid policies. The primary purpose of foreign aid, from Truman's Marshall Plan through the 1960s, had been diplomatic and strategic security purposes (i.e., strengthening the economies of allied nations or securing allegiances from non-aligned nations). Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007): 79.

Prime Minister Begin. Political scientist Kenneth Stein claims that the fervent religiosity of the three leaders formed the basis of their relationships.⁹⁴

Ronald Reagan rejected his predecessor's model of "soft Christianity", and resumed the civil religious model of the Eisenhower years.⁹⁵ The President again used religious rhetoric to draw a harsh line between the atheistic and "evil" Soviet Union and the godly United States. In a speech to the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals, Reagan remarked "while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world."⁹⁶

Reagan also pushed for better relations with the Vatican. Pope John Paul II had shifted Vatican strategy from the non-alignment of his predecessors to a clear opposition to communism, particularly in Eastern Europe. Like Truman, Reagan saw the Vatican as a key ally in the struggle against communism. Unlike his predecessors, Reagan succeeded in establishing full diplomatic relations with the Vatican and appointing an official U.S. ambassador to the Holy See.⁹⁷ According to Inboden, the Vatican and U.S. diplomats shared military and political intelligence, and coordinated efforts to undermine communism in Poland and Latin America.⁹⁸

⁹⁴Kenneth Stein, "Sadat, Carter, Begin: An Unequally Sided Triangle" in *Camp David Process: Lectures*, Merkaz moreshet Menahem Begin (Jerusalem: The Menachem Begin Heritage Center, 2002): 32-42.

⁹⁵Ribuffo, 17.

⁹⁶Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals," 8 March 1983, Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library (accessed 5 April 2013); available from http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Remarks_Annual_Convention_National_Association_Evangelicals_030883.pdf.

⁹⁷Jo Renee Formicola, "U.S.-Vatican Relations: Towards a Post-Cold War Convergence?" *Journal of Church and State* 38, no.4 (1996): 807-810.

⁹⁸Inboden, 316.

Domestic religious groups, particularly Jewish Americans and Evangelicals, also affected U.S. foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s. The American Jewish community's influence is of particular interest because its lobbying efforts are overwhelmingly foreign in nature, not domestic. Jewish foreign policy activism in the United States dates at least to World War II, when Jewish groups lobbied Congress and President Roosevelt to intervene in the Holocaust, though they were unsuccessful in directing U.S. military resources towards the effort.⁹⁹ Jewish Zionists were successful in lobbying Truman to recognize Israel, over the objections of his diplomatic advisors, military advisors and lobbyists for the oil companies; other factors, however—including the support of fundamentalist Christians—were arguably more important than the Israel lobby.¹⁰⁰

According to political scientists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, the political influence of the American Jewish community grew significantly after Israel's success in the Six Day War in June 1967.¹⁰¹ The conflict raised concerns among American Jews over Israel's security while also fueling pride in the nation's success. Powerful lobbying groups, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) raised substantial amounts of private financing to lobby the U.S. government on Israel's behalf. While the American Jewish community had traditionally supported liberal causes, Mearsheimer and Walt contend that the overwhelming focus of Jewish political activities on Israel led to a

⁹⁹Ribuffo, 13.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 15.

¹⁰¹John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007): 118.

dramatic shift rightward, reinforced by a minority of conservative Jews that were extremely devoted to political action.¹⁰²

In addition to advocating for U.S. support of Israel, Jewish Americans also brought attention to the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union. In particular, the USSR imposed a tax on citizens attempting to emigrate, which prohibited many Jews from leaving the USSR for Israel. In response, the Jewish community, among others, successfully lobbied Senator Henry Jackson and Congressman Charles Vanik to amend a 1974 trade bill, providing that non-market based (i.e., communist) countries that did not respect their citizens freedom of movement could not achieve “Most Favored Nation” trading status.¹⁰³ Inboden notes that President Reagan continued to probe the treatment of Soviet Jews with Soviet leadership throughout his tenure.¹⁰⁴

Finally, the last two decades of the Cold War also saw major shifts in American Protestantism; conservative Evangelical Christian groups gained members and political influence, while liberal mainline Protestant groups—historically representing the most numerous and influential denominations in the U.S.—declined in membership and power.¹⁰⁵ While the Religious Right is primarily characterized by conservative views on domestic social issues, its rise to power has affected foreign policy in several ways.

First, conservative Evangelicals increasingly influenced elections, so that a quarter of senators and congressmen identified as Evangelicals in 2004, compared with

¹⁰²Ibid., 126.

¹⁰³Inboden, 314; see also Ribuffo, 16-17.

¹⁰⁴Inboden, 315.

¹⁰⁵Walter Russell Mead, “God’s Country?” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 5 (September/October 2006): 24-43.

just 10% in 1970.¹⁰⁶ The support of the Religious Right was a crucial element in the presidential election of Ronald Reagan and, later, George W. Bush.¹⁰⁷ Second, Evangelicals are particularly supportive of Israel. In the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the victory of Israel over Arab states, many Evangelicals see fulfillment of scriptural prophecies and possible signs of the end times.¹⁰⁸ Third, Evangelical missions abroad increased, which raised awareness of the needs and realities of foreign communities. According to Pierson, 8,700 U.S. mainline Protestant missionaries were serving abroad in 1968 compared with only 2,600 in 1996; comparatively, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association counted 6,800 missionaries in 1968 and 10,800 in 1996.¹⁰⁹ The real impact of this increase in Evangelical missionaries would be most fully felt in U.S. foreign policy at the end of the century, discussed below.

Religion and the State in a Post-Cold War World

Domestic Religion-State Relationship, 1990 -2010

In recent decades, Supreme Court decisions have been less in line with the secularism and broad accommodation of religious minorities that marked the 1970s and early 1980s. Contemporary free exercise jurisprudence has been less accommodating of the religious rights of individuals and gives Congress more leeway to impose religious burdens. Since 1986, the Court has ruled that the military does not have to accommodate the wearing of a yarmulke as part of the military uniform, for example, and that prison

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 37.

¹⁰⁷Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard, "Ronald Reagan, Civil Religion, and the New Religious Right in America," *Fides et historia* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 57-73.

¹⁰⁸Mead, "God's Country," 39-41.

¹⁰⁹Pierson, 160.

officials do not have to allow Muslim inmates to attend collective worship services.¹¹⁰

The Court also ruled that the U.S. Forest Service's construction of a road across a sacred Native American burial site did not impede on the community's free-exercise rights.¹¹¹

In *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), the Court established an extremely narrow reading of the free-exercise clause, such that government policies only need to be reasonable and applied in a neutral way to pass constitutional muster.¹¹² According to Witte, *Smith* weakened the protection religious believers can seek under the First Amendment.¹¹³ In response to *Smith*, Congress passed the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act (RFRA). RFRA prohibits laws from burdening an individual's free exercise of religion unless there is a compelling state interest in doing so and it is the least restrictive means to achieve the state's interest.¹¹⁴ Notably, the Court held in *City of Boerne v. Flores* that the new legislation could not be applied to state law, only federal law.¹¹⁵ Presently, then, free-exercise cases are held to a higher level of scrutiny at the federal level than they are at the state level.

While the Court has been less generous with free-exercise rights, it has offered more support for religious communities under the establishment clause. Witte notes that, since 1985, the Court has been retreating from strict separationism in disestablishment

¹¹⁰*Goldman v. Weinberger*, 475 U.S. 503 (1986); *O'Lone v. Estate of Shabazz*, 482 U.S. 342 (1987).

¹¹¹*Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, 485 U.S. 439 (1988).

¹¹²*Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990).

¹¹³Witte, 167-168.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 150.

¹¹⁵*City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 U.S. 507 (1997).

jurisprudence, though inconsistently.¹¹⁶ The Court has held that states can give parents tax breaks for educational materials purchased for their children's private education, for instance, and that government assistance to disabled students can be granted to those attending private school.¹¹⁷ In 2002 the Court went further and approved of taxpayer money distributed to parents in the form of vouchers to be used at their private school of choice, including religious schools.¹¹⁸

At the same time, religious organizations engaging in social welfare programs have received much more support from the legislative and executive branches as well. In 1996, Congress passed welfare reform through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The Act included a "charitable choice" provision, which required the government to extend funding to religious-based organizations just as it would to non-religious organizations when contracting for social services.¹¹⁹ Policy makers viewed the charitable choice provision as being a potential cost-savings for the government, due to the religious organizations' use of volunteer labor. According to political scientist Michael McGinnis, the Act's supporters also hoped religious-based social services could be more effective, as faith-based groups often have closer ties to under-served communities and emphasize personal responsibility.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶Witte, 213.

¹¹⁷ *Mueller v. Allen*, 463 U.S. 388 (1983); *Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind*, 474 U.S. 481 (1986); *Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District*, 509 U.S. 1 (1993).

¹¹⁸*Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, 122 S.Ct. 2460 (2002).

¹¹⁹Paula F. Pipes and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Faith-Based Coalitions, Social Services, and Government Funding," *Sociology of Religion* 63, no. 1 (2002): 49-68.

¹²⁰Michael D. McGinnis, "Religion Policy and the Faith-Based Initiative: Navigating the Shifting Boundaries between Church and State," *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table* 6, no. 4 (2010): 1-24.

Shortly following his inauguration, President Bush launched his Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI), to advance implementation of the charitable choice provision and support faith-based organizations in applying for funding. Under traditional establishment jurisprudence, federal funding could not be granted to “pervasively religious” organizations, but according to a legal review conducted by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, the turn-of-the-century Court chose to emphasize instead the purpose of the funding, rather than the character of the organization receiving the funding.¹²¹ Under this new interpretation, the range of partnership activities between the government and faith-based organizations is now much wider.

A final, but significant, change in contemporary domestic religion-state relations results from foreign policy concerns. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, raised the prospect that groups actively supporting or engaging in terrorist activities were operating in the United States and benefitting from constitutional religious protections.¹²² In October 2001, President George W. Bush signed the USA PATRIOT Act into law, giving law enforcement agencies wider powers for collecting intelligence domestically, monitoring financial transactions, and deporting individuals suspected of engaging in terrorism-related activities.¹²³

The Act’s key components are controversial, particularly as they allow for deportation of non-citizens who are unable to dispute terrorism-related charges (since the

¹²¹Ira C. Lupu and Robert W. Tuttle, *The State of the Law – 2008: A Cumulative Report on the Legal Developments Affecting Government Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations* (Albany, NY: The Rockefeller Institute of Government, 2008).

¹²²Derek Davis, “The Dark Side to a Just War: The USA PATRIOT Act and Counterterrorism’s Potential Threat to Religious Freedom” *Journal of Church and State* 44, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 5-17.

¹²³“Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT Act) Act of 2001,” Public Law 107-56, 107th Congress.

relevant information is classified), and allows the government to monitor individuals (including citizens) and domestic groups through warrant-less wire-tapping and property searches.¹²⁴ Furthermore, provisions of The PATRIOT Act determine a religious institution to be a terrorist organization if just one or two of its members are tied to terrorist activity, and any party that contributes money to that institution is thereby aiding terrorists.¹²⁵ Under this definition, hypothetically, if an American citizen donated money to a religious organization abroad to support charitable works, and a member of the organization's Board of Directors was deemed to have terrorist ties, that American citizen could be prosecuted for aiding terrorists.

Law and religion scholar Derek Davis contends that religious individuals and groups are particularly vulnerable to monitoring and investigation because “many churches traditionally have undertaken a prophetic role in relation to government, that is, [they are] willing to speak out against questionable government policies.”¹²⁶ Indeed, the “ideological exclusion provision” of the Patriot Act was cited in denying Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan admission to the U.S. to accept a tenured academic position at the University of Notre Dame, on account of his alleged endorsement of terrorist activity. In response, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), on behalf of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), and others, sued the Departments of State and Homeland Security, charging the ideological provision to be unconstitutional, partly on First Amendment grounds.¹²⁷ After six years of litigation, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

¹²⁴Davis, 8.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 9, 10.

¹²⁶Ibid., 11.

¹²⁷*AAR v Napolitano*, 573 F.3d 115 (2nd Cir. 2009).

granted Ramadan permission to enter the U.S., though the ideological exclusion provision remains legal.

In sum, domestic religion-state relations under the Clinton and Bush administrations have moved to the right, under the classification used here, from a legislative, executive and juridical perspective. The Court's reinterpretation of establishment law, plus legislative and executive efforts that have resulted in direct funding for faith-based organizations mark a retreat from the strict separationism of early American church-state jurisprudence. At the same time, the free-exercise clause allows for fewer exceptions for adherents of minority religions to government regulations, especially at the state level, and the PATRIOT Act allows for monitoring and discrimination of religious individuals and personnel, at times based solely on their ideological beliefs.

Foreign Policy and Religion: 1990-2010

The peaceful end of the Cold War left the United States as the sole remaining superpower, but with no blueprint as to how to navigate the new international reality.¹²⁸ The collapse of the Soviet Union was seen by many policy makers as a victory for U.S. economics and ideology, i.e., capitalism and democracy. According to Mead, then, establishing global trade and spreading democratic values formed the core of the foreign policies of both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.¹²⁹ In the early-to-mid 1990s, religion assumed a minor role in the latter of these concerns, as one among many human

¹²⁸Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 78, No. 2 (March/April 1999): 35-49.

¹²⁹Mead, 175.

rights that the United States aimed to spread and protect. Yet even within the larger human rights agenda, religious issues initially received very little attention.

According to political scientist Allen Hertzke, the secularism of policy makers, diplomats and journalists—particularly those on the left—resulted in their “striking ignorance” of global religious persecution and tendency to dismiss religious issues.¹³⁰

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright admits as much, saying

Religion was not a respecter of national borders; it was above and beyond reason; it evoked the deepest passions; and historically, it was the cause of much bloodshed. Diplomats in my era were taught not to invite trouble, and no subject seemed more inherently treacherous than religion. This was the understanding that guided me while I was serving as President Clinton’s ambassador to the United Nations and secretary of state. My colleagues felt the same.¹³¹

According to Hertzke, many conservative elites’ realist understanding of the national interest similarly led them to discount the importance of religious causes, as well as the human rights agenda more broadly.¹³²

In response to this pervading relative neglect, a broad coalition of groups and individuals, including legislators and representatives of religious communities, launched a campaign to raise awareness among U.S. policy makers and diplomats of religious persecution by foreign governments. Their efforts resulted in the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), the most significant U.S. policy to overtly infuse religious concerns with foreign policy.¹³³ Enacted by Congress in 1998, IRFA requires that the advancement of religious freedom be a core tenet of American foreign policy. The Act established an

¹³⁰Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004): 95-97.

¹³¹Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflection on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006): 8.

¹³²Hertzke, 97-103.

¹³³International Religious Freedom Act of 1998

Office of International Religious Freedom within the State Department, along with an Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. Together, the Office and Ambassador are responsible for monitoring the status of religious freedom abroad, providing recommendations for policy makers, and instituting programs to encourage religious freedom. The Office presents to Congress an Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, which evaluates the religion-state relationship and religious persecution in every country in the world. The Act also established a bi-partisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and urged, but did not require, that a Special Advisor for Religious Freedom be appointed to the National Security Council.

The Act passed both the House and Senate unanimously, but according to Thomas Farr, the first director of the Office of International Religious Freedom, much debate had surrounded the act, especially in its earlier version, the Wolf-Specter bill.¹³⁴ Some Democratic congressmen feared the bill was too concerned only with persecution of Christians and catered too overtly to the Religious Right. State Department officials feared it created a “hierarchy” of human rights and did not allow enough flexibility for practical diplomatic action. In fact, the Clinton Administration only supported the Act after its backers dropped a requirement for economic sanctions for the worst religious rights violators, and instead made economic sanctions an optional tool.¹³⁵

The impact of the Act on actual foreign policy decision making and diplomatic activities is mixed. The annual reports call public attention to religious persecution, and religion-state relations generally, in every country around the world. The reports also

¹³⁴Thomas F. Farr and William L. Saunders, Jr., “The Bush Administration and America’s International Religious Freedom Policy,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 949-970.

¹³⁵Hertzke, 191-236.

designate “Countries of Particular Concern” (CPCs), which publicly shame the worst human rights violators. Moreover, interaction between Foreign Service personnel and local religious actors has increased, as a necessity for gathering the information necessary to draft the reports.¹³⁶

Still, redressing religious rights abuses abroad has not been a State Department priority. According to Farr, both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations isolated the Office of International Religious Freedom and the Ambassador-at-Large within the larger State Department bureaucracy.¹³⁷ Neither Clinton nor Bush opted to designate a Special Advisor for Religious Freedom to his National Security Council, as provided for by IRFA. Moreover, few actions have been taken to redress religious persecution by foreign governments, even among CPCs. From IRFA’s enactment in 1998 through 2009, three foreign policy actions may be specifically credited to IRFA: 1) economic sanctions on one CPC, Eritrea, for its religious rights abuses, 2) a binding agreement with Vietnam that resulted in reduced religious persecution and 3) a non-binding agreement with Saudi Arabia to end funding for Wahhabism and modify Wahhabi language in educational textbooks.¹³⁸

Beyond the impact of IRFA—and treating religion as a human rights concern more generally—religion has increasingly become a salient feature in U.S. foreign policy in myriad other ways. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 illuminated the importance religion continues to play in world affairs, though U.S. policy makers did not immediately address the religious dimension of terrorism. In its 2002 National Security

¹³⁶Farr, “Bush Administration,” 953.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 956-957.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 157-158.

Strategy, the Bush Administration attributed the rise of terrorism to poverty, weak institutions and failed states, while it downplayed the theological dimension of Al-Qaeda's mission and appeal.¹³⁹ Moreover, the Bush Administration's early response to terrorism was overwhelmingly tactical in nature, such as the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and the disruption of terrorist organizations command structures, communication ability and funding.¹⁴⁰

Religion featured much more prominently in the 2006 National Security Strategy.¹⁴¹ The Bush Administration identified religion as a significant cause of Islamic terrorism, though certainly a distorted and extreme interpretation of Islam. It confirmed the administration's commitment to religious freedom as the "first freedom", fundamental to the successful functioning of democracies. It also highlighted religion as a means of combating terrorism, by engaging and supporting moderate religious groups and leaders. Bush appointed a Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2008 to engage with Muslim leaders, and personally instructed State Department officials to take the time to reach out to religious leaders.¹⁴²

A 2007 review of U.S. engagement with religion conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) supports the finding that religion had become a much more salient feature of U.S. foreign policy by Bush's second term. The review found that U.S. officials were aware of the importance of religion, particularly in conflict-

¹³⁹ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September, 2002.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, Section III.

¹⁴¹ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March, 2006.

¹⁴² Karen Hughes, "Interfaith Dialogue with Religious Leaders at Topaki Palace," September 25, 2005, Istanbul, Turkey, *U.S. Department of State Archive*, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/us/2005/54106.htm> (accessed April 9, 2013).

prone areas, and that many U.S. agencies and personnel engaged with religious leaders or considered the religious movements and trends in policy analyses. The CSIS review contends, however, that religious engagement was conducted by most agencies in an *ad hoc* matter, and that the U.S. suffered from the lack of a coherent strategy for engaging religion.¹⁴³

The review specified four ways in which U.S. policies and procedures incorporated religion. First, as discussed above, the State Department monitors religious freedom and highlighting the most egregious abuses of religious rights through the provisions of IFRA. Additionally, State officials were working to improve U.S. relations with the Muslim world, through media outreach, television and radio campaigns, and scholar exchange programs.¹⁴⁴

Second, the CSIS review notes that the intelligence community has developed a deep understanding of Islamic theology and history, and has conducted detailed studies on political Islam. Studies of other religious traditions and groups were not a focus of the intelligence community, and religious knowledge gained specific to Islam was not, according to the authors, being applied according to any coherent or strategic framework. The authors cite a counterterrorism expert as noting his division was “not as focused on religion as on the process of radicalization.”¹⁴⁵ Military intelligence agencies, conversely, have developed teams of religion experts and sophisticated analyses of religious dynamics, particularly for post-intervention, peace-keeping and counter-terrorism

¹⁴³ Liora Danan and Alice Hunt, *Mixed Blessings: U.S. Government Engagement with Religion in Conflict-Prone Settings* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-17.

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous intelligence officer quoted in Danan and Hunt, 24.

operations. The CSIS review notes the military's experiences in the Balkans, as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan, have been particularly instructive. The military also has developed training procedures for engaging with religious actors during operations, though implementation of religious training appears to be uneven and often localized to specific units.¹⁴⁶

Finally, the CSIS review authors note an increase in development funding through USAID for faith-based organizations, as well as the incorporation of religious considerations in certain USAID development programs. Paralleling domestic efforts, the Bush Administration established a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives within USAID, to extend funding to religious organizations engaged in humanitarian and conflict-resolution activities. According to the CSIS review, \$1.7 billion in aid was granted from 2001 to 2005 to faith-based organizations.¹⁴⁷ Not only have religious organizations increasingly benefited from government funds but, according to former USAID administrator and Foreign Service professor Carol Lancaster, domestic religious groups have also acted as a driving force for the overall increase in aid for foreign development programs in the late 1990s and into the twenty-first century.¹⁴⁸ Lancaster contends that Evangelical Christian groups, influenced by their exposure to developing societies through missionary efforts, lobbied successfully for an increase in foreign aid to alleviate poverty and combat disease, especially HIV/AIDS.

¹⁴⁶Danan and Hunt, 24-28.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 18.

¹⁴⁸Lancaster, 92-93.

Notably, 98% of faith-based organizations that received USAID funding between 2001 and 2005 were Christian.¹⁴⁹ The fact that Christian groups have received nearly all faith-based funding has been controversial, and may be due to the intense lobbying efforts of domestic Evangelical groups. The CSIS report also explains the imbalance as a result of U.S. officials' concern over the "legal consequences of supporting Islamic charities and other Muslim groups."¹⁵⁰ International relations scholar Lee Marsden suggests that U.S. funding of Christian humanitarian groups may actually harm U.S. outreach efforts to some Muslim communities.¹⁵¹ While funds recipients are legally required to separate religious activities from aid activities, this is a very fine line in practice. Marsden cites the example of Samaritan's Purse, a faith-based organization that distributes U.S.-funded assistance in majority-Muslim countries (among others), but also engages in proselytizing activities and publicly denigrates Islam. As Marsden notes, such faith-based groups may easily be perceived by local populations as working on behalf of the U.S. government, feeding into narratives that the U.S. is engaged in a "Christian crusade against Islam."¹⁵² This serves as a particularly good example of the multi-dimensional nature of religion, which can serve as both a threat and a solution, advancing and harming U.S. policies, depending on execution.

¹⁴⁹ Danan and Hunt, 18. According to political scientist Mark Amstutz, U.S. government funds account for over thirty percent of the total budgets of several leading faith-based NGOs, including Catholic Relief Services, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and Mercy Corps International. Mark R. Amstutz, "Faith-Based NGOs and U.S. Foreign Policy," in Abrams, 175-187.

¹⁵⁰ Danan and Hunt, 17.

¹⁵¹ Lee Marsden, "Bush, Obama, and a Faith-Based U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Affairs*, 88 no. 12 (2012): 953-974.

¹⁵² Marsden, 973.

Political rhetoric is a final consideration of religion and U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Both Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, like most of their predecessors, used religious rhetoric to varying degrees. However, President Clinton primarily employed such rhetoric domestically, in campaign speeches and a few presidential addresses. Historian Robert Linder notes Clinton repeatedly touched upon themes of an American rebirth, a theology-laden term that was also appropriate for the new era that seemed to be dawning following the end of the Cold War.¹⁵³ Clinton also used the religious term for contract in describing his political platform as a “new covenant” with the American people. Yet, political scientists Jack Van der Slick and Stephen Schwark note Clinton used the term rarely, and retired the “new covenant” symbolism in favor of the more secular “Bridge to the 21st Century” for his second term.¹⁵⁴ In her comparative analysis of themes of manifest destiny in the rhetoric of Clinton and George H.W. Bush, sociologist Roberta Coles finds that Clinton primarily used secular language to describe America’s mission and, in some instances, overtly signaled that America’s destiny is a temporary human construct.¹⁵⁵

George W. Bush’s rhetoric was much more consistently religious, reflecting both his personal devotion as a born-again Christian and the rise of evangelicalism amongst the Republican base. An analysis of Bush’s speeches by Religion scholar Helen Daley Schroepfer reveals that Bush credited God and His Providence for freedom generally, for

¹⁵³Robert D. Linder, “Universal Pastor: President Bill Clinton’s Civil Religion,” *Journal of Church and State* 38, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 733-749.

¹⁵⁴Jack R. Van der Slick and Stephen J. Schwark, “Clinton and the New Covenant: Theology Shaping a New Politics or Old Politics in Religious Garb?” *Journal of Church and State* 40, no. 4 (August 1998): 873-890.

¹⁵⁵Roberta L. Coles, “Manifest Destiny Adapted for the 1990s’ War Discourse: Mission and Destiny Intertwined,” *Sociology of Religion* 63, no. 4 (2002): 403-426.

America's mission to spread freedom to others, and for America's success as a nation.¹⁵⁶

Religion historian Bruce Lincoln points to Bush's reliance on the arguments that freedom and democracy are gifts from God, and that America has a duty to spread these divine gifts, in his justification of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁵⁷ In his 2003 State of the Union speech, after delineating a list of grievances about Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the President stated:

Americans are a free people who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity. We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not ourselves alone. We do not know—we do not claim to know all the ways of providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history.¹⁵⁸

President Bush used religious rhetoric repeatedly in relation to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the larger War on Terror. He relied heavily on scriptural passages and religious imagery in consoling the nation in the days and weeks immediately following the attacks. In perhaps Bush's best-remembered and most spontaneous public speech, the President remarked to rescue workers at Ground Zero, "I want you all to know that America today—that America today is on bended knee in prayer for the people whose lives were lost here, for the workers who work here, for the families who mourn."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Helen Daley Schroepfer, "Pursuing the Enemies of Freedom: Religion in the Persuasive Rhetoric of the Bush Administration," *Political Theology* 9, no. 1 (January 2008): 27-45.

¹⁵⁷ Bruce Lincoln, "Bush's God Talk: Analyzing the President's Theology," *Christian Century* 121, no. 20 (2004): 22-29.

¹⁵⁸ George W. Bush, "President Delivers 'State of the Union'," January 28, 2003, White House Archives, <http://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html> (accessed May 17, 2003).

¹⁵⁹ George W. Bush, "Remarks to New York Rescue Workers," September 14, 2001, White House Archives, http://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf (accessed April 8, 2013).

Bush also used religious rhetoric to differentiate the “evil” of the terrorists from the righteousness of America. Visiting the Pentagon in November 2001, Bush remarked

The hijackers were instruments of evil who died in vain. Behind them is a cult of evil which seeks to harm the innocent and thrives on human suffering... Theirs is the worst kind of violence, pure malice, while daring to claim the authority of God. We cannot fully understand the designs and power of evil. It is enough to know that evil, like goodness, exists. And in the terrorists, evil has found a willing servant.¹⁶⁰

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush widened his designation of the term “evil” from those who had actively engaged in terrorism against the United States and her allies, to those states that support terrorist groups or oppressed their own citizens, including an “axis of evil”: North Korea, Iran and Iraq.¹⁶¹

Finally, President Bush reiterated the republican tenet that self-government requires a moral populace; notably, however, Bush took a very pluralistic republican view. He credited Judaism, Christianity and Islam with developing a moral body politic, saying the national character is sustained by “the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people.”¹⁶²

Scholars from various disciplines have dissected the meaning, purpose, and effects of George W. Bush’s political use of religious language. It is no surprise, especially given the short distance from Bush’s departure from office, that little consensus has emerged. It is beyond doubt, however, that Bush used religious passages and imagery in political speech more frequently and more strategically than did his

¹⁶⁰George W. Bush “Department of Defense Memorial Service at the Pentagon,” October 11, 2001, White House Archives, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf (accessed April 8, 2013).

¹⁶¹George W. Bush, “State of the Union Address to the 107th Congress,” January 29, 2002, White House Archives, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf (accessed April 8, 2013).

¹⁶²George W. Bush, “Second Inaugural Address” (2005).

immediate predecessor. Early evidence also suggests that Bush's religious rhetoric surpassed that of other war presidents in earlier eras.¹⁶³

Initial Assessment

The salience of religion in U.S. foreign policy has been highly variable historically. Religion has been both a cause and tool of U.S. foreign policy, though usually a secondary cause and a very soft tool. The foregoing analysis reveals several ways religion played a role in U.S. foreign policy. First, many U.S. presidents adopted religious rhetoric in times of conflict – to unify the nation, motivate the troops, console the nation in times of loss, and justify foreign policy actions. Second, some administrations emphasized religion as a source of American identity, particularly to differentiate from an enemy; this approach was noticeably absent until the Cold War. Third, American religious groups, including missionaries and faith-based lobbyists, influenced particular foreign policies of interest to their group or cause.

Several factors limit the role of religion in U.S. foreign policy. First, the legal separation of religion and state in domestic policies has likely served as a check on entangling religion in foreign affairs; though this sentiment may be waning with the accepted funding of foreign faith-based organizations. Second, American pluralism limits the ability of U.S. politicians to make sectarian appeals. Plus, what constitutes an argument that is too particular to one faith tradition has expanded over time as the demographic composition of America has become increasingly multicultural. Third, religious groups often find themselves on opposite sides of any particular policy; like

¹⁶³ Barbara Warner, Brinck Kerr, Andrew Dowdle, "Talking the Nation into War Using Religious Rhetoric: A Study of Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and George W. Bush," *White House Studies* 11, no.2 (2011): 155-174. See also, Gunn, 49-50.

other special interest groups, the various religious factions serve to balance each others' influence. Fourth, foreign policy decision making is decentralized in the U.S. to a greater extent than in other countries. The short maximum tenure of presidents, the relative independence of the State Department, and the power of certain congressional groups, such as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, limit the extent to which one government official could successfully institute a religious foreign policy. The resistance shown by the State Department to fully integrating the Office of International Religious Freedom illustrates this dynamic. Finally, U.S. officials are constrained by the fact that engaging religion in the wrong ways could create unnecessary barriers to policy implementation or efficacy. For instance, Bush walked a tight rope when using Judeo-Christian religious rhetoric in reaction to terrorist attacks on America, while also attempting to undercut the authenticity of the Al-Qaeda's theological claims without offending moderate Muslims.

Even given these restraints, religion was a much more visible factor in U.S. foreign policy by the end of the Bush administration than at the beginning of Clinton's term. Notably, many foreign policy elites contend that the U.S., and particularly the State Department, has not gone far enough in incorporating religion in its foreign activities. Influential foreign policy elites including Thomas Farr, Douglas Johnson, Walter Russell Mead, and even Madeleine Albright have encouraged Washington to make religion a more salient feature of foreign policy, not less.¹⁶⁴ While U.S. foreign policy institutions appear to be desecularizing, this does not necessitate sacralization. Rather, historical trends suggest religion will assume a place in U.S. foreign policy similar to that in the

¹⁶⁴ Farr, "Bush Administration," 962-966. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994); Mead, "God's Country," 41-43; Albright, 65-78.

domestic sphere: it will assume a salient and dynamic role in the public square of ideas, influence and engagement while remaining distinct from the government.

CHAPTER FOUR

Case Study Two: Religion and State in Russia¹

At the heart of all Russia's victories and achievements are patriotism, faith and strength of spirit.

—Vladimir Putin²

The contemporary relationship between religion and state in Russia is exceedingly complicated. The Russian Federation today remains merely two decades removed from the most brutal policies of forced secularization in world history over a period that spanned multiple generations. In the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders had to formulate new policies towards religious institutions that were signaling clear intentions to return to the public square. In the social, political and economic turmoil of the post-Soviet period, religion as an institution is again relevant to Russia's search for purpose and identity. However, nearly a century of persecution has left all major religious groups in Russia—and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in particular—with a lack of funds, infrastructure and most importantly adherents. The interrelation of religion with domestic and foreign policy in post-Soviet Russia is characterized by: an Orthodox Church that is struggling to regain its cultural relevance and institutional vigor, large populations of adherents to minority religious groups who

¹Portions of this chapter were adapted from a paper presented by the author at the Midwestern Political Science Association's Annual Conference, "The Use of Religious Rhetoric, Symbolism and Institutions in Russian Foreign Policy: The Russian Orthodox Church and the State," (Chicago, IL: MPSA, March 31, 2011).

²Russian President Vladimir Putin in a speech celebrating Patriarch Kirill's fourth anniversary of his accession to the patriarchy, qtd. in Thomas Grove, "Church should have more control over Russian life: Putin," February 1, 2013, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/01/us-russia-putin-church-idUSBRE91016F20130201> (accessed May 16, 2013).

expect the state's protection of their religious rights, and a political elite that must come to terms with both the forced secularism of the past and the role of religion in Russia going forward.

Before attempting to assess the salience of religion in Russia's foreign policy in the two decades following the fall of the Soviet Union, this case study includes an assessment of the religion-state relationship in Russia historically. This historical framework is followed by an overview of religion and domestic politics in the time period under review, roughly 1990 to 2008. I then recount the participation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the state's foreign policies during this period, followed by initial thoughts regarding the religious salience in the state's contemporary foreign policy.

Historical Framework: Religion and State in Russia, 988-1990

The Pre-Soviet Period

Russian historians typically recount the pre-Soviet history of the religion-state relationship in Russia as the relationship between various princes and emperors and the Orthodox Church. Though Orthodoxy has remained the dominant religious tradition it is by no means the exclusive one. Large populations of Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Roman Catholics, Protestant Christians, Uniates (or Greek Catholics) and Pagans have existed throughout history within Russia's fluctuating borders, and these traditions continue to have a presence in Russia today. Each of these minority religious traditions has influenced Russia's domestic and even foreign policies, though primarily in their role as identity markers of minority populations. By contrast, Orthodoxy has been the most politically relevant religious tradition since 988 when, according to Russian mythos,

Prince Vladimir of Kiev chose the Orthodox Christian tradition for all of Rus' over the "homeless" Judaism, the more sober Islam and the less glamorous Western form of Christianity.³ For this reason, much of the history of religion-state relations recounted in this chapter focuses on the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and its relations with the central governing authority of Russia through different historical periods.

The pre-Soviet relationship between Russian political leaders and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was based on the ideal of *symphonia*, whereby political leaders cared for the temporal concerns of the populace while Orthodox leaders tended to the spiritual and moral needs of the empire, including the emperor himself.⁴ Many accounts of saints and Patriarchs litter the tales and myths of early Russian history, especially in times of war or national emergency. Such is the story, for instance, of St. Sergius assuring Grand Duke Dmitri that God would grant victory over the Tatars in 1380.⁵ Orthodoxy also gave the maturing political system centered in Moscow ideological justification for its power and authority. Following, first, the fall of the Roman popes into heresy and, second, the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, Moscow took on the mantle of the "Third Rome" and protector of all Orthodoxy.⁶ Church and state also found common purpose in the expansion of Russian borders. Following the Russian conquests of Kazan and Astrakhan in the sixteenth centuries, for instance, Tsar Ivan IV instructed

³A. Zenkovsky, ed. and trans., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales*, rev. ed., (New York: Meridian, 1974): 65-71.

⁴ The doctrine of Church-State Symphony is not exclusive to the Orthodox tradition, but is reflective of Western Christianity as well, beginning from the reign of Roman Emperor Justinian (527-65, A.D.). Dmitry Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998): 2.

⁵Zenkovsky, 284-286.

⁶Pospelovsky, 45-46. See also, "The Tale of the White Cowl", in A. Zenkovsky, 323-332.

Orthodox missionaries to teach and convert the Pagans and Muslims living in the newly acquired Russian territory.⁷

In practice, of course, the state has typically wielded much more power in relation to the Church, and the Church's independence from the state has waxed and waned throughout the centuries. The Russian Orthodox Church became autocephalous and received its own Patriarchate, independent from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, in 1589.⁸ Ironically, this recognition of an Orthodox Church independent from the Greek Orthodox Church lessened its power in relation to the state, since the ROC no longer had a source of independent power outside of Russian borders that could be used as leverage against the Russian sovereign.⁹

While the relationship between the institutions had vacillated around the symphonic ideal over the years, a dramatic shift took place in favor of the state under the authoritarian rule of Peter the Great. In his determination to consolidate his control over Russian territory, Peter weakened the one domestic institution with leverage against the throne, eventually abolishing the patriarchate entirely and creating a synod of bishops over whom he had direct control.¹⁰ The legacy of Peter's adjustments to church-state relations was severe. According to Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemman, during Peter's reign, "However far the reality might have digressed from the symphony ideal,

⁷Michael Khodarkovsky, "The Conversion of Non-Christians in Early Modern Russia," in *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*, Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky, eds. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001): 120-121.

⁸Pospelovsky, 66-67.

⁹Ibid., 45.

¹⁰Ibid., 105-106.

[the digressions] were always perceived as digressions.”¹¹ As Peter’s reforms lasted into their second century, however, these digressions “came to be perceived as a perfectly normal situation.”¹² Of course, these changes were not made in a vacuum. Historian Paul Bushkovitch argues that a decline in the importance of monasteries and the rise of a more moralistic theology focused on individual integrity (rather than a collective, ritualistic theology), in the early sixteenth century contributed to the changes in religious life in Russia even before Peter’s reforms.¹³

Even under such domination by the state, the ROC received exclusive benefits and played a role in the administration of governmental policies, especially at the frontiers of Russian borders. In 1740, for instance, the Russian government established a new mission, which would later become the Agency of Convert Affairs.¹⁴ This agency, composed by Orthodox priests as well as lay staff, was tasked with converting non-Christians in four provinces: Kazan, Astrakhan, Nizhnii Novgorod and Vornezh. In contrast to earlier proselytizing efforts that relied primarily on religious education, the new missions often produced converts through force and legal decree. To prevent the practice of Islam, many mosques were destroyed.¹⁵

The synodal system established by Peter the Great was to last for two centuries during which time the Church held little control over its own affairs. As the Russian intelligentsia and government looked West, so too did the educational centers and

¹¹Quoted in Pospelovsky, 107.

¹²Ibid., 159.

¹³Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁴ Khodarkovsky, 132.

¹⁵Ibid., 136.

leadership of the Church, so that much of the uniquely Eastern identity of the tradition was eroded in favor of Western styles of belief and worship. Yet, as the Russian empire was coming to an end, interest in Slavic and Russian history, language and culture – including the “authentic” Orthodox theology of earlier eras - experienced a revival.¹⁶ Even among secular authors, the idea that Russia should reject scientism and rationalism for a way of being that was more culturally and spiritually mature and authentic emerged.¹⁷

As the Tsarist government grew weaker, Orthodox leaders began to call for reforms, and for a *sobor*, or special assembly, during which a new independent institutional future might be determined. ROC representatives assembled at the Great Moscow Sobor of 1917-1918 and re-established the Patriarchate, under the newly elected Patriarch Tikhon.¹⁸ It is perhaps one of the greatest ironies in Russian religious history that as the Church was again realizing its independence from the state, the most radical secularist movement in European history was consolidating its political power over the country.

The Soviet Period

Lenin and the Bolsheviks, already ideologically opposed to religion in general, endeavored to remove the ROC as a rival center of political power and societal

¹⁶This is evidenced in the writings of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Vladimir Soloviev. Pospelovsky, 186-189.

¹⁷Berdiaev, et al, *Vekhi*, Marshall S. Shatz and Judith E. Zimmerman, trans. and ed. (NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

¹⁸Pospelovsky, 204-205. Alexander A. Bogolepov, *Church Reforms in Russia, 1905-1918*, (Bridgeport, Connecticut: Publications Committee of the Metropolitan Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of America, 1966).

influence.¹⁹ Believing the Church to be merely a “superstructure over a material base,” the earliest attempts at annihilating religion were essentially material and legal in nature, or were aimed at Orthodox officials.²⁰ In 1918, all of the Church’s property and capital investments were nationalized.²¹ In 1919, all relics were ordered destroyed.²² During the Civil War from 1918-1920, thousands of clergy were killed, including nearly thirty bishops.²³ These early efforts, however, did not have the effect desired and so a new “divide and conquer” campaign was launched to force the Church into a schism. Patriarch Tikhon was arrested in 1921, and a rival Orthodox Church called the Restorationists emerged with Soviet support – an effort that ultimately failed. In its wake a much more extensive and vicious anti-religion campaign was launched under the League of the Militant Godless. This included the mass closing of churches, the burning of sacred books and materials, and a drastic rise in atheistic propaganda.²⁴ The number of Orthodox churches would fall from its pre-Revolutionary height of 54,000 to just 4,200 churches prior to World War II.²⁵

According to Russian historian Tatiana A. Chumachenko, “World War II, the most tragic event in the history of our country, became the salvation of the Russian

¹⁹See, for instance, V.I. Lenin, “The Attitude of the Worker’s Party to Religion,” *Lenin Collected Works Vol. 15*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973): 402-415.

²⁰ Pospelovsky, 227-228.

²¹V. Lenin, “Decree of the Council of the People’s Commissars concerning the separation of the Church from the State, and schools from the Church,” January 23, 1918.

²²Pospelovsky, 228.

²³Ibid., 209.

²⁴Ibid., 264-265.

²⁵Paul Froese, *The Plot to Kill God: Findings from the Soviet Experiment in Secularization* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 2008): 53.

Orthodox Church.”²⁶ The day the war started in Russia, the *locum tenens* of the Orthodox Church Metropolitan Sergei released a statement declaring

This is not the first time that the Russian people have endured suffering. And on this occasion, with God’s help, they will grind the hostile forces of fascism into the dust... The Church of Christ confers its blessing on all Orthodox believers in their defense of the holy borders of our Motherland.²⁷

The unity of purpose between the state and Church leadership led to direct government support of Church activities; Church leaflets were printed and distributed by state agencies and clergy were allowed to minister to the Red Army.²⁸ Even more unbelievably, given the context of the past two decades, a concordat was reached between Stalin and the Orthodox leadership, by which relations were normalized and the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs, a state agency to manage relations with the Church, was established.

Scholars debate the hierarchy of reasons behind this drastic change in religious policy, but it is clear that beyond the Church’s ability to legitimize and invigorate the war effort, Stalin also intended to use the Church as a foreign policy tool after the war.²⁹ In fact, Stalin met with Orthodox leaders in April of 1945 specifically to discuss international policy, and the useful role religious leaders could play in that regard. The Church’s involvement in foreign policy started immediately when delegations of ROC representatives visited Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia. Additionally, on government

²⁶ Tatiana A. Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev Years*, Edward E. Roslof ed. and trans., (Armonk, N.Y.:M.E. Sharpe, 2002): 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁸ Religious leaders from other traditions performed similarly patriotic activities. For instance, according to Soviet studies scholar William C. Fletcher, some Muslim clergy in Russia participated in radio broadcasts and other propaganda for foreign consumption in support of the Soviet effort in World War II. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973): 71.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

orders, the Church initiated a campaign to lure Uniate believers away from Vatican influence and into the Soviet sphere.³⁰ Finally, the new “privileges” granted the Church were meant to assure foreign governments that the Soviet Union was a free society. Indeed, the head of the new Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs, Georgii Karpov, was instrumental in constructing grand ceremonies at which Church leaders would receive awards for their patriotism, because “...the presence of leading figures of the Russian Orthodox Church on the platform near diplomats and foreign guests should make a beneficial impression, especially in foreign countries.”³¹

The freedoms granted the Church during and immediately after World War II were unsustainable. Though the ROC was a useful tool for foreign propaganda, its security could not be assured long past Stalin’s lifetime, since the favorable church-state arrangement of the late 1940s and early 1950s was a creation of the Soviet leader himself. So while the reign of Stalin’s successor Nikita Khrushchev is considered by historians to be a period of political “thaw” for Russian society in general, it was one of renewed persecution for the Church, domestically. The ROC had received such a supportive reception from the citizenry under the Stalinist reprieve that the Khrushchev administration felt its power needed to be checked once again by the State. The ensuing crackdown was driven by Agitprop (The Agitation and Propaganda Department), which found the freedoms granted the Church clearly contradictory to its mission. Furthermore, as part of the “thaw”, the new Soviet leadership had begun a process of de-Stalinization and the policies favorable to the Church were seen as an “incorrect” remnant from that

³⁰Uniates, or “Greek-Catholics” follow the Orthodox liturgy but recognize Papal authority. The largest populations of Uniates reside in the Ukraine, but also make-up sizeable minorities in Romania and Slovakia, among other, largely Eastern European or Middle Eastern, countries.

³¹Chumachenko, 51.

era.³² After expanding its number of churches under the Stalinist era to roughly a third of the pre-Revolutionary numbers at 17,500 churches, the number of Orthodox churches declined to just 7,500 by 1966.³³

In his foreign policy, Khrushchev differentiated himself from Stalin as well, but in a way that ultimately increased the activities of the ROC abroad. Whereas Stalin's foreign policy focused primarily on nations immediately adjacent to or near Soviet borders, Khrushchev expanded the scope of Russian foreign policy globally. And while Stalin saw the world as a dichotomy between capitalists and socialists, Khrushchev recognized the importance of non-aligned states, paying particular attention to those states newly independent of Western colonization.³⁴ Both of these divergences from earlier Soviet policy opened new roles for ROC participation in foreign affairs.

According to Soviet studies scholar William C. Fletcher, the ROC played its most important role internationally in its participation in the Prague Christian Peace Conference (CPC). With its emphasis on social justice, the CPC was a natural home for a religious body, and Fletcher contends that Russian participation in the CPC was advantageous to Soviet policy in two ways. First, it provided a means by which to build relationships with representatives of non-aligned states through an institution that was at least semi-independent from the official Soviet state apparatus.³⁵ Compared with Western nations, which had long nurtured diplomatic ties to countries on every continent through religious missionaries, international trade and political imperialism, the U.S.S.R. had only

³²Ibid., 148.

³³Froese, 53.

³⁴Fletcher, p. 36.

³⁵Ibid, 36-37, 42.

recently become a global power. Khrushchev's expansion in scope beyond immediate geopolitical and ideological allies and enemies made the need to foster new relationships—political, economic and cultural—with third-world countries paramount.

Second, the CPC gave the Khrushchev administration an independent affirmation of the Soviet definition of peace, which encompassed chiefly a “peaceful co-existence” between the superpowers. By defining peace in this way, Soviet leaders hoped to advance a tri-fold goal of: 1) creating a political moral high-ground from which to support peace efforts while, 2) allowing for the possibility of justified violence for those nations or movements facing Western imperialist aggression, and 3) tempering bellicose language in an age of nuclear weaponry and mutually assured destruction.³⁶

According to Fletcher, the CPC adopted Khrushchev's definition of peace as peaceful co-existence between the superpowers, rather than a more comprehensive doctrine of just war or even Christian pacifism, from the outset. Theologically, the ROC could authentically call for peace while also leveraging Christian social justice theory to support national liberation movements. Fletcher argues that, through the ROC in the CPC, the Soviets were successful in gaining independent justification for criticism of Western aggression, while simultaneously gaining tacit approval of armed conflict supporting national liberation movements against colonizers or aggressors. For instance, the CPC was among the earliest organizations to call America's involvement in Vietnam

³⁶Notably, Khrushchev's doctrine of peaceful co-existence was a departure from the more traditional Soviet reading of the Marxist requirement that all communist nations engage in revolutionary struggle against capitalist and imperialist entities and was partially responsible for the Sino-Soviet Split. Wladyslaw W. Kulski, *Peaceful Co-existence: An Analysis of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1959).

immoral, and provided religious bodies in Western nations a theological rationale for doing so.³⁷

Outside of its efforts in the CPC, the ROC also conducted independent diplomatic visits to Asia, Cuba and the Middle East.³⁸ According to Fletcher, the ROC's contributions were negligible in this effort, given the very small numbers of Orthodox believers in these regions, and the much greater influence of Western Christianity due to past missionary endeavors in these regions.³⁹ Furthermore, the substantial economic and military support that the Soviet Union could offer Third World nations would almost certainly outweigh cultural considerations. Still, Fletcher contends, "Where societies were in turmoil the Church could contribute to Soviet attempts to capitalize on the unrest by the degree to which religion was influential in the country in question."⁴⁰

After Khrushchev's administration, the state's level of intolerance towards the ROC domestically never again reached such brutal levels. The relationship between church and state under Leonid Brezhnev was typical of Brezhnev's leadership style and ultimate legacy: that of stagnation. The Soviet leadership desired a Church with weak leadership that would pose little threat to state power. According to Orthodox historian Dmitri Pospelovsky, the Soviets picked the perfect Patriarch for a stagnant era in Patriarch Pimen.⁴¹ Though opportunities presented themselves during the Brezhnev era to

³⁷Fletcher, 43-48.

³⁸Ibid., 49, 57-68.

⁴⁰Ibid., 36. Fletcher also argues that Soviet Muslim leaders had more success establishing relations with Middle-Eastern and Arab countries than did the ROC; such relations were particularly fruitful in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. Fletcher, pp. 69-81.

⁴¹Pospelovsky, 332.

perhaps gain some concessions for the Church, Pimen's timidity prevented any breakthrough gains or changes in the Church's relationship with the state.

The ROC continued to play a role in Brezhnev's foreign policy, but with less success. The ROC's role in Russian foreign policy remained much the same as in previous years: improve the image abroad of religious freedom in the Soviet Union and support Soviet policies through Christian social teachings at various peace conferences.⁴² However, according to Fletcher, the Brezhnev administration had much less success in using the ROC as a foreign policy tool. Whereas Khrushchev allowed ROC leaders some flexibility in engaging with international organizations like the CPC – even allowing for criticism of the Soviet state on matters that were tangential to Soviet interests – Brezhnev took a harder line. The Brezhnev administration was not content to wait for the process of relationship building to bear fruit and instead required the ROC to be bolder about supporting Soviet policies and to push much more aggressively for distinct achievements in its relationships with international organizations and diplomatic contacts.⁴³ This new strategy was unsuccessful because a more aggressive approach was unsuitable to relationship-building, and because the requirement that ROC representatives adhere strictly to the Communist party line undercut their credibility.⁴⁴

Mikhail Gorbachev's administration was transformative politically, economically, and socially, and relations with the ROC were no exception. Facing a nation and Union going bankrupt, financially and ideologically, Gorbachev instituted the reform policies of

⁴²Dmitri Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, Vol. II, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984): 470.

⁴³ Fletcher, 140-145.

⁴⁴Pospelovsky adds that high-level denials by the ROC of blatant persecution of religious believers further undercut the ROC leadership's credibility. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime 1972-1985*: 446-447.

perestroika (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness), which resulted in the intelligentsia openly writing about subjects bordering on the religious. Marking a thousand years of Christianity in Russia, 1988 was a turning point for domestic church-state relations. In April, the General Secretary met with the Holy Synod of the ROC for the first time since Stalin's meeting with the ROC in 1945.⁴⁵ At the meeting, the Synod presented Gorbachev with a list of complaints and demands, which the General Secretary promised to fulfill. Thereafter, the Church was permitted to publish more freely, churches began to reopen and regulations of religious practices ceased to be enforced. Yuri Smirnoff, the director of the International Information department of the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs noted "The big event that opened the gate was the meeting in the Kremlin in April 1988...Until then we talked and talked but nothing happened. After that things started to happen. *Perestroika* began to reach the churches."⁴⁶

Gorbachev also assumed a different posture in Soviet foreign policy, especially towards the West, and made his democratization efforts—including increasing freedom of religion—a focal point for improved relations. When Gorbachev flew to Washington for negotiations with President Ronald Reagan in 1987, for instance, representatives from all of Russia's major religions flew with him.⁴⁷ In return, President and Mrs. Reagan visited the Danilov Monastery in May of 1988, "to show Western support."⁴⁸ According

⁴⁵ Pospelovsky, 355-356.

⁴⁶ Jim Forest, *Religion in the New Russia: The Impact of Perestroika on the Varieties of Religious Life in the Soviet Union* (New York: Crossroad, 1990): 197.

⁴⁷ Pospelovsky, 354-355.

⁴⁸ John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent: Faith and Power in the New Russia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008): 45.

to White House documents, President Reagan discussed the state of religion in Russia with Gorbachev during the visit.⁴⁹

The liberalization occurring throughout the Soviet republics in response to his reform efforts quickly grew beyond Gorbachev's control, leading some within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to doubt his ability, or will, to preserve the Union. In August, 1991, a junta of CPSU and KGB hardliners took Gorbachev captive and established an emergency committee to rule the USSR. The democratically-elected President of Russia Boris Yeltsin resisted the junta by entrenching himself with his staff and some colleagues at the Russian Parliament building. Notably, after U.S. President George H.W. Bush and U.K. Prime Minister John Major notified Yeltsin that they could not come to his aid, Yeltsin appealed to Patriarch Alexei over the national radio:

At this moment of tragedy for our Fatherland I turn to you, calling on your authority among all religious confessions and believers. The influence of the Church in our society is too great for the Church to stand aside during these events. This duty is directly related to the Church's mission, to which you have dedicated your life: serving people, caring for their hearts and souls. The Church, which has suffered through the times of totalitarianism, may once again experience disorder and lawlessness. All believers, the Russian nation, and all Russia await your word!⁵⁰

Patriarch Alexei responded the following day, asking to hear from Gorbachev to clarify the situation and calling on "the whole of our people, and particularly our army at this critical moment for our nation to show support and not to permit the shedding of fraternal blood."⁵¹ Shortly after midnight the next day, military tanks surrounded the Parliament

⁴⁹Reagan Library (NSC System File Folder 8791367) "Memorandum of Conversation: The President's Meeting with Monks in Danilov Monastery," (Large Scale Document Archive, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 2013).

⁵⁰ Garrard and Garrard, "Yeltsin's Appeal (to Patriarch Aleksey II)": 255.

⁵¹ Garrard and Garrard, "Announcement of the Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksey II": 255-256.

building, with resistance from protestors that resulted in three deaths. An hour later, Patriarch Alexei addressed the people over national television and radio warning all Russians against engaging in violence, appealing to the military to refrain from killing innocent civilians and inciting the flame of civil war, and asking the Mother of God (Theotokos) to protect the city.⁵²

The coup ultimately failed and, according to Garrard and Garrard, the first parliamentary session following the coup opened only after officials attended a requiem performed by the Patriarch to honor the three men killed during the coup.⁵³ The role played by the Patriarch at this critical moment in Russian history marked a resounding return of religion as a salient feature in the public and political life of the nation.

Religion and the State in Post-Soviet Russia

Domestic Politics and Religion, 1990 -2010

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the ensuing political, economic and moral destabilization left the Russian people searching for a new identity and the Russian government searching for a new source of legitimacy. According to Librarian of Congress and Russian scholar James Billington, much of the discussion over identity points to three factors as necessary in the new Russia: a strong leader, spiritual renewal, and a balanced society.⁵⁴ As it had throughout Russian history, the ROC would support the first, assume responsibility for the second and advocate for the third. It is actually the

⁵²Garrard and Garrard, "21 August 1991. 1:30 A.M. Address (Obrashchenie) to Compatriots:" 256.

⁵³Garrard and Garrard, 32-33.

⁵⁴James Billington, *Russia In Search of Itself* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004): 51.

third of these goals, a balanced society, which gives the best context for the contemporary involvement of the ROC in the state's domestic politics.

The transition from the Soviet Union to the Russian nation-state in the 1990s was marked by domestic turmoil. President Yeltsin's administration adopted market reforms based on the Western capitalist system without first establishing the rule of law and the necessary institutions to govern such a market, opening wide the doors to corruption and the impoverishment of the middle class.⁵⁵ Similarly, a new 1990 law governing religion in Russia allowed expansive new religious freedoms for individuals and groups, along with a strict separation between religion and state, but with unintended consequences.⁵⁶ Foreign missionaries, primarily from Western Europe and North America, flooded Russia, attracted by a wealth of fresh souls to save. Just as the Russian state and people were unprepared for a Western-style market economy, Russia's traditional religious groups were ill prepared to compete in a free religious marketplace.

Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (now Patriarch Kirill) explained his frustration in a speech at the World Council of Churches:

As soon as freedom for missionary work was allowed, a crusade began against the Russian church, even as it began recovering from a prolonged disease, standing on its feet with weakened muscles...Missionaries from abroad came with dollars, buying people with so-called humanitarian aid and promises to send them abroad for study or rest. We expected that our fellow Christians would support and help us in our own missionary service...All this has led to an almost complete rupture of the ecumenical relations developed during the past decades.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 113-141.

⁵⁶John Witte, Jr. "Introduction," in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: the New War for Souls*, John Witte Jr. and Michael Bordeaux, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999): 2-11.

⁵⁷Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, "Gospel and Culture," in John Witte Jr. and Michael Bordeaux, eds.: 73.

Clearly, this was not the type of spiritual renewal the ROC had envisioned, and the Church began a sustained effort to bring about a more balanced religious landscape through new legislation that limited the freedom of activity for some religious groups.

After years of lobbying from the ROC and other nationalist groups— and over the objections of many religious groups, human rights organizations and Western statesmen—Yeltsin signed a new “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” in 1997.⁵⁸ This law, still in effect today, offers more protections for traditional religions and greater restrictions on foreign groups and new religious movements.⁵⁹ The new law recognizes the special contribution of Orthodoxy to the history of Russia and awards it special state privileges, including financial support for the restoration of buildings and other property related to Russian history and culture. Other religious traditions indigenous to Russia—“traditional” Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism—are guaranteed full freedom of worship, but without the same state privileges enjoyed by the ROC. Religious groups who do not meet these standards face burdensome registration requirements, and foreign missionaries face difficulties even attaining a visa to enter the country.⁶⁰

Especially since 2000, when Vladimir Putin attained the Russian presidency, the ROC has found the state a reliable partner, so long as its requests are limited. The Church’s position vis-à-vis other religious groups in Russia has been described by James Warhola as one of “hegemonic ecumenism,” where the emphasis on its hegemonic power

⁵⁸Witte, Jr., “Introduction”: 11-19.

⁵⁹Wallace L. Daniel and Christopher Marsh, “Russia’s 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience in Context and Retrospect,” *Perspectives on Church-State Relations in Russia* (Waco, TX: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, 2008): 27-36.

⁶⁰Daniel and Marsh, 29-33.

or a more gracious ecumenical stance is largely determined situationally.⁶¹ Besides the passage of the 1997 law on religion, the ROC has also succeeded in using state agencies and funds to restore its properties at home and abroad, and in getting a “Basics of Orthodox Culture” course into Russian classrooms.⁶² Furthermore, after a lengthy debate in the military community over the role of religion among the troops, Orthodox priests now serve as chaplains in the Russian armed forces.⁶³

From the state’s perspective the situation is complex. Political leaders have relied on Orthodoxy to inspire a sense of nationalism and unity among the populace, and frequently include Orthodox representatives in official ceremonies or celebrate national events with an Orthodox mass. The military in particular has been more than receptive to participation by Orthodox representatives in military events, such as the blessings received from the Church before submarines are set sail.⁶⁴ Military journals also frequently recount stories from Russian history featuring religious-military cooperation, and the veteran affairs group, Victory, has made part of its mission the spiritual and cultural development of new recruits.⁶⁵

⁶¹James Warhola, “Religion and Politics under the Putin Administration: Accommodation and Confrontation within ‘Managed Pluralism’,” *Perspectives on Church-State Relations in Russia* (Waco, TX: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, 2008): 121-140.

⁶²Daniel Payne, “Spiritual Security, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Russian Foreign Ministry: Collaboration or Cooptation?” *Journal of Church and State* 52, no.4 (December 2010): 712-727.

⁶³“Russian Church to Appoint 400 Priests as Military Chaplains,” *Interfax*, (February 3, 2010, accessed 19 May 2013); available from <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=6891>.

⁶⁴“Russian submarines don’t sail the Pacific Ocean without church blessing,” *Interfax* (September 20, 2011; accessed 19 May 2013); available from <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=7714>.

⁶⁵See, for instance, Alexander Segen, “History, Lent of Alexander the Blessed,” *Russian Military Review*, May (2004): 30-33. Fyodor Kozanchuk, “In Order that Experience of Generations Would not be Lost in Vain,” *Russian Military Review*, May (2007): 29-34. Retrieved through East View.

Yet the existence of large minority populations of Muslims, Buddhists and Jews, among others, has made the state sensitive to the need for a balanced approach. This sentiment is reinforced by conflicts in Chechnya and other Caucasian territories where religio-ethnic minorities desire secession from the Russian Federation. This threat to the territorial integrity of the state acts as a check to Orthodox ambitions for religious establishment. Officially secular, the state appears instead to have settled on a policy of “managed pluralism,” exemplified in the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience. This “managed pluralism” fits with the recent style of Russian political leadership in general. Political scientist John Anderson compares managed religious pluralism to “managed democracy” in Russia, “For the Russian president, it seems that the political form is less important than the consequences—if democracy strengthens the state and enhances social harmony then Putin is for it, but if it challenges those fundamental objectives then other political forms may be preferable.”⁶⁶

Clearly, the modern Russian state can exert more leverage on the Church than vice-versa and must govern a religiously heterogeneous country. These factors have prevented the state from returning to a traditional “symphonia” relationship with the Church. Instead, scholars point to the emergence of an “asymmetric symphonia.” Under this construction of the relationship Anderson contends that the “president is happy to allow Orthodoxy a position of *primus inter pares*, so long as its leaders continue to use that position to play a generally supportive role in society. Nevertheless, Putin is clearly

⁶⁶ John Anderson, “Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church: Asymmetric Symphonia?” *Journal of International Affairs* 61, no. 1 (2007): 192.

the dominant partner in this relationship.”⁶⁷ Interestingly, this asymmetric symphonia can be applied to the participation of the ROC in Russian foreign policy as well.

Foreign Policy and Religion: 1990-2010

The alignment of purposes and policies between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Foreign Ministry has taken several forms, all of which align with Russia’s larger foreign policy goals: the exclusion of foreign (Western) influences in Russian domestic politics, the expansion of the ROC’s influence over Russian diaspora or Orthodox minority communities in other nations, the alignment of fellow Orthodox-majority nations with Russian foreign policy, and engagement with non-Orthodox nations that harbor anti-Western sentiments.

As described in the previous section, the ROC heavily advocated for the first of these policies. The 1997 law on religion increased the prestige of the ROC and resulted in foreign missionaries being denied visas or being expelled from the country. Anderson argues that the state came to define foreign missionaries as a national security threat, since they inevitably promoted the interests of their state of origination. Furthermore, Anderson suggests that Russian policy makers tend to be suspicious of foreign missionaries as potential spies.⁶⁸ The desire to protect and promote Russian culture was evident in the 2000 National Security Concept, which stated:

Ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation also includes protection of the cultural, spiritual and moral legacy, historical traditions and the norms of social life, the preservation of the cultural wealth of all the peoples of Russia, the formation of government policy in the field of the spiritual and moral education of the population, and the imposition of a ban on use of air time in electronic mass media for distribution of programs propagandizing violence and exploiting low

⁶⁷Anderson, 198.

⁶⁸Anderson, 194.

instincts, along with counteraction against the negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries.⁶⁹

Ironically, the Church and state do not apply the same principle outwardly and themselves engage in expansionist activity by extending the ROC's authority over Orthodox communities living as minority groups in other nations. According to Payne, the ROC aggressively pursued reunion with the Russian Orthodox diaspora group, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR); in 2007, ROCOR and the ROC reestablished canonical union.⁷⁰ With the support of the state, the Church has also established new Orthodox churches in locations that are also strategically important to the state, especially Latin America and Asia.⁷¹ This expanding sphere of influence provides a new platform for the state to build diplomatic relations with foreign states, even if only on a cultural level.

Russia's most immediate foreign policy interests lie in the "near abroad", which includes the former Soviet states of Central Europe and Eastern Europe and the Eurasian states, most of which are historically, culturally, economically and/or politically linked to Russia. Playing the role of the regional hegemon, Russia considers activities taking place within and among these states to be within its sphere of influence. According to a recent study by the RAND Corporation for the United States Air Force, Russian interests in the

⁶⁹Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation," January 10, 2000, <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31!OpenDocument> (accessed May 17, 2013).

⁷⁰Payne, 716.

⁷¹ For instance, new Orthodox churches have been built, or are in the process of being built, in Pyongyang, Beijing, Havana and Quito, among other locations. Payne, 725.

near-abroad are security-related first, as most of the states share a border with Russia.⁷² It also has significant economic interests in the area as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is Russia's second-largest trading partner, after the European Union, and Russia controls energy supplies to the region. Finally, many of these states were historically part of the Russian Empire, speak Russian primarily or secondarily, and practice Orthodox Christianity. Having smaller neighbors dependent on or largely influenced by Russian policy augments its international prestige and validates its identity as a world power.

Accordingly, Russia is especially defensive when Western powers intervene in what it perceives as its regional affairs. Russia is extremely sensitive to NATO activities, specifically its intervention in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, and its expansion toward the East in 2004 and 2009. According to Russia's 2008 Foreign Policy Concept,

Russia maintains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO, notably to the plans of admitting Ukraine and Georgia to the membership in the alliance, as well as to bringing the NATO military infrastructure closer to the Russian borders on the whole, which violates the principle of equal security, leads to new dividing lines in Europe and runs counter to the tasks of increasing the effectiveness of joint work in search for responses to real challenges of our time.⁷³

NATO involvement in political disputes and military conflicts in the region is seen by Russia as wholly inappropriate. Instead, Russian officials tout their own abilities as third-party mediators specifically because of their long-standing history and influence in the area. Russian officials point to their successful involvement in the Tajik civil war and their ongoing mediation between Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the conflict over

⁷²Olga Oiliker, et. al., *Russian Foreign Policy: Sources and Implications* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Project Air Force, 2009): 93-95.

⁷³“The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation” July 12, 2008, President of Russia Official Web Portal, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml> (accessed December 6, 2009).

Nagorno-Karabakh as models of their responsible engagement.⁷⁴ Ultimately, when issues or conflicts arise in the region, the Russians would prefer to be the sole or at least lead arbitrators.

The utilization of the ROC in Russian policy towards the near abroad is perhaps the most expected scenario as, diplomatically, states at times rely on shared religious histories to emphasize cultural similarities with potential allies. In a post-Cold War world, some scholars see such alliances forming precisely along civilizational lines that are largely determined by religious tradition, most notably Samuel Huntington.⁷⁵ It was no surprise therefore when, upon being enthroned as Patriarch following his predecessor's death in 2009, current Patriarch Kirill made Ukraine the site of his first Patriarchal visit abroad.⁷⁶ During his visit, which included a meeting with then-President Yushchenko, Kirill emphasized the spiritual unity of the Orthodox peoples and the unbreakable bond between the two nations. The Patriarch even utilized the "civilizational" language popularized by Huntington. According to Orthodox scholars Payne and Tonoyan, during his trip to Ukraine, Kirill visited the place where Prince Vladimir was baptized and accepted Christianity for all of Russia. Reportedly, "Kirill's sermon was devoted to the preservation of the spiritual unity of the 'great east-Slavic

⁷⁴ Igor S. Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: The Nixon Center and Brookings Institution Press, 2002): 84-90.

⁷⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1996).

⁷⁶ Daniel Payne and Lydia Tonoyan, "The Visit of Patriarch Kirill to Ukraine in 2009 and its Significance in Ukraine's Political and Religious Life," *Religion, State and Society* 38, no.3 (2010): 253-264.

civilization'. Kirill repeatedly admonished his listeners not to allow political ideals to divide the body of believers united together in the Eucharist.”⁷⁷

More interesting, and perhaps more counter-intuitive, is the use of the ROC in non-Orthodox countries. In the autumn of 2008, for instance, the Russian Foreign Ministry in conjunction with the Russian Orthodox Church promoted a series of celebrations of Russian culture in seven countries in Latin America, which included educational projects, business programs, performances by the Moscow Stretensky Monastery Choir and even the christening of a new Russian Orthodox church in Havana.⁷⁸ This episode is only one of many recent events planned and executed jointly by the Russian state and the ROC taking place outside of Russia's borders in countries with few, if any, ties to Orthodox culture and small Russian diaspora communities. In the past decade, new Orthodox churches have been christened or are in the process of being built in Quito, Singapore, and even Pyongyang, among other remote locales.⁷⁹

Beyond working as cultural ambassadors abroad, ROC officials also regularly receive foreign diplomats. Metropolitan Hilarion's meeting with the foreign ambassador from Iran, mentioned in the introduction, is but one example; German President Christian Wulff, Irish President Mary McAleese, Columbian Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez Merizalde, President of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmood Abbas, President of the Cuban Parliament H.E. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada and even U.S. President Barack

⁷⁷Payne and Tonoyan, 29.

⁷⁸“Days of Russia to Take Place in Latin America for First Time,” October 9, 2008, Russkiy Mir Foundation News Service, <http://russkiymir.org/en/aboutrm/eventsrn/index.php?id4=4308> (accessed December 7, 2009).

⁷⁹Associated Press Worldstream, “First Russian Orthodox Church Consecrated in North Korea,” August 13, 2006, *Lexis-Nexis Academic* (accessed December 4, 2009).

Obama have all met with Patriarch Kirill or Metropolitan Hilarion while visiting Moscow on state business.⁸⁰

This seemingly odd use of the ROC in the “far-abroad” is rooted not in Russia’s role as a regional hegemon, but in its legacy as a revisionist power and its goal of becoming a balancer. A revisionist state is generally defined as one which has experienced a loss of power relative to other states, especially those states considered to be rivals, and which desires a return to its previous status. Having lost much military, political and economic power through the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the 1998 economic crash, it is clear that Russia is no longer one of the two most powerful countries in the world and just as clear that Russian leaders would like nothing more than to return the nation to great power status. Because military and economic symmetry with the United States is not likely in the near term, Russian foreign policy makers are concentrating primarily on building their global prestige and influence.

Hans Morgenthau stipulated that the purpose of a policy of prestige is to “impress other nations with the power one’s own nation actually possesses, or with the power it believes, or wants the other nations to believe, it possesses.”⁸¹ Following Morgenthau’s logic, Russia’s entry into the G8 in 1997, its frequent top-level summits (especially during the Putin-Bush years) and, more recently, its positioning itself as a key mediator with Iran, are all aimed at increasing Russian influence abroad. According to the RAND study, the increase of Russia’s international prestige is its second foreign policy priority

⁸⁰“Obama engages in Church Diplomacy,” July 7, 2009, PDS Russia Religion News, <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/0907a.html> (accessed May 19, 2013).

⁸¹Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th Ed. Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton, eds. (N.Y.: McGrawHill, 2006): 84.

only after the continued strengthening of its economy.⁸² Morgenthau insisted that prestige-seeking is indeed a worthy foreign policy endeavor, since the prestige gained becomes another means by which to achieving the national interest. According to Morgenthau, “Prestige has become particularly important as a political weapon in an age in which the struggle for power is fought not only with the traditional methods of political pressure and military force but in large measure as a struggle for the minds of men.”⁸³

Russian policy makers also desire to play the role of global balancer. After initially opting for a policy of bandwagoning with the West during the 1990s under Yeltsin’s administration, the Putin administration took steps towards a more independent role for Russia in international relations. According to former Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, the West has mistakenly believed that world order can be structured in its own image, assuming that democratization and economic liberalization are necessary for peace. Conversely, the Russians favor a “multilateral world system” with a “central role for *collective* mechanisms to support peace and security [his emphasis].”⁸⁴ His sentiments were reflected in the updated 2008 Foreign Policy Concept, which decried unilateral action as destabilizing and sought to strengthen the “principles of multilateralism in international affairs.”⁸⁵ It even declares that Western fear of a powerful Russia is rooted in the imminent loss of its own power – a situation that Russians would welcome as essentially positive and more equitable.

⁸²Olga Oliker, et. al. 5-6.

⁸³Morgenthau, 92.

⁸⁴Ivanov, 45.

⁸⁵“The Foreign Policy Concept” (2008).

In attempting to implement Russian foreign policy, the state's military and economic weapons are most influential in very specific disputes when they are most likely to be used effectively. In regard to the broader, long-term foreign policy goals of prestige-seeking and balancing the power of the United States, Russian policy makers are using public-relations tools to capitalize on international political trends. Such tools are often ideological or cultural in nature, and generally project a non-Western character. By taking on such a character, the Russian leadership is attempting to provide a viable political and ideological alternative to Western-style hegemony and promote a more equitable distribution of global power.

For such a strategy to be successful, the Russians must believe that there is a sufficiently strong desire among non-Western countries for an alternative to Western, and especially American, leadership. Evidence supporting this contention pre-dates the collapse of the Soviet Union by at least a decade; in 1979 the Islamic Revolution in Iran replaced its American-supported secular government with a neo-traditional Islamic one. Muslim antipathy toward the West would not be put into proper global context, however, until the 1990s when international politics could again be analyzed free of Cold War parameters. Such rhetoric resounds across many traditional and modernizing cultures. It was reflected in the "Asian values" debates of the 1990s, led by Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, in which the universalism of human rights was questioned.⁸⁶ A similar argument resonates with traditional and fundamentalist Muslims, who see in much of Western culture a materialism and licentiousness clearly at odds with Islamic values. While much

⁸⁶According to Confucian values, it was argued, communal needs supersede individual rights and, in Confucian-based societies, discipline and stability are more highly valued than liberalism. Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Asian Values: What Lee Kuan Yew and Li Peng Don't Understand about Asia," *The New Republic* (July 1997): 33-40.

of this rhetoric may be pure political posturing among Asian and Muslim leaders in their own attempts to balance politically against Western hegemony, the sentiments contained therein are political powerful and potentially explosive, as evidenced by the rise of jihadist groups such as Al-Qaeda.

A third traditionalist movement that refuses to accept wholesale Western political and cultural ideals is the Russian Orthodox Church. Ever since its experiences with Western-style “freedom” in the 1990s, ROC leadership have been particularly vocal defenders of traditional values and cultures. In a 2001 article, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (now Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia) essentially reiterated Huntington’s view of the post-Cold War world and then reiterated the “Asian values” and “Islamic fundamentalist” problems with Western hegemony from an Orthodox perspective. He states,

Westerners seem to entertain the feeling that their customary norms and standards are certainly shared (or should be shared) universally by the ‘civilized world’. In reality, though...three-fourths of the world’s population do not claim them as their own. If there is to be real integration, and not the cultural and philosophical domination of the West over the whole world, then we should be aware that every nation is called to find its own place in the emerging new reality.⁸⁷

Furthermore, ROC representatives are by no means preaching their message solely to the faithful. Orthodox representatives have made appearances in front of the European Parliament, have submitted their opinions for consideration at the European Court of Human Rights and, as noted previously, Orthodox leadership have met with untold numbers of foreign delegates, both in Moscow and abroad.

⁸⁷Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, “The Orthodox Church in the Face of World Integration: The Relation between Traditional and Liberal Values,” *The Ecumenical Review* 53 (2001): 484.

The Church's assertions of Russian – that is Orthodox – distinctiveness against the West, and especially its strong focus on the loss of Christian values in Europe, is connected to Russia's post-Soviet search for its national identity. An emerging consensus of Russian intellectuals believes Russia has a role to play geo-politically and philosophically. Billington suggests that few Russians believe that their country can provide world leadership, at least in the near future, militarily. Instead, they see their cultural and geopolitical situation as their source of leadership, stating:

many more seem to think that Russia's unique role in history lies in the spiritual, cultural, and scientific arenas more than in traditional measures of economic and political power. A democratic version of Eurasianism foresees Russia helping create a Eurasian Union like the European Union...and perhaps also helping reinvigorate the spiritual life of a fatigued and decadent Europe.⁸⁸

Because the Orthodox position broadly parallels the rhetoric emanating from other traditionalist cultures, the ROC can be used as a foreign policy tool of the state wherever such a message finds traction. In fact, because the Russian state has often identified with the West, and for the greater part of the twentieth century espoused a Western, secular, authoritarian and proselytizing ideology of its own, its grounds for entrance into this political tide of multiculturalism without the Russian Orthodox Church could be interpreted as inauthentic.

Furthermore, because diplomacy conducted by Orthodox representatives occurs on such a low-level of international politics, Russia is able to engage in prestige-seeking behavior in countries that might otherwise arouse American suspicion, such as in Latin America. In September of 2009, Patriarch Kirill, in a meeting with ambassadors from Latin American countries, declared, "In a globalized world, the like-minded people

⁸⁸Billington, 140.

should stick together...we are like-minded in many ways” because “the religious component remains strong both in Latin America and in Russia.”⁸⁹

Initial Assessment

According to the assessment made for the U.S. Air Force in the 2008 RAND study, Russia’s domestic politics are precisely the place to begin an investigation of its international outlook. Russian foreign policy

parallels in many ways Russian domestic policy, both in the evident desire for control and stability and in the focus on sovereignty. In the foreign policy context, these goals lead to an emphasis on restoring Russia’s international prestige and eliminating levers of influence that Western countries have had in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁹⁰

This is consistent with the history of church-state relations in Russian outlined in this chapter. Russian leaders’ attempts to use the ROC as a foreign policy tool, whether in legitimizing wars (in Medieval Rus’ and during World War II), providing a connection with other Orthodox peoples (the attempted bait-and-switch with the Uniates, and in Eastern Europe today), or providing a bridge to traditional and developing cultures working through the problems posed by modernity, is always conditioned by the domestic church-state relationship. Today, the domestic relationship of asymmetric *symphonia* is essentially replicated at the international level. The two societal pillars work on the basis of a mutually beneficial relationship, with the much more powerful state maintaining control and setting the agenda.

However, without looking at the changing global scene since the end of the Cold War, it would be impossible to understand why the ROC would be utilized by Russian

⁸⁹“Patriarch Kirill urges Latin America and Russia to build a just world together,” September 21, 2009, Interfax, www.interfax-religion.com (accessed September 30, 2009).

⁹⁰Oliker, et. al., 89.

leadership at all. The changing international conversation from one of Western hegemony in an assumed secular modernity to one of multiple modernities in which religion is most certainly a relevant player has made the ROC relevant. As Russia pursues its goals of regional hegemony, valued balancer and recaptured prestige, scholars should expect to see a continuing role for Orthodox leaders in Russian foreign policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Case Study Three: Religion and State in Iran

In order to assure the unity of the Islamic *umma*, in order to liberate the Islamic homeland from occupation and penetration by the imperialists and their puppet governments, it is imperative that we establish a government.

—Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini, *Islamic Government*¹

The contemporary relationship between religion and state in Iran is perhaps the clearest example of theocracy in the modern world. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, religious clerics have governed Iran as a specifically Islamic country according to *shari'a* law. Initially, many Western political scientists treated the Islamic Revolution as an anomaly, but this same event helped catalyze a re-assessment of the secularization thesis. The Islamic Revolution and subsequent founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran, now in its fourth decade, proved that religion continues to play a salient role in the modern world.

This case study follows a similar pattern of the preceding two. This chapter begins with an account of the Iranian religion-state relationship historically. This historical framework is followed by an assessment of religion and domestic politics in the time period under review, roughly 1990 – 2008. I then examine the interaction between religion and the state's foreign policies during this period.

¹Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini, *Islamic Government*, in Hamid Algar, trans. and ed., *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)*, (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981): 49.

Historical Framework: Religion and State in Iran, Antiquity to 1989

*Pre-Modern Persia*²

The relationship between religion and the state in pre-modern Persia spans several millennia and multiple empires. Indo-European tribes migrated into the geographic area within Iranian borders in the second millennium B.C.E., though earlier peoples are thought to have lived in the region for thousands of years prior.³ The Iranian peoples were unified by Cyrus the Great of the Achaemenid Empire in 550 B.C.E. and further developed as a civilization under the Parthians and Sasanians, until succumbing to invading Arab Muslims in 651 C.E.

This period of Iranian antiquity includes much interaction between the Persians, Greeks, and later, Romans. The expansion and retraction of Iranian borders from the many military campaigns of Persian rulers, in addition to the various native Iranian peoples, resulted in a plurality of ethnicities, languages and religions under Iranian sovereignty. Persian studies scholar Michael Axworthy contends that early Persian rulers tended to accept this pluralism rather than attempt to homogenize the population.⁴ The Achaemenids established a federal form of government, with local rulers (*satraps*) tending to politics within their local spheres, but paying tribute to the “king of kings” (*shahanshah*). The decentralization of the government waxed and waned under various rulers, but the *shahanshah* remained quite powerful domestically. Historian Homa

² Following Iranian historians, particularly Axworthy, I use “Persia(n)” and “Iran(ian)” interchangeably until 1935 when Reza Shah instructed foreign governments to refer to his country as Iran, not Persia. Michael Axworthy, *Empire of the Mind: A History of Iran* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

³ Homa Katouzian, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran* (New Have: Yale University Press, 2009): 27-28.

⁴ Axworthy, 21.

Katouzian notes that the *shahanshah* drew his legitimacy not from the ruling class, or even from hereditary lineage, but rather through the approval of the gods/God, whose authority was granted through divine grace (*farr*).⁵

Several religions developed out of Persian antiquity: Zoroastrianism, and its predecessor Mazdaism, Mithraism (a warrior cult of the god Mithras), and Manichaeism. It is the first of these that was most embraced by Persian rulers and people, and which has had the longest lasting influence on Iranian culture and politics. Around the fourth century, C.E., Sasanian rulers instructed Persian scholars and priests (magi) to determine a single form of religion, the result of which was the form of Zoroastrianism still largely recognized by contemporary Iranian minority groups. This centralization of religion was paralleled by a centralization of political institutions; the Sasanians built a bureaucratic system that brought local rulers of the various provinces under closer control of the *shahanshan*.⁶

Throughout Persian antiquity, the existence of the magi points to a locus of religious influence apart from political rulers.⁷ Notably, the religious magi grew more politically powerful under Sasanian rule, gaining bureaucratic duties and, at times, countering Sasanian political rulers' inclination towards religious toleration. Axworthy claims that Persian rulers tended to tolerate religious minorities, except in those instances

⁵Katouzian, 4-5.

⁶Axworthy, 47-48.

⁷Gene R. Garthwaite, *The Persians* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005): 10.

in which magi claimed political power, resulting in religious oppression.⁸ For instance, before being killed by Achaemenid Emperor Darius, the magi Gautama had seized political power and destroyed rival sects' temples; in the third century C.E., a Mazdean priest, Kerdir, used his influence at court to put Mani (founder of Manichaeism) to death and persecute Jews, Christians and Buddhists.⁹

Weakened by wars with the Byzantine Empire, and suffering from internal discord due to political rivalries, disease, and heavy taxation, the Sasanian Empire succumbed to invading Muslim Arab armies in the mid seventh century.¹⁰ In addition to the empire's military and political weaknesses, Katouzian counts the Sasanian state's general unpopularity among the reasons the Persian Empire fell with relative ease.¹¹ Politically, the Arabs kept the Persian bureaucracy intact and leveraged the administrative system to rule the vast Iranian lands. Persians continued to staff the bureaucracy as local governors, scribes and soldiers.¹²

Conversion to Islam—which was voluntary—took generations, and in some Iranian regions, centuries. Muslim rulers in Persia and elsewhere permitted followers of other monotheistic religions (specifically Judaism and Christianity, and later Zoroastrianism) to continue to practice their religions so long as a poll tax (*jizya*) was paid. Katouzian contends that the *jizya* was a vital source of revenue for the early Islamic

⁸Of course, certain political factors could also reduce Iranian toleration of religious minorities. For instance, the Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and himself the protector of Christians everywhere, during the Sasanian period. As a result, Persian rulers began to treat Christians within their territory with suspicion, and ultimately, less tolerance. Axworthy, 55-56.

⁹Ibid., 17, 54.

¹⁰Ibid., 65-66, 72-74.

¹¹Katouzian, 65-66.

¹²Ibid., 67.

empire that would have been lost if the native populations were forced to convert.¹³

Therefore, many Persians converted to Islam only gradually, and often to benefit economically from avoiding the *jizya*. Katouzian also notes that Jewish and Christian Iranians typically converted to Islam earlier than Zoroastrian communities, due to the shared Abrahamic ancestry of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

By the ninth century, most of the Iranian population had converted to Islam, but many Iranian territories were again ruled by Persian (though now Muslim) political leaders.¹⁴ Nostalgia for the pre-Islamic Iranian empires emerged, and was cemented in the *Shahnameh*, Abolqasem Ferdowsi's tenth century epic poem.¹⁵ Persian influence also infused the wider Islamic empire. In the Abbasid period, for instance, Islamic Caliphs adopted Persian administrative techniques, scholarship, and architecture. It was also during Abbasid reign that the supremacy of the Arabs was abandoned in favor of recognized equality of all Muslims, regardless of ethnicity.¹⁶ According to Axworthy, the various powers that came to rule Iranian territory over the next few centuries – Turkish, Mongol, Timurid – all were Persianized to some extent, adapting to and leveraging Iranian political culture.¹⁷

Yet, despite this continuity of Persian political culture, Islam introduced distinct ideas about the proper religion-state relationship. Islam recognizes no separation between spiritual and secular spheres, and indeed the earliest Islamic political rulers, the Prophet

¹³Katouzian, 66.

¹⁴Ibid., 81

¹⁵Axworthy, 85-88.

¹⁶Ibid., 78-80.

¹⁷Ibid., 67-121.

Muhammad and his first four successors—the *Rashidun* or Rightly-guided Caliphs—decided both religious and political questions.¹⁸ This practice broke down, however, among later rulers of the vast Islamic empire. Instead, the caliph's chief role as it evolved was to protect the Muslim community (the *umma*), and promote the observance of *shari'a* law. *Shari'a*, which developed during the Abbasid period, was interpreted not by the caliph, but by independent religious scholars, or *ulama*.

Religious groups that identified with Sufism, an offshoot of Sunni Islam characterized by its mysticism, also formed a source of religious authority separate from political rulers. Sufi masters began acquiring disciples in the tenth and eleventh centuries and forming wider associations – or brotherhoods – in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Islamic social historian Ira Lapidus notes that the brotherhoods assumed responsibility for various religious rituals at the community level and were known for their charitable works.¹⁹ The brotherhoods largely remained aloof from state politics but assumed a significant societal presence, ensuring the administration of religious law and calling for the community to live up to its moral ideals. Sufi brotherhoods were widespread among the various peoples living in Iranian territory, and it was a coalition of Sufi tribes, the Safavids, who reunified Iran and re-established the *shahanshah*, or monarchy, in the sixteenth century. Notably, the Safavids declared Shi'a Islam as the official religion of the state, in contrast to the Sunni Islam of the Ottoman Empire.²⁰

¹⁸Ira M Lapidus, "State and Religion in Islamic Societies," *Past and Present* 151 (May 1996): 9.

¹⁹Lapidus, 13-14.

²⁰Garthwaite, 157. According to Axworthy, it is unclear to historians when the Safavids, known as a Sufi order with Sunni ties, embraced Shi'ism. However, Katouzian contends that the first Safavid shah, Ismai'l was protected and mentored by Shi'ite tutors as a boy after his father was killed. Axworthy, 130-131. Katouzian, 111.

Shi'ism dates to the founding era of Islam. Following the passing of the Prophet Muhammad, the community debated the Prophet's rightful successor. Abubakr was nominated the first caliph, but some denied his legitimacy and instead supported Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in law.²¹ Ali eventually ruled as the fourth caliph, but for only five years before being assassinated. In addition to Ali's direct lineage to the Prophet Muhammad, the Shi'a believed Ali had been divinely ordained to rule and that he—and the next twelve imams—were righteous and infallible.²² Following Ali's death, and the death of his oldest son Hasan, Ali's second son Hosein attempted to claim the caliphate, unsuccessfully. Hosein and nearly all of his male followers died in battle, and the martyrdom of Hosein continues to play a vital role in Shi'a theology and sociology. According to both Katouzian and Axworthy, Hosein's martyrdom marks the schism between the Sunnis and the Shi'a, and its annual religious remembrance renews a sense of betrayal and continual grievance among the Shi'a against the Sunni, even today.²³

When the Safavid leader Isma'il declared himself *shah* and Shi'ism the official state religion, Sunni Islam was the majority religion of Iran.²⁴ Katouzian claims that Isma'il imposed Shi'ism on Sunni Muslims in Iran rather quickly, through the threat of

²¹Katouzian, 67-68.

²²This view of the Shi's Imamate is particular to Twelver Shi'ism. Because Twelver Shi'ism is the dominant branch in Iran, this chapter almost exclusively discusses Twelver, or Imami, Shi'ism. Where other branches of Shi'ism are discussed, the branch identification (e.g., Ismaili, Alawite, etc.) is specified.

²³Axworthy, 124-125. Katouzian, 69-71.

²⁴Axworthy, 132. However, large Shi'a minorities, primarily Twelver Shi'ites and Ismailis, existed throughout Iran before Safavid rule.

death, though the true conversion of the Iranian populace likely required generations.²⁵ He describes Isma'il's followers as "fanatical" Sufis who believed their leader to be divine and a direct descendant of the Seventh Twelver Shi'a Imam.²⁶ He also claimed to be the vicegerent of the Mahdi, the Hidden Imam and redeemer of Islam who will return to Earth at the end of time.²⁷

Isma'il's claim to be the Mahdi's vicegerent was problematic. For Twelver Shi'ites, the Mahdi is the twelfth and last Imam who never died but has remained in occultation, hidden from man by God (thus earning the name of the Hidden Imam). So long as the Twelfth Imam remained in occultation he technically retained all sovereignty, and in his absence the ulama assumed the authority for determining God's will.²⁸ This element of Shi'ism essentially encourages a profound suspicion of the authority of secular rulers. Near Eastern Studies scholar Hamid Algar succinctly describes the Shi'a attitude towards government, stating, "While the Imam remained in occultation, a shadow of illegitimacy was bound to cover all worldly strivings and activities, above all those related to government. There was no true authority nor the possibility thereof: only power."²⁹

Still, Isma'il integrated his political rule of the kingdom with military and spiritual leadership, and then institutionalized the Shi'a ulama and brought them under

²⁵Katouzian, 115.

²⁶Katouzian, 112.

²⁷Axworthy, 129.

²⁸Garthwaite, 186.

²⁹Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906; The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969): 4.

the monarchy's control.³⁰ Isma'il recruited Shi'a ulama, primarily from Syria, and established the position of *sadr*, the head of the religious community and the highest civil position after the shah himself—even higher than the shah's chief political adviser.³¹ These policies both empowered the ulama as well as set them at odds with the monarchy, in a power struggle that waxed and waned throughout the Safavid era.

Especially important was the Usulis' rise to prominence in the late Safavid period. In contrast to other Shi'a groups, which argued that only the Imams had the power to apply disciplined reasoning (*ijtihad*) to interpret religious law, the Usulis contended that elite ulama, or *mujtahid*, could also assume this role.³² Later Safavid rulers supported the Usulis, meaning the *mujtahids*, not the shah, came to have power over religious interpretation; Garthwaite contends this essentially established a separation between religious and political authority.³³ Garthwaite further contends that the institutionalization of the ulama under the Safavids, along with their empowerment over time, established the religious hierarchy as a fundamental societal institution that held the Iranian nation together in periods when the political system was weakened. It also set a pattern for future Iranian eras whereby particularly charismatic *mujtahid* could rival the shah's power.³⁴

A newly reunified and radically Shi'a Iran also caused tension outside of Iranian borders, particularly in relations with the Ottoman Empire. Safavid-led conversions

³⁰Katouzian, 116-117.

³¹Ibid., 117-118.

³²Garthwaite, 187-188.

³³Ibid., 189.

³⁴Garthwaite cites, for example, the Safavid-era *mujtahid* Muhammad Baqir Majlisi. Garthwaite, 189.

extended into territory conquered from the Ottomans, essentially turning Sunni Ottoman citizens into Shi'a Iranian ones. The Ottomans, who claimed universal rule over all Muslims, denied the legitimacy of Safavid rule, resulting in frequent war.³⁵ Isma'il's radicalism further intensified bitter feelings between the Sunni Ottomans and Shi'a Safavids, as Isma'il instructed his followers to publicly curse the first three caliphs, who were highly respected among Sunnis.³⁶ Historians suggest that the Safavids' leveraged Shi'ism as an ideological weapon against the Ottomans; one that reinforced a sense of Iranian identity distinct from the Ottomans and one that could rally the troops in warfare.³⁷

In the eighteenth century, when the Safavid Empire collapsed due to weak political leaders, internal revolts and external threats, Nader Shah attempted to turn the Iranians towards Sunni Islam. Outside of Persia, Nader presented himself as a converted Sunni, thus opening the possibility of challenging the Ottoman sultan for rule over all Muslim lands. Internally, the shah secured loyalty from diverse Iranian groups by treating religious minorities with greater tolerance, especially the Sunnis.³⁸ Nader even ended the insulting Shi'a practice of cursing the first three caliphs. Nader's Sunni turn could not be sustained beyond his rule, however, which was followed by a period of inter-tribal conflict, resulting in numerous rulers from different tribes. Karim Khan, who ruled from 1759-1779, restored Shi'ism as the religion of the Iranian territories.³⁹

³⁵Garthwaite, 169.

³⁶Axworthy, 132. Katouzian, 115.

³⁷Axworthy, 132. Garthwaite, 161-165. Katouzian, 115.

³⁸Axworthy, 145-155.

³⁹Ibid., 168.

Western Influence and Constitutionalism, 1796 – 1925

In the nineteenth century, under the leadership of the Qajar tribe, Iran became entangled in European warfare and politics, with detrimental results to the country. Iran lost Afghan and Caucasian territory and opened itself to European intrusion on internal Iranian affairs. Treaties with Britain and Russia rarely benefited Iranians: cheap European imports undercut Iranian artisans' livelihood and a shift in agricultural production towards cotton and opium for export resulted in severe food shortages.⁴⁰

This extensive European contact influenced some Iranian elites to attempt to enact modernizing political and economic reforms. By the mid-eighteenth century, some Persian reformers recognized that the chief difference between the successes of European civilization and the stagnancy of the Iranian state was not solely a matter of military technology, as many Persians initially thought, but was also due to the former's adherence to the rule of law and the latter's tradition of arbitrary rule.⁴¹ Several advisors attempted to implement political reforms, with limited success. Amir Kabir, chief minister to Qajar Shah Naser od-Din, enacted financial, educational and military reforms, but was dismissed and ultimately murdered by the shah in 1852.⁴² Eight years later Malkam Khan, the shah's advisor, proposed a draft constitution that retained the monarchy but established a legislative and executive council.⁴³ This constitution was not implemented, though the shah did establish a council of ministers.

⁴⁰Axworthy, 177-184, 192-194. Garthwaite, 200-201.

⁴¹Katouzian, 157-158.

⁴²Garthwaite, 197-199; Axworthy, 191-192; Katouzian, 153-154.

⁴³Neither the executive nor legislative officials would be democratically elected under this draft constitution; instead, they would be appointed by the shah. Katouzian, 158-160.

Garthwaite and Katouzian both contend that the Qajar shahs never truly committed to enacting many of the reforms they claimed to support.⁴⁴ The opposition of the ulama to modernizing reforms—and to a strong central state in general—offers a partial explanation. According to Katouzian, the ulama enjoyed an increase in both power and independence in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ The ulama opposed the ever-increasing influence of foreign emissaries, the majority of whom were Christian. Additionally, the reformers proposed measures that would lead to the further centralization of the state, which the ulama opposed.⁴⁶ The ulama's greatest ability to influence state policies was in acting as intermediary between the people and the state, exerting their political power at the grassroots to lead opposition to particularly unpopular measures.⁴⁷ In 1891, for instance, a leading *mujtahid*, Hajji Mirza Hasan Shirazi, issued a fatwa calling for a nation-wide boycott on tobacco in response to an Iranian treaty granting a British company monopoly rights to tobacco production and export.⁴⁸ The boycott was successful and the tobacco concession repealed.

An alternative voice for reform came from Seyyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, an Iranian-born political activist who transcended his Shi'a background to embrace both Sunnism and rational philosophy.⁴⁹ Like the ulama, al-Afghani opposed British imperialism—and Western influence generally—throughout the Islamic world, including

⁴⁴Garthwaite, 201-202; Katouzian, 160.

⁴⁵Katouzian, 146-147.

⁴⁶As noted earlier, the ulama had traditionally harbored suspicions against centralized secular government because Shi'a theology holds that the Hidden Imam continues to reign supreme until his return at the end of time, rendering secular governments illegitimate.

⁴⁷Garthwaite, 192.

⁴⁸Axworthy, 196-197.

⁴⁹Garthwaite, 206-207.

in Iran. He argued that Islam could be a potent mechanism to force political change, but that Islam must modernize; al-Afghani saw no conflict between Islam and technology or between Islam and institutional reform.⁵⁰ During his lifetime, Al-Afghani advised both political and religious leaders, though ultimately his ideas were too unorthodox for both. He did not explicitly advocate constitutionalism, but Garthwaite argues that al-Afghani's emphasis on personal responsibility among Muslims and strong political leadership based on Islamic traditions and identity, laid the groundwork for the constitutionalism that gained popularity within a decade after his death.⁵¹

Iran's first years in the twentieth century were marked by growing financial instability, partially due to foreign debts, under the leadership of a new and sickly shah, Mozaffar od-Din.⁵² High domestic tariffs along with soaring prices on Russian sugar, as a result of the Russo-Japanese war, incensed Iranian merchants. Two leading Iranian *mujtahids*, Ayatollah Abdollah Behbehani and Seyyed Mohammad Tabataba'i, led merchants and others in protest against the unpopular government policies.⁵³ After government efforts to resolve the situation failed, both the ulama and the merchants effectively went on strike: the *mujtahids* led their followers to Qom, the heart of theological study in Iran, while thousands of merchants took refuge north of Tehran at the British legation.⁵⁴ After a month of protests, the shah agreed to convene a *Majlis*, or national consultative assembly, resulting in Iran's first constitution.

⁵⁰Axworthy, 197-198.

⁵¹Garthwaite, 207.

⁵²Axworthy, 199-201.

⁵³Ibid., 201.

⁵⁴Garthwaite, 210; Axworthy, 202.

The 1906 Iranian Constitution, including both the Fundamental Law signed in 1906 and the Supplementary Fundamental Law passed in 1907, declared Twelver Shi'a Islam the religion of the state. It established a legislature, judiciary and executive, giving the shah power over the military and warfare, but the legislature the authority to raise revenues, approve treaties, and construct infrastructure.⁵⁵ The constitution controversially specified that the “the powers of the realm are all derived from the people,” rather than the traditional Islamic notion that sovereignty is derived from God and legislated through the Qur'an and *hadith*.⁵⁶

Clearly, the constitution marked a radical divergence from the traditional Iranian political system towards very modern and even Western political ideals. Several scholars admit that the passing of a founding legal document obviously modeled on European constitutions is particularly confusing given that the dominance of Western powers in Iran was among the catalysts of the popular unrest. Algar argues that many of the reformers did not have a deep understanding of the political ideals associated with constitutional governance, nor of the potential consequences of the limited democratic participation for which the constitution provided.⁵⁷ Garthwaite notes that the ulama's close ties with the community—particularly the bazaar merchants—resulted in their assuming the familiar role of protesting community grievances before the state, and thus their initial support of grassroots petitions for governmental reform.⁵⁸ Both Garthwaite

⁵⁵Garthwaite, 210.

⁵⁶“The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907. Article 26”, made available by the Foundation for Iranian Studies, <http://fisiran.org/en/resources/legaldoc/iranconstitution> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁵⁷Algar, 252-253.

⁵⁸Garthwaite, 218.

and Algar further contend that the ulama supported the constitution because they assumed the rule of law would be vastly superior to the arbitrary rule of secular monarchs, and that the new laws would be in accordance with *shari'ah*. Indeed, this new expression of democratic principles in the constitution was balanced by a provision requiring all legislation to be in accordance with Islamic law, as determined by a five-member panel of the *mujtahid*.⁵⁹

The 1906 constitution did not result in the institutionalization of *shari'ah* law, however, nor in a significant legislative role for the ulama. Conversely, the 1906 constitutional revolution marks the beginning of the ulama's declining influence in Iranian governance and the increasing secularization of Iranian politics until the 1979 Islamic Revolution. After the full constitution was passed in 1907, *mujtahid* Shaykh Fazl Allah Nuri led a group of conservative ulama to withdraw support for the document, alleging that the new constitution was not in accordance with Islam.⁶⁰ Nuri, and others, had decided that Islam might not permit constitutionalism at all, in fact, and certainly not rule by the people. According to Nuri, the rule of the majority, the concept of a legislature that can create and change laws, the freedom of the press, and most especially the equality of all citizens, all contradicted Islamic principles.⁶¹ For Nuri, the last of these "innovations" was the most absurd, and certainly not in accordance with *shari'ah*. Nuri noted that many provisions in Islamic law distinguish between different categories of people (minors/adults, slave/free, Muslims/infidels/infidels under Muslim protection,

⁵⁹“The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907: Article 2.”

⁶⁰ Garthwaite, 217; Kartousian, 182; Axworthy, 206.

⁶¹Shaykh Fazl Allah Nuri, “Refutation of the Idea of Constitutionalism,” introduced and translated by Abdul –Hadi Hairi, in *Religion and Politics in Modern Iran*, Lloyd Ridgeon, ed. (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2005): 41-52.

etc.), particularly regarding management of households and finances. He argued “Oh! [my] religious brother! How can Islam, which thus distinguishes among provisions of different matters, tolerate [the idea] of equality?...Oh, heretics! If this state law is in conformity with Islam, it is not possible to include equality in it...”⁶²

Nuri, and many leading ulama, publicly supported return to the monarchy.⁶³ Within a year of the constitution’s passage, the shah retook power and shut down the *Majlis* with force. In response, revolutionary forces took Tabriz, Isfahan, and ultimately Tehran, forcing the shah to flee. A second *Majlis* was convened for a short time under the shah’s son, Ahmad Shah, but was eventually dissolved.⁶⁴ Though Iran’s constitutionally-based government did not survive Ahmad Shah’s reign, Garthwaite argues that the constitutional era had the dramatic effect of delegitimizing the arbitrary and universal rule of the shah. It also introduced the idea of the equality of all Iranian citizens regardless of religion or region; instead, an Iranian identity more modern and nationalist, and certainly more secularized, emerged.⁶⁵

Pahlavi Rule: 1926-1978

In the aftermath of World War I, the British attempted to reduce Iran to the status of a protectorate, under an agreement that would turn Iranian military and monetary

⁶² Nuri, 46-47. Bracketed text inserted by translator Andul-Hadi Hairi.

⁶³ Iranian ulama did not uniformly support or oppose constitutionalism. For an analysis of constitutionalist ulama, see Andul-Hadi Hairi, *Shi’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977).

⁶⁴ Garthwaite, 214.

⁶⁵ Garthwaite, 219-220.

policies over to the British.⁶⁶ Ahmad Shah accepted this Anglo-Persian Agreement but popular sentiment across the ideological spectrum opposed the deal. When Reza Khan, the commander of the Persian Cossack Brigade, took Tehran in 1921, the British did not intervene. According to Axworthy, the British were content to see Reza Khan—a soldier the British had appointed commander of the Cossack troops, and thus more likely to be friendly to them than to the Russians—assume control of the country in the midst of their failure to claim Iran as a protectorate.⁶⁷ Reza Khan tried but failed to establish a republic, and claimed the monarchy in 1926.⁶⁸

Reza Shah had an immediate and profound impact on Iran. His goal was to modernize the country and strengthen it to withstand foreign domination. The shah modeled many of his reforms on those of Kemal Ataturk, who had established a secular, nationalist state in Turkey.⁶⁹ The shah instituted universal conscription to build a modern, strong military and to breakdown regionalist identities through military service.⁷⁰ He also invested in infrastructure, domestic agricultural production, and a centralized education system.⁷¹ A fervent nationalist, Reza Shah replaced words of non-Persian origin with

⁶⁶Axworthy, 215-216.

⁶⁷Ibid., 217-220.

⁶⁸The Shah did allow the *majlis* to continue to operate as a council of ministers, but with little independent power. Axworthy, 225.

⁶⁹In fact, Reza Shah visited Ataturk in Turkey in 1934.

⁷⁰Garthwaite, 228; Axworthy, 221-222.

⁷¹Axworthy, 222-224.

Persian words, and instructed all official communications to refer to the country as Iran, not Persia.⁷²

Reza Shah's modernization program embraced many Westernizing elements as well, to the dismay of traditional merchants and ulama. He required both men and women to wear Western clothing, for instance, and banned women from wearing the veil in public. Additionally, his educational reforms displaced the ulama from their traditional role as teachers while also instituting a curriculum that emphasized secularism and loyalty to the state.⁷³ According to Garthwaite, the ulama's initial support of the shah's attempts to defend Iranian sovereignty quickly withered as his secularization campaign continued. Indeed, so did the support of other social groups; the shah's censorship policies angered poets and writers, his anti-nomadic policies angered rural populations, his confiscation of property angered landowners, and his autocratic rule angered liberals. Axworthy contends that the Shah's forced abdication upon Iran's invasion by the USSR and Great Britain in World War II was a satisfactory development for much of the citizenry.⁷⁴

Upon Reza Shah's abdication, his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was promoted to the throne.⁷⁵ Katouzian notes three distinct periods in Mohammad Reza Shah's rule: constitutional monarchy (1941-1953), dictatorship (1953-1963), and absolute/arbitrary

⁷²Iran was the word traditionally used by the Iranians themselves, whereas Persia was the name that Western nations had used to identify the country.

⁷³Garthwaite, 29.

⁷⁴Axworthy, 228.

⁷⁵Katouzian, 230-231; Axworthy, 228-230.

rule (1963-1979).⁷⁶ In the earliest of the three periods, the shah's weakness, along with the domination of Iranian politics by foreign powers, strengthened the *Majlis*, and genuine elections were held in 1944.⁷⁷ Multiple political parties formed, including the Marxist Tudeh Party (which often aligned with the Soviets), the liberal Iran Party, and several Islamist parties, such as the Society of the Devotees of Islam, and The Islamic Propaganda Society.⁷⁸ However, the elected body was characterized by discord and accomplished little. Domestically, there were bread riots in Tehran and rebellions in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.⁷⁹ According to Garthwaite, the one unifying political principle was Iranian nationalism, embodied by Iran's struggle to achieve control over her own national sovereignty and keep her territorial borders intact.⁸⁰

During this period of political and societal turmoil, several leading left-leaning intellectuals blamed Iranian weaknesses on the country's Shi'ism.⁸¹ Ahmad Kasravi, an Iranian intellectual, was among the leading voices of this school of thought. Kasravi argued that Muslims' inability to embrace rational thinking, glorification of the past over progress towards a better future, and denial of the possibility of revelation outside of Islam or after the time of the Prophet Muhammad had resulted in weak Islamic nations (not just Iran) that were subservient to foreign powers.⁸² Kasravi blamed Muslim clerics

⁷⁶Katouzian, 231; 243.

⁷⁷Axworthy, 231; Katouzian, 237-38.

⁷⁸Katouzian, 234-235.

⁷⁹Ibid., 238-240.

⁸⁰Garthwaite, 236-237.

⁸¹Axworthy, 233.

⁸²Ahmad Kasravi, "The Detrimental Consequences of Islam", translated by M. R. Ghanoonparvar, in Ridgeon, 58-60.

for blindly following a superstitious and “ignorant” Islam, and Shi’a ulama in particular for profiting financially from their religious and bureaucratic roles.⁸³ He argued that both domestic and foreign politicians capitalized on Muslims’ ignorance and the weak state of Islamic societies and institutions, writing “Another detriment of this establishment they call Islam is that powerful governments who wish to conquer the world and have set their eyes on the impotent and helpless Islamic masses have made of this establishment a tool for the advancement of their objectives.”⁸⁴ Ahmad Kasravi was assassinated by a member of the Society of the Devotees of Islam in 1946.⁸⁵

As in previous decades, Iranian foreign policy was dominated by its relations with Western powers, especially the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States. The National Front, a broad coalition of nationalist groups spanning the left-center-right spectrum, leveraged the popular sentiment against foreign domination of Iranian affairs. The Front’s leader, Mohammed Mossadeq, became Prime Minister in 1951 and immediately nationalized Iranian oil. In response, the British imposed a blockade and turned Iran’s largest source of revenue into a financial drain on the country. Mossadeq appealed to the United States for a loan, but was denied.⁸⁶ The oil crises persisted, with

⁸³ Kasravi, 69-70.

⁸⁴ Kasravi, 67.

⁸⁵ Katouzian, 244.

⁸⁶ M. Reza Ghods argues that Mossadeq put greater trust in the United States than other Western governments due to its comparative lack of a colonial history. M. Reza Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: a Political History* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1989): 185; Axworthy contends that the Marxist Tudeh Party’s support of the National Front scared the United States from supporting Mossadeq ; Axworthy, 236.

Mossadeq resigning and then returning to power, over a two-year period and ultimately ending in a coup.⁸⁷

The government overthrow was sponsored, and even organized, by the U.S. CIA and British intelligence officers with the cooperation of the shah. However, scholars contend that the broad coalition that had supported the National Front had already begun disintegrating. M. Reza Ghods explains that the Tudeh Party reacted with suspicion to Mossadeq's request for U.S. aid during the oil nationalization crisis, believing it proved he was pro-Western, not nationalist.⁸⁸ Mossadeq also lost support from the religious groups who had supported him just two years before; anti-imperialist Ayatollah Kashani, for instance, felt Mossadeq had moved too far left in his domestic reforms.⁸⁹

The coup resulted, initially, in the installation of General Zahedi as Iranian premier, but Muhammad Reza Shah ultimately assumed control of the government and military, supported by political, military and economic aid from the United States.⁹⁰ In the early 1960s the shah attempted to enact several internal political reforms, including limited elections, voting rights for women, land reforms, and new health and education initiatives for rural populations.⁹¹ Although some of these reforms were widely popular, many groups protested the shah's instituting such reforms autocratically, without any

⁸⁷ Axworthy, 235-237.

⁸⁸ Ghods, 185.

⁸⁹ Ghods, 187.

⁹⁰ According to Katouzian, U.S. foreign aid between 1955 and 1959 accounted for 31 percent of Iranian public expenditures, on average. Iran ended its policy of non-alignment and officially aligned militarily with Britain and Turkey in 1955, and with the U.S. in 1959. The U.S., which saw Iran as an important bulwark against the USSR, also sent the shah a team of CIA officers, who trained the shah's security forces, SAVAK, to identify and suppress political opposition. Katouzian, 256-257.

⁹¹ According to Ghods, the Kennedy Administration was influential in convincing the shah to implement internal political reforms. Ghods, 192-193.

representative body. According to Ghods, the newly educated middle classes were not given effective means to participate in the government, or any alternative means of influencing the development path of society, and began to turn cynical even in the face of promised reforms.⁹²

Several of the influential theorists that emerged in this era appealed to Islam as a mechanism of political change, including Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Ali Shariati, and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.⁹³ The first of these published a widely read book, *Gharbzadegi* (Weststruckness or Westoxication), in 1962; Al-e Ahmad argued that Iranian infatuation with the West was a disease that needed to be cured.⁹⁴ The author did not advocate specifically for an Islamic form of Iranian government, but implored secularists to seek the support of religious clerics as a potentially vital source of political activism, while simultaneously criticizing the ulama for being too “quietist”.⁹⁵

Unlike Al-e Ahmad, Ali Shariati did consider Islam as being a potential ideological foundation for a new Iranian state. According to Ghods, Shariati argued that Iran must build a government based on its own authentic heritage, Shi’a Islam. Shariati rejected both Western liberalism and Marxism as being materialist, and thus immoral, though he had strong Marxist leanings.⁹⁶ He also criticized Marxism for becoming institutionalized and stagnant, which undermined its ability to be a revolutionary force. In fact, he criticized Iranian Shi’ism on the same grounds, claiming the ulama had become

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ghods, 194-196

⁹⁴Jalal Al-e Ahmad, “The Outline of a Disease”, from *Gharbzadehi*, re-printed in Ridgeon, ed. (John Green and Ahmad Alizadeh, trans.): 163-174.

⁹⁵Katouzian, 297.

⁹⁶Ghods, 195.

obstacles to revolution. He argued for an unintermediated relationship between Muslims and God, thus discarding of the role of the ulama, and claimed Islam is not antithetical to modernization.

Khomeini, a *mujtahid*, preached against the corruption of the shah's government and the United States' encroachment on Iranian sovereignty. In 1963 the Shah's security force, the SAVAK, arrested Khomeini after a particularly rousing speech on Ashura, the day of remembrance of the martyrdom of Hosein.⁹⁷ The shah imposed martial law to control the demonstrations that resulted from Khomeini's arrest, and hundreds of protestors were killed. The following year, Khomeini condemned a new legal provision granting American military personnel immunity from Iranian prosecution, in exchange for a \$200 million loan to the Iranian government, in a speech that resulted in his deportation.⁹⁸ In that speech, Khomeini insisted that a political role for the ulama would have stopped the implementation of the policy, while also declaring the U.S. as an enemy of Islam, saying

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit this nation to be the slave of Britain one day, and America the next...let the American President know that in the eyes of the Iranian people, he is the most repulsive member of the human race today because of the injustice he has imposed on our Muslim nation. Today the Qur'an has become his enemy, the Iranian nation has become his enemy. Let the American government know that its name has been ruined and disgraced in Iran.⁹⁹

⁹⁷In his speech, Khomeini compared the "tyrannical regime" of the shah with the Yazid regime, responsible for Hosein's death. Khomeini, "The Afternoon of 'Ashura,'" 3 June 1963, Qom, Iran; in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-980)*, Hamid Algar, trans. and ed. (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981): 177-180.

⁹⁸Axworthy, 242-243.

⁹⁹Khomeini, "The Granting of Capitulatory Rights to the U.S.," 4 November 1964, Qom, Iran; reprinted in Algar, 181-188.

Katouzian claims that Iranian foreign policy under the shah in the late 1960s and 1970s was more independent from the British and Americans than was widely assumed at the time.¹⁰⁰ Iran's oil revenues allowed it to decrease its dependence on foreign aid and thus gain more leverage in negotiations with foreign governments.¹⁰¹ However, the unpopularity of the shah's rule domestically was such that foreign nations' popularity in Iran was inversely related to that state's support of the Shah. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the United States, Great Britain and Israel, which all had established ties with the shah, were increasingly despised by the Iranian populace while the Soviet Union, Egypt, and even Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government enjoyed positive public sentiment.¹⁰²

Revolution & Islamic Republic: 1979-1989

Axworthy describes Iran in the 1970s as a nation flush with oil money and Western cultural influences, but where political repression was growing in severity. SAVAK increased arrests of the shah's political critics and regularly engaged in torture.¹⁰³ According to Katouzian, the shah was aloof from the general public and believed in his own propaganda touting his regime's success and popularity. The shah's social reforms— especially the establishment of a national educational system— resulted in a modern middle class, but one that rejected his arbitrary rule.¹⁰⁴ Iran's oil economy also contributed to the rise of a middle class, but a huge gap emerged between urban and rural

¹⁰⁰Katouzian, 264-274.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 280.

¹⁰²Ibid., 277-279.

¹⁰³Axworthy, 250.

¹⁰⁴Katouzian, 280-281.

areas, the latter of which suffered from the shah's land use policies and forced settlement of nomadic communities.¹⁰⁵

Throughout the 1970s, opposition groups on both left and right became more radicalized and began explicitly supporting active resistance to the government. Marxist guerilla groups formed in the early 1970's that supported armed resistance against the shah, and were continuously persecuted by SAVAK.¹⁰⁶ Religious opposition groups were radicalizing as well. Khomeini continued to communicate with his followers in Iran through letters and audio tapes; he urged the ulama and religious students to take a more political role, writing in 1971, for instance,

I tell you plainly that a dark, dangerous future lies ahead and that it is your duty to resist and to serve Islam and the Muslim peoples. Protest against the pressure exerted upon our oppressed people every day. Purge yourselves of your apathy and selfishness; stop seeking excuses and inventing pretexts for evading your responsibility. You have more forces at your disposal than the Lord of the Martyrs (upon whom be peace) did, who resisted and struggled with his limited forces until he was killed.¹⁰⁷

Garthwaite notes that the shah tried to manage domestic politics by alternatively tightening control and repression and then taking a more conciliatory approach.¹⁰⁸ In response to a damning human rights report from Amnesty International, and the election of human rights champion Jimmy Carter as U.S. president, Muhammad Reza Shah allowed for several liberalizing policies, including a promised end to the use of torture

¹⁰⁵Katouzian, 282-283; 287

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 303-308.

¹⁰⁷Khomeini, "The Incompatibility of Monarchy with Islam," 31 October 1971, Najaf, Iraq; reprinted in Algar, 200-208.

¹⁰⁸Garthwaite, 254.

and pardons for hundreds of political prisoners.¹⁰⁹ Seeing an opportunity for real change, political groups demanded more freedoms, leading to street protests in Tehran. Shortly afterwards, a government-backed newspaper issued an article attacking Ayatollah Khomeini, in response to which riots broke out in Qom that ended with civilian casualties. Several Shi'a ulama publically defended Khomeini, and many Iranians observed the traditional forty-day period of mourning for the victims of the Qom violence.¹¹⁰ More protests broke out at the end of the mourning period, resulting in more deaths, another mourning period and, ultimately, more protests. The shah addressed the Iranian people, promising to make reforms in exchange for their cessation of protests and strikes—he also attempted to form a new government—but both approaches failed. The shah left Iran on January 16, 1979, and Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile on February 1.¹¹¹

Ayatollah Khomeini was the central figure of the revolution and religious students were among its leading foot soldiers, but the revolution was truly society-wide, encompassing merchants, Marxist intellectuals, students, and industrial and agricultural workers. According to Katouzian, the weakness of the shah's regime was not only the strength of the opposition, but the near total lack of conviction within the shah's administration as well.¹¹² The entire department of justice went on strike, for instance, as did the employees of the National Bank, the press, and in the end even Air Force

¹⁰⁹ Katouzian, 312-313.

¹¹⁰ Katouzian, 314-315. Garthwaite, 254.

¹¹¹ Katouzian, 320-322.

¹¹² Ibid., 264-266; 309-310; 326-327.

personnel.¹¹³ All Iranian social groups and classes were represented in the decision to depose the shah, but there was no corresponding vision as to what form of government to construct in place of the monarchy. Just two months after the revolution, a national referendum was held to determine whether the future of Iranian government would take the form of an Islamic Republic; over 98 percent of participants voted “yes”.¹¹⁴

According to political scientist Asghar Shirazi, the first draft constitution was composed in January 1979 by Iranian intellectuals in exile, under Khomeini’s instruction.¹¹⁵ A second draft, revised by a commission in Tehran composed of civil jurists and secular politicians, was published publicly in June of 1979, with Khomeini’s approval. According to Shirazi, the preliminary draft constitution allowed for only a minority and consultative role for the ulama. After the national referendum approved of an Islamic Republic, however, Khomeini began a campaign to denounce the preliminary constitution as anti-Islamic and called for a greater political role for the clergy.¹¹⁶ The election of the Assembly of Experts, which was to oversee the drafting of the constitution, is widely regarded to have been rigged in Khomeini’s favor. The Assembly largely discarded the preliminary constitution and constructed in its place a constitution establishing a government based on the principle of *velayat-e-faqih*, or the rule of the state by the ulama.

Velayat-e faqih is a novel concept in Islamic theology and jurisprudence and most ulama, both activist and quietist, initially rejected Khomeini’s role for the religious jurists

¹¹³Katouzian, 317; 322.

¹¹⁴ Asghar Shirazi, *The Constitution of Iran: Politics and the State in the Islamic Republic* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 1998): 27.

¹¹⁵ Shirazi, 22.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 30.

in government.¹¹⁷ This new governing concept, propagated by Khomeini while in exile years before the revolution, relied on the earlier arguments of the Usulis that it was the ulama's responsibility to determine Islamic law in the absence of the Hidden Imam.¹¹⁸ Since, for Khomeini, *shari'ah* was the only valid law to rule Iran, and the ulama were the appropriate interpreters of that law, the ulama should therefore govern Iran.¹¹⁹ *Velayat-e faqih*, and the concept of an Islamic Republic more generally, is the guiding principle of the structure of Iranian government.

According to Shirazi, Islamic elements infuse the Iranian constitution both ideologically and institutionally.¹²⁰ The constitution establishes Iran as an Islamic state, with the Twelver Shi'ite school of Islam as the official state religion. It declares that the revolution that brought about the state was also Islamic and defines the state's tasks and goals as being Islamic in character. It requires that legislation be in accordance with *shari'a* and restricts certain individual and group rights (e.g., the rights of women) according to Islamic definitions.¹²¹ The constitution also declares that the state's Islamic mission is not confined to its borders; Article 11 recognizes all Muslims as one people and enjoins the state to work towards the "political, economic and cultural unity of the Islamic World."¹²²

¹¹⁷Katouzian, 300; Axworthy, 264.

¹¹⁸See the collection of Khomeini's lectures given in Najaf in 1970, recorded and transcribed by one of his students, and published under the title *Islamic Government*. Re-printed in Algar, 27-166.

¹¹⁹Axworthy, 253.

¹²⁰Shirazi, 8.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹²²Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 11 (1979); Foundation for Iranian Studies. <http://fis-iran.org/en/resources/legaldoc/constitutionislamic> (accessed April 14, 2013).

To support the state's Islamic mission, the constitution provided for political positions for the ulama. First, eighty-six *mujtahid*, elected by the people for eight-year terms, constitute the Assembly of Experts, tasked with electing, supervising and dismissing if necessary the Supreme Leader. The Leader, also a *mujtahid*, is the highest ranking political and religious position in Iran—above the office of president—and rules Iran while the Twelfth Imam remains in occultation. The constitution names the Leader as head of the armed forces; it grants the Leader war powers and the ability to issue national referenda; it tasks the Leader with the responsibility of delineating and overseeing national policy; and grants the Leader the power to appoint and dismiss the chief of staff, head of the armed forces, and the head of the judiciary.¹²³ The leader also appoints six ulama to the Council of Guardians, which reviews legislation and screens candidates for the Presidency, Majlis (Parliament) and Assembly of Experts. According to Shirazi, the Council of Guardians is the second most powerful body after the Supreme Leader, with the ability to veto legislation.

The extensive incorporation of Islamic ideology and political positions for Shi'ite clerics in the constitution coincides with several secular and democratic provisions. For instance, the provision of elections for many public officials, the ability to submit certain vital issues to the people for a national referendum, and the explicit recognition of certain civil rights (though always limited by the need for these rights to be in accordance with Islam) all reflect democratic principles. Furthermore, the very idea of a constitution, the

¹²³Ibid., Article 110.

separation of government functions among three branches, and the concept of the nation-state are all secular in nature.¹²⁴

Khomeini's ability to ensure that the concept of *velayat-e faqih* emerged as the ideological foundation of the Islamic Republic demonstrates the power he commanded upon his return to Iran, but that the secular and democratic principles survived the final approved constitution also reveals the limits of the Leader's power in the immediate transitional period. The leftist and Islamist revolutionary groups began to turn on each other, sometimes clashing violently; in the midst of the chaos, Khomeini acted to consolidate his power and marginalize liberal and leftist opposition. In fact, Axworthy and Katouzian argue that Khomeini supported the students' taking American consulate officials hostage to prolong a revolutionary fervor, justify his censorship of the press and brutal tactics against his opposition, and unify the public against a common enemy—America, the Great Satan.¹²⁵

The Iranian Islamists further consolidated their power through warfare. In September 1980, Iraq attacked Iran, sensing weakness in the chaotic revolutionary state, and fearing a domestic uprising by the majority Shi'a population within Iraqi borders, inspired by the Iranian Revolution.¹²⁶ After Iranian forces successfully liberated the territory the Iraqis had grabbed, the Iraqis sued for peace, but the Islamic Republic

¹²⁴Shirazi, 18-19.

¹²⁵Axworthy, 265. Katouzian, 333; 338. Beeman explains the image of the "Great Satan" was particularly powerful in assigning blame to the U.S. for the nation's loss of its spiritual core to materialism. Beeman describes the most familiar image of Satan in Islam is one of a tempter, who diverts men from the path of God. The United States was associated with the Great Satan not as an "external" conqueror that physically occupied Iranian lands, but much more damagingly, as a tempter that corrupted Iranian politics and culture internally. William O. Beeman, "Images of the Great Satan: Representations of the United States in the Iranian Revolution," in *Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'ism from Quietism to Revolution*, Nikki R. Keddie, ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983): 191-217.

¹²⁶Katouzian, 343.

refused. Instead, Khomeini saw an opportunity to topple Saddam Hussein and spread the Islamic Revolution beyond Iranian borders. Just days before the Iraqis invaded, Khomeini appealed to all Muslims to unite behind the Islamic Revolution and criticized the divisions between Muslims caused by nationalism, specifically in Iraq, saying “For years the government of Iraq has been busy promoting nationalism, and certain other groups have followed the same path, setting the Muslims against each other as enemies.”¹²⁷ He also positioned the war as a defense of the revolution, cautioning that the secular socialist Iraqi government’s true motive was to destroy both the Islamic Republic and the Revolution. Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Rajai echoed this sentiment at the U.N. Security Council in October 1980, saying “The true aim of the Iraqi regime and its masters is not to gain a few kilometers of territory. What they are trying to do is mutilate the revolutionary movement of the Islamic Iranian people. They wish to destroy the Islamic Republic.”¹²⁸

Khomeini declared that the war was not of a limited nature, but rather a war that could only end in Iranian victory, which he expanded to mean invasion of Iraq and the liberation of Shi’a holy sites.¹²⁹ Diplomatically, Khomeini strengthened relations with other traditionally Shi’a states, including Lebanon and Syria, but lost the support of the

¹²⁷Khomeini, “Message to the Pilgrims,” 12 September 1980, Tehran, Iran; re-printed in Algar, 300-306.

¹²⁸Mohammad Ali Rajai, “Statement of Mohammad Ali Rajai, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, before the Security Council of the United Nations,” 17 October 1980; re-printed in Tareq Y. Ismael, *Iraq and Iran: Roots of Conflict* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1982): 212-219.

¹²⁹J.M. Abdulghani, *Iraq & Iran: The Years of Crisis* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984): 210.

predominately Sunni Arab Gulf States, which backed Iraq.¹³⁰ Iran was also largely isolated from Western support, with the U.S. having ended diplomatic relations upon the hostage crisis and Iran suspending diplomatic relations with Israel shortly after the Revolution. Khomeini compensated for its relative isolation by turning inward, relying on Iranian nationalism, continuing revolutionary fervor, and Islamic notions of self-sacrifice to sustain the eight-year long war effort. According to Saskia Gieling, the Islamic Republic successfully sacralized the war effort in nearly every stage, from the reasons for Iraq's invasion to Iran's response and expansion of hostilities, and even to the peace resolution.¹³¹ Khomeini justified the war as a *jihad*—despite the war being waged primarily against other Muslims—requiring every Iranian Muslim to defend the Qu'ran, the faith, and the Islamic Revolution from the secular Iraqi government.¹³²

The Iran-Iraq war initially served to legitimize the Islamic Republic at home and quell domestic political divisions.¹³³ However, as the war dragged on, the situation began to reverse; Iranian morale was low, the people and economy had suffered greatly, and several political and even religious leaders began questioning the war effort. The situation was worsened by Iran's diplomatic isolation; what little leverage Iran previous could command by playing the U.S. and Soviet Union against one another evaporated amidst the warming relations between the superpowers. According to Gieling, Khomeini and other leading statesmen—including President Ali Khamenei—justified their

¹³⁰Ghods, 223. However, clandestine Iranian relations continued with both the U.S. and Israel in order to secure armaments with which to fight Iraq. The discovery of these relations resulted in the Iran-Contra public scandal. Saskia Gieling, *Religion and War in Revolutionary Iran* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999): 27.

¹³¹Gieling, 176.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 44-47.

¹³³Abdulghani, 207.

acceptance of a peace resolution with Iraq by claiming the war had become a burden to the goals of the revolution.¹³⁴

Religion and the State in Post-Cold War Iran

Domestic Politics and Religion, 1990 -2009

Katouzian contends that Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989 did not result in the collapse of the regime because, unlike Muhammad Reza Shah's arbitrary rulership, the Islamic Republic retained a wide social base along with government functionaries who remained devoted to upholding the state's institutions.¹³⁵ Still, Khomeini's legitimacy, and his ability to act as the ultimate and essentially irrefutable leader, was due in part to his own charisma and wide personal support among the populace. These were characteristics that could not be replicated after his death, necessitating some change, albeit measured, in the Iranian political system in the post-Cold War (aka post-Khomeini) era.

The Assembly of Experts elected Ali Khamenei as the new Supreme Leader, simultaneously promoting him to the highest clerical status of Grand Ayatollah. His election marks the first significant departure from the Khomeini era: rather than assert leadership on the basis of public support, Khamenei was elected by a political body (The Assembly of Experts, itself an elected council) that also has the power to dismiss him, thus making him more beholden to the system than was Khomeini.¹³⁶ This situation was reinforced by a change to the constitution made just before Khomeini's death: according

¹³⁴Gieling, 168-169.

¹³⁵Katouzian, 353.

¹³⁶Ibid., 355.

to the legal revisions, the Supreme Leader was no longer required to be a *marja'-e Taqlid*, or source of imitation.¹³⁷ This revision allowed for Khamenei's election as he is not a *marja*, nor even a *mujtahid*. However, without the independent following a *marja* commands, Khamenei's ability to build a strong political base became even more important.¹³⁸

A second major change was the selection of the pragmatic politician, cleric, and former speaker of the *Majlis* Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as Khamenei's successor as president. Rafsanjani had been an ideological disciple of Khomeini and was chiefly responsible for the conduct of the war with Iraq, but took a much more pragmatic approach as president. He allowed for limited privatization efforts to stimulate the economy and took a more moderate approach to foreign policy (discussed below).¹³⁹

A third significant political change precedes Khomeini's death and disrupted the domestic Iranian relationship between religion and state. By the late 1980s, the constitutional provision granting the Council of Guardians veto power over legislation that was deemed contrary to *shari'a* created tension between the Council and the *Majlis*. According to Iranian studies scholar David Menashri, the Council vetoed several laws

¹³⁷In Shi'a theology, the institution of *marja'-e taqlid*, or "source of imitation" holds that every believer should choose a *mujtahid* to follow as their mentor in law and doctrine. The Usuli school developed the concept in the eighteenth century and envisioned the ideal of a single *marja* who could command all the believers of the nation, thus instituting a formal hierarchy of clerics. Practically, the existence of a single recognized *marja* has been rare in Iranian history, though the Ayatollah Khomeini held that position. Nikki R. Keddie, "Introduction" in Keddie, ed., 9.

¹³⁸Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 32. Washington Institute for Near East Policy Fellow and Shi'ite Theologian Mehdi Khalaji contends that Khamenei has been successful in building a powerful political base and large bureaucracy by recruiting young military and intelligence professionals to replace older established politicians that might oppose Khamenei's administration or policies. Mehdi Khalaji, "Policywatch 1524. House of the Leader: the Real Power in Iran" June 1, 2009, *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/house-of-the-leader-the-real-power-in-iran> (accessed May 9, 2013).

¹³⁹Katouzian, 357.

relating to such seemingly secular topics as land redistribution, taxation and labor practices, resulting in the inability for the government to function properly.¹⁴⁰ To settle such disagreements, Khomeini provided for the formation of an Expediency Council, composed of the six clerical members of the Council of Guardians plus six state officials, including the president and speaker of the *Majlis*. The Expediency Council can recommend a policy to the Supreme Leader even after the Guardian Council has deemed it un-Islamic so long as it is in the interest of the regime.¹⁴¹ He also created a council composed solely of state officials (i.e., not clerical officials) to make decisions regarding post-war reconstruction. Menashri contends that these two new bodies effectively deprived the Council of Guardians the exclusive right to review legislation. By providing for these institutional changes and removing the requirement that the Supreme Leader be a *marja*, Khomeini essentially elevated political concerns over revolutionary Islamic ideology.¹⁴²

Finally, the political unity characteristic of the Khomeini era was not sustained after his death. Several Islamist political factions developed in the 1990s: Rafsanjani's pragmatist faction, a conservative faction, a radical fundamentalist faction, and a reformist faction. According to Katouzian, the pragmatist faction appealed to bureaucrats and businessmen while more traditional bazaar merchants and Islamist ulema tended to

¹⁴⁰David Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society and Power* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001): 14.

¹⁴¹Michael Eisenstadt and Mehdi Khalaji, *Nuclear Fatwa: Religion and Politics in Iran's Proliferation Strategy*, Policy Focus #115 (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2011): ix-x.

¹⁴²Menashri, 15.

side with the conservatives.¹⁴³ Alongside these political factions, several intellectual discourses emerged regarding the Republic's ideology, institutions and future, all of which have clear roots in the debates that had dominated Iranian intellectual discourse earlier in the century. Political scientist Mehran Kamrava describes three distinct modes of thought: conservative religious, reformist religious, and secular-modernist.¹⁴⁴

Those aligning with the conservative religious school of thought maintain the legitimacy and superiority of the Islamic Republic as conceived and established by Khomeini, especially the guiding principle of *velayat-e faqih*. This conservative discourse continued to dominate Iran throughout Rafsanjani's administration and generally reflects the thinking of Supreme Leader Khamenei. The secular-modernist discourse has been a constant intellectual undercurrent from the first constitutional revolution in 1906. Secular modernists argue for the privatization of Islam and an embrace of democracy, though not necessarily wholesale Westernization.¹⁴⁵ While the secular-modernist discourse flourished under President Mohammad Khatami's administration, their political influence has been muted by government harassment and imprisonment.¹⁴⁶

A reformist religious dialogue emerged with the election of President Khatami in 1997. Khatami and other reformist intellectuals aimed to balance the traditional Shi'a Islamic religion with modern political mechanisms, including such liberal institutions as

¹⁴³Katouzian, 360-361.

¹⁴⁴ Kamrava, 10-12.

¹⁴⁵Kamrava notes nearly twenty intellectuals as being particularly influential Iranian secular-modernists, including the better-known Ramin Jahanbegloo and Seeyed Javad Tabataba'i. Kamrava, Table 4, pp. 176-177.

¹⁴⁶ Kamrava, 212.

the formation of a vibrant civil society and freedom for individual choice.¹⁴⁷ Kamrava contends that Khatami's election was the result of an undercurrent of discontent among the populace with the established system (Khatami was seen as an outsider).¹⁴⁸ The discontent was fueled by the rising expectations of a growing middle class that had benefited from the economic reforms Rafsanjani had made in the previous eight years. Kamrava also contends that Khatami's election revealed a large generation gap between the revolutionary generation and a younger, more educated, and more prosperous generation, who were also much less religious and thus less inclined to support the conservative status quo.¹⁴⁹

Along with Khatami, university lecturer Abdolkarim Soroush emerged as an important reformist figure. Soroush was close with Ali Shariati and shares his position that governments should reflect the societies they represent.¹⁵⁰ He also shares Shariati's modernist leanings, but instead of contending that Islam must adjust to modernity, Soroush acknowledges the immutability of religion. He distinguishes between the religion of Islam, which is eternal and true, and human knowledge and understanding of Islam, which is forever incomplete and conditioned by place and time.¹⁵¹ On the basis of this distinction, Soroush teaches that Islamic understanding should be allowed to adapt to the modern world even while Islam as a religion remains unchanged. Furthermore,

¹⁴⁷Other notable reformists include Mohsen Kadivar and Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari. Kamrava, 122. See also Menashri, 32-41.

¹⁴⁸Kamrava, 20.

¹⁴⁹Kamrava, 23-24.

¹⁵⁰Valla Vakili, *Debating Religion and Politics in Iran: The Political Thought of Abdolkarim Soroush* (N.Y.: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996): 3

¹⁵¹Vakili, 7.

Soroush controversially argues that Islam should not be used by the state as a governing ideology since political ideologies necessarily reduce the vastness and complexity of religious knowledge to a fixed worldview with particular and temporary ends.¹⁵² As a governing ideology, Soroush believes Islam becomes a servant of the government and that this political-religious relationship becomes a barrier to the expansion and deepening of religious knowledge.

Ultimately, Soroush argues that the only form of government that allows a community to represent itself as a religious society while also avoiding erecting governmental barriers to the free growth of religious knowledge is democracy. He also contends that the current clerical system operates on a system of financial and social status incentives, which encourages corruption.¹⁵³ Therefore, Soroush contends that the Shi'a clerical establishment should be abolished and replaced with a smaller core of self-funded theological academics whose only motivation for studying and teaching Islam is the pursuit of Islamic knowledge. Of course, Soroush's theory of religion and politics is quite separationist and threatens directly the power and influence of the ulama; he has faced extensive criticism of his views, but due to his personal participation in the Islamic Revolution and early formation of the Republic, his presence and perspective are tolerated. According to Kamrava, the reformist discourse of Soroush and others may not bear political fruit immediately but is likely to have a long-term effect on Shi'a jurisprudence and the relationship between Shi'ism and the state.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵²Vakili 14-15.

¹⁵³Vakili, 29-38.

¹⁵⁴Kamrava, 215. Many reformist intellectuals have faced severe repression and even death. In 1998 three reformers were murdered by Iranian intelligence officers. Katouzian, 371.

Khatami did not achieve many of the reforms he campaigned upon and his supporters became disenchanted with his presidency by the end of his term. Conservatives continued to hold much institutional power, especially in the Council of Guardians, which approves both legislation and candidates running for public office. Kamrava explains that many non-conformist ulema had been silenced or chose to stay out of the political arena, allowing Khamenei and a narrow inner circle to dominate the nation's politics. Political scientist Ofira Seliktar argues that Khatami was a naturally cautious leader and unwilling to take on Khamenei, the Council of Guardians and the security forces; ultimately, Khatami was thus marginalized from important governmental functions.¹⁵⁵

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the former mayor of Tehran, to the Iranian presidency in 2005 marked a retrenchment to conservatism. Ahmadinejad quickly built a political power base by placing loyal supporters in key government positions, including ambassadorial posts.¹⁵⁶ His administration clamped down on moral regulations domestically and intensified the state's censorship efforts. Yet, according to Kamrava, Ahmadinejad's conservatism is more of a radical populist nature than the traditional conservatism of the clergy.¹⁵⁷ In fact, Ahmadinejad's presidency has challenged the conservative clerics, and Khamenei directly, in several ways. According to Seliktar, part of Ahmadinejad's populist appeal was his criticism of corruption among the clergy. He

¹⁵⁵Ofira Seliktar, "Reading Tehran in Washington: The Problems of Defining the Fundamentalist Regime in Iran and Assessing the Prospects for Political Change," in *Political Islam from Muhammad to Ahmadinejad: Defenders, Detractors and Definitions* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010): 172-173.

¹⁵⁶Katouzian, 385.

¹⁵⁷Kamrava, 38-39, 216. Kamrava attributes Ahmadinejad's success partly to the tactical missteps of the reformists and partly to Khatami's inability to bring about reform or economic development, which led to widespread mistrust of the reformers.

also promised to rollback the free market reforms implemented under Khamenei's supervision over the past two decades towards more state redistribution of finances for poor and rural populations.¹⁵⁸ The conservative split into traditional and radical/populist factions has resulted in party in-fighting, but Ahmadinejad retained Khamenei's support and won re-election in 2009, amidst charges of election fraud.

Foreign Policy and Religion: 1989-2009

Foreign policy making in the Islamic Republic, after the constitutional reforms of 1989, is divided among several political institutions.¹⁵⁹ The Supreme Leader has ultimate authority over both domestic and foreign policy, and is the head of the military. The President is the head of the government, controls the budget, appoints the head of the National Bank, and chairs the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). According to political scientist Eva Patricia Rakel, the president is primarily responsible for developing and executing foreign policy, but all decisions are subject to the approval of Khamenei.¹⁶⁰ This system has resulted in a dual-leadership of foreign policy, which sometimes results in clear tensions between the two leaders, but also shields both from criticism as actions are typically taken with joint approval. The SNSC is the preeminent forum for debating foreign policy priorities, but the Council of Guardians and *majlis* frequently weigh in on foreign policy matters as well.

Constitutionally, the state's leaders are required to formulate foreign policy with Islamic goals in mind. In addition to the requirement that the state work towards the

¹⁵⁸Seliktar, 173-174.

¹⁵⁹ Eva Patricia Rakel, "Iranian Foreign Policy since the Iranian Islamic Revolution, 1979-2006" *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, no. 6 (2007): 159-187.

¹⁶⁰ Rakel, 165-166.

political unity of the entire Muslim world, as noted in an earlier section, the Iranian Constitution states among the Republic's goals, "framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the *mustad'afin* of the world."¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the constitution establishes the Islamic nature of the military, such that all service members are "committed to Islamic ideology and the people, and ...have faith in the objectives of the Islamic Revolution."¹⁶²

Within this structural arrangement, several themes characterize contemporary Iranian foreign policy. First is a theme of transition: starting with Khomeini's death in 1989, Iran became a state that was recovering from a destructive eight-year war with Iraq, under the leadership of a new Supreme Leader, trying to navigate a post-Cold War world. As a result, the Iranian leadership's initial instincts were to turn towards pragmatic reconstruction of the Iranian economy and better trade relations with other nations. A second major theme is Iran's deep-seeded opposition to Westernization, along with the corollary to that sentiment, Iranian nationalism. Both sides of the anti-West/nationalism coin have contributed to Iranian diplomatic isolation, economic sanctions, and constant tensions over Iranian nuclear ambitions. A third theme is the vacillation among Iranian foreign policy decision makers between ideological and pragmatic foreign policies. Often times this vacillation is due to the competing influences over foreign policy and results in contradictory policies emanating from the same administrations.

¹⁶¹ Mustad'afin means downtrodden, oppressed or weak. Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 3 (1979).

¹⁶²Ibid., Article 144.

According to political scientist R.K. Ramazani, foreign policy under Khamenei has diverged from Khomeini's policies most dramatically in the former's reinterpretation of Iran's revolutionary mission towards a much more pragmatic stance. The first Supreme Leader rhetorically prioritized Islamic ideology, denied the legitimacy of the nation-state construct, and claimed the universality of the Islamic Revolution. As noted previously, one result of this revolutionary foreign policy was a destructive war with Iraq. Ramazani claims that in the first few years of Khamenei's leadership, "The export of the revolution by coercive means is being largely replaced by the projection of an Irano-Islamic role model by peaceful means."¹⁶³

Iran's failure to support (militarily) a Shi'a rebellion in Iraq in 1991 is clear evidence of this change in tactics. Revolutionary radicals pressured Khamenei and Rafsanjani to support the Iraqi Shi'ites, and potentially spread the Islamic Revolution, but the Rafsanjani administration chose strategic national interest over ideology. According to Ramazani, the president preferred a unified Iraq over a failed and divided one, as the latter situation might encourage rebellion among the Iranian Kurdish community.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, Khamenei and Rafsanjani were likely quite aware of the limits to spreading the Islamic revolution in the aftermath of the war with Iraq. According to Islamic politics scholar Olivier Roy, the revolution was unable to transcend—and even exasperated—the Sunni-Shi'a divide, and was only deepened by the Iran-Iraq war.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³R.K. Ramazani, "Iran's Foreign Policy: Both North and South," *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 395.

¹⁶⁴Ramazani (1992): 398.

¹⁶⁵Olivier Roy, "The Impact of the Iranian Revolution on the Middle East," in *The Shi'a Worlds and Iran*, Sabrina Mervin, ed., Bart Peeters, trans. (London: SAQI, 2010): 29-44.

The realism of the Khamenei-Rafsanjani years also manifested itself in better relations with its neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the Rafsanjani administration focused on developing better relations with former Soviet states for trade and security purposes, most especially the fellow Shi'a nation of Azerbaijan but also Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.¹⁶⁷ Yet relations with the United States remained frozen. Khamenei's hard-line rhetoric towards the U.S. was particularly unyielding and played to his conservative power base.¹⁶⁸ Khamenei continued to oppose "Westernization", which was most clearly represented by American military and cultural influence globally. He also sharply opposed particular American policies, such as the Clinton Administration's embargo on trade and investment in Iran. Rafsanjani tended to echo these sentiments, but held open the potential for dialogue with the United States in principle, should the United States acknowledge the Islamic nature of the Republic and end its policy of containment towards Iran.

According to Rakel, President Khatami's election broke through the stalemate with Europe, if not with the United States.¹⁶⁹ Khatami ended the Salman Rushdie affair, leading to restored diplomatic relations with the British and better relations with other European states as well.¹⁷⁰ The reformist president also rejected the possibility of keeping

¹⁶⁶Iran's international relations benefited from The Persian Gulf War, as Iraq, not Iran, was thereafter viewed by other Gulf States as the primary security threat in the region. Rakel, 172.

¹⁶⁷Ramazani (1992), 406-408.

¹⁶⁸Menashri, 187-192.

¹⁶⁹ Rakel, 159-187.

¹⁷⁰ R.K. Ramazani, "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy," *Middle East Journal* 58, no.4 (Autumn 2004): 549-559. Katouzian, 380. Salman Rushdie's 1988 book *The Satanic Verses* was viewed by many Muslims as anti-Islamic. Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* calling for Rushdie's death, resulting in the suspension of diplomatic relations between Iran and Britain, as well as several European nations withdrawing their ambassadors from Iran.

Iran culturally isolated from the influence of the West in an age of interdependency, and encouraged Iranians to learn about and selectively adopt those historical and intellectual contributions Western nations had made to human society.¹⁷¹ Khatami also appealed to the United Nations to designate a year dedicated to the dialogue among civilizations and faiths.¹⁷²

A temporary reprieve in Iranian-U.S. relations was noticeable in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Khatami issued a quick condemnation of the attacks and spontaneous public vigils were held in Tehran in sympathy for the victims.¹⁷³ Iran then supported the U.S. in toppling the Taliban regime, backed the American presidential candidate for Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, and committed funds for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.¹⁷⁴ However, after President George W. Bush counted Iran among an “Axis of Evil” (with Iraq and North Korea), and turned down a 2003 Iranian offer of negotiation with the United States, Iranian-U.S. relations cooled considerably.¹⁷⁵

Two issues dominated the strained Iranian-American relationship during the end of Khatami’s administration and Ahmadinejad’s first term: Iran’s support for terrorist groups (leading to its inclusion in the “Axis of Evil”) and the Iranian nuclear program.

¹⁷¹Menashri, 205-207.

¹⁷²Ibid., 83.

¹⁷³Mohsen M. Milani, “Iran’s Policy Towards Afghanistan” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 60, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 247.

¹⁷⁴Ramazani (2004): 558; Iranian opposition to the Taliban after September 11, 2001, was not a new foreign policy. Incensed by the Taliban’s kidnapping and killing of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist, plus the destruction of Shi’a holy sites, Iran had provided training and financial support to the Northern Alliance in resisting the Taliban for years before the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Milani, 247-248.

¹⁷⁵Katouzian, 382.

Iran's nuclear program is primarily a strategic consideration as well as an outgrowth of nationalistic and anti-colonial sentiment still highly palpable in Iran. Iran's support for terrorist groups, however, is both ideological and tactical, and dates to the beginning of the revolution. Security studies specialist, Daniel Byman, contends that Khomeini viewed the support of armed groups internationally as a duty of the Revolution.¹⁷⁶ Khomeini supported armed Shi'a groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Pakistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. After his death, Khamenei continued Iranian support of terrorist groups, even as Khatami pledged a new dialogue of civilization.¹⁷⁷ Iranian support of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian territories has been particularly destructive to Iranian-U.S. relations. According to Byman, Iranian support of Hezbollah and Hamas is as tactical as it is ideological: these and similar groups give Iran transnational influence while also giving the state ostensible distance from terroristic activities.¹⁷⁸

Relations between Iran and the West have only deteriorated further under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's administration. Ahmadinejad's rhetoric is highly ideological and reflects Iranian sentiments from the Revolutionary era. The president's religious conservatism and piety are well known, and he personally follows the radically conservative Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi Mesbah-e Yazid is his *marja*, or source of emulation.¹⁷⁹ The president frequently references his hope for the *mahdi*'s return to both domestic and international audiences. As a result, Western journalists, scholars and even

¹⁷⁶Daniel Byman, "Iran, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31 (2008): 169-181.

¹⁷⁷Rakel, 179.

¹⁷⁸Byman, 172.

¹⁷⁹Ze'ev Mahgen, "Occultation in 'Perpetuum': Shi'ite Messianism and the Policies of the Islamic Republic," *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 2 (Spring, 2008): 234.

policy makers have become nervous that Iran would use nuclear weapons to bring about an end-times scenario.¹⁸⁰ According to historian Ze'ev Mahgen, this perspective fundamentally misunderstands Shi'a eschatology, which does not permit Muslims to take actions specifically to hasten the *Mahdi's* return.¹⁸¹ Instead, Mahgen claims that Ahmadinejad's use of conservative Shi'a theological themes rhetorically is meant to reenergize the Iranians behind the original goals of the Revolution.

Initial Assessment

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Shi'a Islam has been a salient feature of Iranian foreign policy. Shi'ism remains the state's official ideology and the most powerful foreign policy decision maker is a Shi'a cleric. In the decade proceeding the Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini leveraged his position as a *marja* to garner widespread popular and political support for his vision of Islamic governance, *velayat-e faqih*. He further leveraged Iranian revolutionary fervor to garner support for the Iran-Iraq war and to provide financial assistance and training to revolutionary groups and terrorists similarly wanting to overthrow established or colonial regimes.

Yet, both ideological and pragmatic impulses have existed in all post-Revolution administrations.¹⁸² Khomeini subverted ideological purity to state interests, for instance, during the Iran-Contra affair. Rafsanjani—typically a pragmatist—chose ideology over realism by upholding Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie throughout his administration, accepting the resulting lack of diplomatic relations with the United

¹⁸⁰Mahgen, 234-237.

¹⁸¹Mahgen, 250-255. Mahgen also argues that as a political measure the Shi'a ulama have always—traditionally and contemporarily—repressed *mahdist* groups.

¹⁸²R.K. Ramazani, "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy," *Middle East Journal* 58, no.4 (Autumn 2004): 549-559.

Kingdom as a consequence. Khatami's reformism may be marked as "pragmatic" from a Western point of view but is, at core, ideological and rooted in his more liberal understanding of Islam. Ahmadinejad's nuclear ambitions have been widely interpreted as messianic, but there exist several strategic reasons Iran (and other nation-states) want nuclear capabilities as well; first among them, a deterrent to encroachments on Iranian sovereignty.

In the post-Khomeini era, the most important foreign policy decision maker, and consistent three-decade leadership presence, is Ayatollah Khamenei. Khamenei's top priority is the continued existence of the Islamic Republic. Domestically, this means a reliance on the Revolutionary Guard and the conservative *majlis*, a heavy-handed supervision of elections and widespread repression and censorship. In Iranian foreign policy, this means neither confrontation nor accommodation, but rather deterring other states from engaging in activities that threaten either Iranian territory or the ruling regime.¹⁸³ Under Khamenei, Iran has continued its opposition to the United States on both strategic and ideological grounds. Arguably, since Iran retracted its pretensions to universality, the revolutionary state's policies have been guided more by the ideology of Anti-Americanism than by any particular Islamic tenet. Yet, according to Sadjadpour, Khamenei sees the expulsion of foreign influence from Iran and the successful establishment and continued existence of the Islamic Republic as inextricably related.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, Khamenei sees economic and technological self-sufficiency (i.e., nuclear

¹⁸³ Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009): 3.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

capabilities) as key strategies to retain Iranian political independence and, again, safeguard the existence of the Islamic Republic and Revolution.

In essence, the foreign policies of the Islamic Republic of Iranian are indelibly marked by the state's Shi'a Islamic ideology, the legal composition of Iranian governmental bodies, and the informal power relations that continue to ensure the regime's survival as an Islamic and modern nation-state.

CHAPTER SIX

Comparisons and Analysis

The preceding case studies have emphasized various examples of religious ideology, rhetoric or actors functioning at the foreign policy level across three very different domestic models of religion-state relations. After considering each case separately, with considerable historical context particular to each state, this chapter analyzes all three cases together with a focus on the 1990s and 2000s. This chapter begins by establishing the domestic relationship between religion and state, evaluated according to Casanova's framework on secularization. This is followed by an analysis of the salience of religion in each state's foreign policy, with emphasis on three ways in which religion may influence foreign policy: policy legitimization, mobilization of political forces, identity creation/delineation. The third sub-section identifies important intervening variables and the ways in which the variables enhanced or detracted from the salience of religion in each state's foreign policy. Finally, I identify additional points of alignment and departure among the three case studies revealed in the comparison of cases but not covered in this chapter's first three sections.

Categorizing the Religion-State Relationship Domestically

In assessing the domestic religion-state relationships of the cases under review, referring back to Casanova's tri-partite definition of secularization is helpful. Casanova defines secularization as: first, the process of differentiation between religious and non-religious institutions; second, the decline in religious belief and meaning in the modern

world; and third, the privatization of religion.¹ Casanova's definition conceptualizes the continuum of relationships between religion and state as essentially negative (i.e., more or less secularized, not more or less sacralized), but a more neutral approximation of Casanova's definition could be stated: 1) to what extent are religious and state institutions integrated or differentiated, 2) to what extent does religion provide meaning to the state's populace and decision makers, and 3) to what extent does religion play a public or communal role in the functioning of state and society. As noted in the first chapter, most emphasis is placed on the first, differentiation of institutions, as particularly appropriate to an evaluation of state policies, but reference is made to Casanova's second and third definitions of secularism where doing so provides greater context to the analysis.

The United States federal government has recognized an institutional differentiation between church and state since its founding. The strictness with which the Supreme Court required this differentiation peaked in 1985 with its separationist decision in *Wallace v. Jaffree*.² Since that high mark, the Court has been more accommodating towards government support of religion, resulting in some blurring of the traditional differentiation between religious and government institutions, particularly in the realms of education (school vouchers) and social welfare programs (faith-based initiatives). Still, the differentiation of religion and government institutionally is among the most thorough in the modern world and those policy areas in which government aid is given to religion must legally be done so for compelling secular state purposes.

¹Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

²*Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38 (1985).

The United States is far less secularized according to Casanova's second and third measures. Results of the 2006 Baylor Religion Survey show that religion continues to hold subjective meaning for individuals. Four out of every five Americans continue to affiliate themselves with a religious group while the majority of unaffiliated Americans believe in God or a higher power.³ All U.S. presidents have professed belief in God and all presidents in the post-Soviet period have associated with a particular Christian denomination.⁴ Religion also continues to be present in the public square: religious groups play a role in forming public opinion and can influence political decision makers from the grassroots level. Religious movies, music and books remain popular in American popular culture and religious symbolism and rhetoric are commonly used by individuals, civic groups and government personnel in times of war, national tragedy or remembrance.⁵ Due to its blended nature, the United States domestic religion-state relationship may be considered a "separationist/public square" model.

In chapter four, I followed John Anderson in characterizing the religion-state relationship in post-Soviet Russia as an asymmetric symphonia, wherein the Russian Orthodox Church assumes responsibility for the spiritual and cultural identity of the

³Bader, et al, *American Piety in the 21st Century: New Insights to the Depth and Complexity of Religion in the U.S.* (Waco, TX: Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion, 2006): 7-8.

⁴ George H.W. Bush is Episcopalian, Bill Clinton is Baptist, George W. Bush is Methodist and Barack Obama affiliated with the United Church of Christ before ending his association with the denomination after his pastor's political comments caused political controversy during his campaign. Michael Powell, "Following Months of Criticism, Obama Quits His Church," June 1, 2008, *The New York Times* (http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/01/us/politics/01obama.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 Times (accessed May 16, 2013)).

⁵On religion and popular culture, see: Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, *Religion and Popular Culture in America, Revised Edition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005); David Chidester, *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005); Meredith Anne Holladay, "Jesus on the radio: theological reflection and prophetic witness of American popular music," (Ph.D. diss, Baylor University, 2011). See Chapter Three for instances of religious rhetoric used by political leaders.

nation, but the state is the dominant power in the relationship and can assert its independence from the Church when necessary.⁶ The Church was successful in lobbying the Putin Administration to revise the Yeltsin-era religion law that the Church perceived as being too accommodating to competing (often Western) religious groups. The ROC is recognized as contributing to Russian history and culture, it receives state funds to restore its property, and it has been influential in using state mechanisms to deny visas to foreign religious groups.

Yet, the ROC is not the only religious group to benefit from state support. In pluralistic Russia, the Buddhist, Muslim, and Jewish communities are also recognized as “traditional” religious groups in Russia, and thus enjoy full religious freedom. Like the ROC, these religious groups are also allowed to provide chaplains for military service. The differentiation between religion and state, then, is tiered. The Russian Orthodox Church enjoys some integration of purpose and funds with the state, while the other traditional Russian religions enjoy a beneficial separation; foreign religious groups and native groups from alternative traditions suffer a more punitive separation, inverse to the ROC’s national standing.

Casanova’s second and third definitions are also important to understanding the full context of the domestic religion-state relationship in Russia. Some, though not all, Russian political leaders have publicly professed Orthodox belief, President Putin chief among them. As regards the voting public, the forced secularization of the Soviet Period was not unsuccessful. In 1991, 42 percent of Russians described themselves as unbelievers or atheists, while only 22% described themselves as believers; a decade later

⁶John Anderson, “Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church: Asymmetric Symphonia?” *Journal of International Affairs* 61, no.1 (2007): 192.

those figures had nearly reversed, with 25% in the former category and 44% in the latter by 2002.⁷ Religion is again providing subjective meaning to individuals, yet relative to the United States the level of unbelief is still high at a quarter of the population. Furthermore, attendance at worship services is still extremely low: 42% of Russians “never” attend religious services.⁸

More significant than service attendance is the role of religion—and Orthodoxy specifically—in the construction of a new, post-secular Russian identity. The celebrations marking the millennial anniversary of Russia’s baptism signaled the Church’s return to the public square, while Yeltsin’s public appeal to the Patriarch—and the Patriarch’s public appeal to the military—during the 1991 coup showed the relevance of the Church’s public voice. Since Putin’s first term as president, Orthodox worship services have regularly coincided with state functions and high level clergy increasingly attend official ceremonies.⁹ At the domestic level, the ROC and the state have formed a mutually beneficial relationship that incorporates integration of purpose with a separation of institutions and personnel, though the state dictates the extent of the relationship depending on political circumstances.

The contemporary relationship between religion and state in Iran is, outwardly, the easiest to gauge. The constitution establishes God as having ultimate sovereignty, identifies Shi’a Islam as the official state religion, defines the state’s tasks according to religious ideology, evaluates legislation according to religious jurisprudence, and places a

⁷James W. Warhola and Alex Lehning, “Political Order, Identity, and Security in Multi-national, Multi-religious Russia,” *Nationality Papers* 35, no. 5 (November 2007): 934.

⁸*Ibid.*, 935.

⁹Most recently, Patriarch Kirill blessed Putin in a ceremony following the president’s inauguration to his third term. “Patriarch Kirill blessed Putin for highest ministry to Russia,” May 11, 2012, Interfax, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=9346> (accessed May 18, 2013).

member of the clergy in the highest political office. For all intents and purposes, there is no differentiation between religion and state institutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran. For these reasons, the Islamic Republic is commonly referred to as a theocracy even though lay personnel and secular principles are integral to the functioning of the state as well.

Casanova's second and third definitions only emphasize this assessment of the deep integration of religion in Iran. According to the CIA Factbook, Shi'a Muslims account for 89% of the population, Sunni Muslims for 9% of the population, and various Bah'ai, Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian minorities for the remainder.¹⁰ In the absence of open social inquiry, however, it is impossible to know the extent to which Islam provides subjective meaning in the lives of ordinary Iranian individuals. Several Marxist groups existed, and wielded some influence, at the time of the Revolution, but their atheism cannot be assumed as many were influenced by Shariati's political thought, blending Marxism and Islamism. In the post-Soviet era, the leading Iranian intellectual movements have preached conservatism or reformism, based on Islamic principles. Similarly, if the religiosity of the political leadership is any indication, religion appears to play a significant role in providing subjective meaning to conservatives and reformers alike.

The presence of Shi'a Islam in the public square (or bazaar) is also pervasive. *Shari'a* law extends beyond the political realm into business relations, social etiquette, educational curriculum, and ultimately into the household, the observance of which the Revolutionary Guard enforces. Regardless of whether the population supports or rejects

¹⁰CIA World Fact Book, "Iran", last updated May 7, 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (accessed May 16, 2013).

these measures personally, Iranian citizens are obliged to observe them publicly. Additionally, Shi'a holidays can have palpable political undertones: historically, the commemoration of the martyrdom of Hosein, for instance, has been a recurring scene of public religio-political mobilization. Whether assessed as institutional differentiation, subjective meaning or public role and presence, Shi'a Islam is well-integrated into the public life and political functioning of the Iranian state.

Evaluating the Salience of Religion in Foreign Policy

As established in chapter one, this dissertation evaluates the salience of religion in a state's foreign policies according to several functions religion might perform in the implementation of a state's foreign policy. Specifically, religion might function to: 1) provide legitimacy to a state's foreign policies, 2) mobilize political actors and groups on behalf of or to implement a state's foreign policies, and/or 3) construct state identity so as to enable alignment with or differentiation from another state's foreign policies. This section evaluates each case according to those three religious functions at the foreign policy level and assesses the effect, if any, of the domestic religion-state relationship on each of these functions.

U.S. Foreign Policy and Religion

In the United States, the Clinton Administration avoided using religion to legitimate foreign policy activities. Though the U.S. purported to support the spread of democracy and human rights, religion was not only a minor feature of this agenda, it was consciously minimized. Secretary of State Albright overtly admitted as much, citing

religion's irrationality and ability to evoke passion and "trouble".¹¹ President George W. Bush relied much more readily on religious rhetoric to legitimate his foreign policies, particularly in regard to the war in Iraq and efforts to "spread freedom" to the Middle East. Yet religion was never the sole argument for a particular foreign policy. Rather, the President and other policy makers always cited specific security, economic, or diplomatic reasons for pursuing or implementing a policy.¹² The differences between the presidents' approaches reflect the two-sided sacred/secular nature of U.S. domestic politics. Clinton's reticence to engage religion in politics reflects institutional separationism domestically, which reached its high-point just before Clinton took office. Bush's embrace of religious rhetoric to legitimate his administration's foreign policy goals was only the most recent in a long American political tradition and reflects the continuing relevance of religious sentiments by the citizenry. Yet the American model of religion-state relations—and especially the religious pluralism that sustains that model—limits the type of religious legitimation that can be made. Bush's reference to a divinely-ordained mission is vague, ecumenical, and even nostalgic, and cannot stand alone as a sole legitimating device for American foreign policy.

¹¹ Madeleine Albright, *The Might and the Almighty: Reflection on America, God, and World Affairs*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2006): 8.

¹² In her much cited honors thesis, Devon Largio counted twenty-three distinct rationales put forth by the Bush Administration for invading Iraq, including the Hussein regime's sponsorship of terrorist groups, Iraq's suspected development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the liberation of the Iraqi people, Hussein's personal evilness, America's interest in a stable oil supply, and "unfinished business" from the Gulf War, among others. Of these, only two arguably could be connected with religion: the perception of U.S. policy makers that Saddam Hussein was evil and the threat Iraq posed to freedom (since Bush had overtly linked God with freedom). Largio does not connect religion to either rationale. Devon Largio, "Uncovering the Rationales for the War on Iraq: The Words of the Bush Administration, Congress, and the Media from September 12, 2001 to October 11, 2002," (Thesis, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2004), http://faculty.las.illinois.edu/salthaus/largio_thesis.pdf (accessed May 17, 2013).

In the United States the ability for religion to mobilize political actors or groups on behalf of foreign policy takes the form of grassroots political activism. During the 1990s and 2000s, several religious groups' successful advocacy efforts on behalf of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) provide perhaps the most powerful example of this mobilization function. Evangelical groups' successful lobbying to increase foreign aid to alleviate poverty and combat AIDS under Bush, the influence of the Israel lobby since World War II, and the historical examples of successful lobbying by missionary groups for country-specific policies also attest to the power of religious groups to mobilize foreign policy-related political action.

The enactment of IRFA is a good example of how religions' ability to mobilize political actors for foreign policy purposes reflects the domestic religion-state relationship in the U.S. First, the campaign for IRFA came about because the Act's supporters believed U.S. foreign policy decision makers paid insufficient attention to religious persecution globally—a reflection of the general secularism of the political elite, and the separation of religion and state institutionally. Second, the campaign for IRFA was successful, even in the face of heavy resistance from the foreign policy apparatus, because religious groups retain political relevance, organizational capabilities and voting power in the U.S., and because the U.S. Congress can influence foreign policy through control over the budget and its oversight functions. Third, the ability for the State Department to isolate the Office of International Religious Freedom while taking very few actions to redress religious persecution by foreign governments shows the limits of religious groups to affect the implementation of foreign policy. The relative

independence of the State Department amplifies the institutional religion-state separation in a way that contrasts significantly with the other two case studies.¹³

Finally, the use of religion as an identity marker in U.S. foreign policy is interesting. During the Cold War, several U.S. presidents used the identity of America as a “God fearing” nation to differentiation from the “Godless communism” of the chief competitor to the U.S., the Soviet Union. In the post-Cold War era, much less emphasis has been put on American belief than on Americans’ freedom of belief (i.e., the religion-state relationship in the U.S.) when establishing an identity vis-à-vis others. Particularly in relations with majority-Muslim nations, the U.S. cannot claim religiosity as a differentiator. Policy makers also have been careful not to frame American foreign policy as a Christian crusade against Muslim enemies. Instead the Bush Administration and the office of International Religious Freedom both construct American identity on the freedom of religious worship in the U.S. The Annual Report on International Religious Freedom provides ample opportunity for the U.S. to draw a distinction between itself and its competitors on this principle. Domestically, this identity is even more ecumenical than the Cold War-era “God Fearing” identity, as it encompasses believers and non-believers alike, and the freedom of worship is a legal principle supported by both secularists and accommodationists. Internationally, it works as a differentiator as many political Islamist movements do not accept this same principle, as was seen in the Iranian case study.

Ultimately, the domestic separationist/public square religion-state relationship in the U.S. is reflected at the foreign policy level in several ways: 1) institutional separationism prevails at both levels; 2) the movement since the 1980s from legal

¹³Allison and Zelikow note that this independence of the State Department effectually limits the powers of the President and Congress. Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

separationism towards accommodationism domestically is reflected at the foreign policy level under Bush, especially regarding the funding of faith-based initiatives abroad; 3) grassroots religious groups can affect foreign policies through the same mechanisms as at the domestic level; and 4) U.S. foreign policy leaders use the separationist/public square relationship itself as an identity marker, placing the country on a higher moral plane than competing nations not exhibiting a similar model¹⁴

Russian Foreign Policy and Religion

Russian political leaders rarely justify foreign policy decisions with references to God, religion or Orthodoxy. However, in a post-Yeltsin Russia with extremely high rates of substance abuse, suicide, and organized crime, Russian political leaders have repeatedly identified the building of spiritual and moral strength domestically as a unique “national interest” that has foreign policy implications.¹⁵ To promote the moral character of the nation, the government supports religious instruction in public schools, censors anti-religious speech and art, and harasses “non-traditional” religious minorities and foreign missionaries who threaten to create spiritual chaos. Still, Russian foreign policy leaders are particularly cognizant of their large Muslim and Buddhist populations, and must balance their support for Orthodoxy with the threat of inflaming secessionist attitudes and behaviors by Muslim provinces.

¹⁴ This last point is the crux of Elizabeth Shakman Hurd’s convincingly argument. To restate, Hurd argues that the U.S.’s Judeo-Christian secularism, which is separationist while respecting and encouraging freedom of worship, is itself an ideology that has affected U.S. foreign policy, particularly with Middle Eastern states. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹⁵ World Health Organization data reveal that former Soviet republics Lithuania, Russia and Belarus have the top suicide rates for men globally. World Health Organization, “Suicide rates per 100,000, by country, year, and sex (Table),” http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide_rates/en/index.html (accessed May 18, 2013); For an alarming look at alcohol use in Russia, see: World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health*, 2011, www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/msbgsruprofiles.pdf (accessed May 18, 2013).

The ROC does not typically use grassroots mechanisms to mobilize political actors and groups on behalf of or to implement foreign policy, as religious groups do in the United States. Instead, Church leadership leverages institutional relations with the foreign policy leaders or leadership of various government agencies to achieve mutually beneficial ends. Daniel Payne argues convincingly that the Russian Foreign Ministry has been exceedingly helpful to the ROC's attempts to regain foreign properties lost due to the neglect of the Soviets and to the reunification of the diaspora Orthodox communities with the ROC.¹⁶ In return, the state "mobilizes" Church leadership to act as diplomatic emissaries to other state's political and cultural representatives.

The strategy of state mobilization of Orthodox representatives as diplomats is incomprehensible without understanding the third religious function in Russian foreign policy: Orthodoxy's ability to frame the construction of a new Russian identity to fill the void left by the collapse of communism. Russian leaders have relied upon Orthodoxy, among other sources, to rebuild a nationalistic sense of Russianness that is distinct from the West. Russian leaders draw on their Orthodox heritage to oppose NATO influence in its near-abroad, claiming historical and religious relations with the traditionally Orthodox nations in Eastern and Central Europe. Russia has also relied on its new Orthodox-based identity to reset relations with nations, like Iran, that oppose secularism. Orthodoxy allows Russia a credible way to cut ties with its secular Western communist ideology of the recent past and reconstruct an Eastern-looking, religious-based identity.

The domestic religion-state relationship in Russia is reflected in the state's foreign policies in several ways. First, the institutional support the state has provided the church

¹⁶Daniel Payne, "Spiritual Security, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Russian Foreign Ministry: Collaboration or Cooptation?" *Journal of Church and State* 52, no.4 (December 2010): 712-727.

on the domestic level is paralleled at the foreign policy level, especially as regards funding Orthodox buildings abroad and cultural programs with other countries. Second, while the institutions retain their overall functional differentiation, Church leaders do sometimes act as diplomatic personnel, providing cultural and ideological representation of state policies. Third, the role the ROC has played in reconstructing post-Soviet Russian identity crosses the domestic-foreign divide, and Church leaders are happy to regain their place of prominence in the nation from both a domestic and global perspective.

Compared with the United States, Orthodoxy plays a much more explicit role in Russia foreign policy. While the purposes of the Church and the state often overlap and are implemented in concert, both retain their institutional distinctness. The ROC and the Russian state are engaged in a partnership at both the domestic and foreign policy levels; while the partnership is uneven, both exhibit a degree of dependence on the other for realization of their institutional goals.

Iranian Foreign Policy and Religion

In Iran, Islam performs all three functional roles in the foreign policy of the state: legitimation, mobilization and identity creation/differentiation. Legally, the constitution requires the state to work for the unity of the Muslim world and to frame foreign policy in accordance with Islam. Many Iranian foreign policies can easily be legitimated using Revolutionary ideals, including the funding of Islamic terrorist groups and opposition to Israel. Yet foreign policy leaders have also resorted to justifying foreign policy strategies based solely on their purported necessity to the continued existence of the Islamic Republic. This practice relies on the precedent Khomeini set before his death in

establishing the Expediency Council and granting it the authority to put the state's existential concerns over Islamic theology or jurisprudence.

Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology illustrates this dynamic. Khamenei has repeatedly denounced the development and use of nuclear weapons, to the extent of issuing an oral fatwa claiming that all weapons of mass destruction that kill indiscriminately are inherently un-Islamic (despite the regime's support of terrorist groups that also kill indiscriminately).¹⁷ Yet, in the face of international condemnation and sanctions, and seemingly contrary to this fatwa, Iran continues to pursue the development of nuclear technology. To justify this action Iranian leaders claim that the technology is for peaceful purposes only; they also link Iran's technological independence as one more step towards self-sufficiency from the West, and thus a worthy Revolutionary goal. In the future, however, Khamenei could easily retract the fatwa—which can theologically be revised rather easily according to changing circumstances—and then justify the development of nuclear weapons due to their deterrence capabilities and ability to ensure the continued existence of the Islamic Republic.¹⁸

In Iran, Shi'a Islam's ability to mobilize political actors or groups (both top-down and from a grassroots perspective) is beyond doubt. The public Shi'a mourning cycles and public displays of emotion on key Islamic holidays both contributed to the mobilization of the public towards revolution. In the decade following, Khomeini skillfully leveraged Islamic theology and political sermons to mobilize the troops and instill a virtue of self-sacrifice that was beneficial to the conduct of the Iran-Iraq war.

¹⁷ Michael Eisenstadt and Mehdi Khalaji, *Nuclear Fatwa: Religion and Politics in Iran's Proliferation Strategy*, Policy Focus #115 (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2011).

¹⁸ Ibid.

Under Khamenei's reign, the revolutionary idealism may have died down, but Islam continues to mobilize political groups, such that the largest and most vocal opponents to Khamenei's rule are either Islamic reformers (Khatami and Soroush) or Islamic fundamentalists who criticize the clergy's corruption (Ahmadinejad). Specifically as regards foreign policy, Islam's mobilization function is largely internalized due to the lack of institutional differentiation between religion and state (i.e., the clergy are making foreign policy).

Finally, Shi'a Islam continues to form the basis of Iranian identity vis-à-vis other states. The state's Shi'ism has served as the basis of relations with other Shi'a states, sub-state minority communities, and Shi'a terrorist groups. It has also delineated Iranian identity from Sunni Muslim nations, resulting in its isolation from the Gulf States early on and contributed to the war with Iraq. Iran's identity as an Islamic Republic in sharp contrast to secular Western nations, the United States in particular, has crystallized negative diplomatic relations in what appears to be quite a path-dependent way.¹⁹ Should Iran take a more amenable approach to the secular West, as Khatami tried but failed to accomplish, Iranian identity would be less distinct and it would likely suffer a decline in prestige among other states resentful of American hegemony. According to Sadjapour, Khamenei has even admitted the fact that the state "needs enmity with the United States."²⁰ Changing paths now would be too costly for the regime; instead, policies and groups that appeal for better relations with the U.S. are decried as imperialists, and the

¹⁹Paul Pierson defines path dependency as "a powerful cycle of self-reinforcing activity." Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004): 18.

²⁰Sadjapour, ix.

identity of the Iranian state as an Islamic Republic in continued revolutionary opposition to secularizing Western imperialists continues.

The domestic relationship between religion and state in Iran is an overt source of foreign policy construction and implementation. Iranian foreign policies advance the interests of a religious state and members of the clergy are tasked with implementing the policies. While the Expediency Council can place existential concerns of both the state and the regime above Islam, this only serves to acknowledge that distinctions between secular and sacred goals exist, it hardly lessens the real influence of Islam and religio-political groups in Iran.

Accounting for Intervening Variables

The domestic religion-state relationship cannot possibly explain the totality of religion's salience in foreign policy. Indeed, two intervening variables appeared to be particularly relevant to the three case studies in the time period under analysis. The first of these variables is the sudden structural change from a bi-polar international system of competing secular states, or blocs of states, to a multi-polar system composed of states with varying levels of power and varying attitudes towards religion. Second, all three of these case studies experienced at least one handoff of power between executive administrations in the time period under review. Differences in ideology and personal religiosity among the executive leadership may affect religion's function in a state's foreign policy implementation.

The first of these intervening variables affected all three cases, though to varying degrees. As one of the poles in the formerly bi-polar system, the United States found itself having to re-evaluate its foreign policy strategies and reconstitute its relations with

other states in the wake of the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. Several scholars and policy makers claimed the triumph of the liberal democratic model and claimed the universality of democracy, human rights, and free market principles.²¹ It's status as the sole remaining super power only enhanced this assumption of universality. This perspective is reflected in the Clinton administration's focus on democracy and human rights, though from a particularly American, secularist perspective. The perception that the liberal democratic U.S. and its allies had emerged from the Cold War victorious may have enhanced the institutional and ideological secularism of the state. At the very least, the loss of an atheistic communist enemy undermined the potency of religion as an identity-marker for U.S. foreign policy, resulting in the further secularization of American identity under Clinton.

The second intervening variable offers a similar perspective. While Clinton and Albright have both attested to personal religiosity, they held secularist ideologies on the proper construct of foreign policy and conduct of diplomacy. Indeed, religious influence on foreign policy appears to increase after the change in executive leadership from Clinton to Bush. Bush, whose more accommodationist views are evidenced by his faith-based initiatives domestically, used religious rhetoric to legitimate certain foreign policy goals and expanded foreign aid for religious groups.²²

As the other pole in the bi-polar system, the Russian Federation was also intimately affected by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Compared with the United States,

²¹ See, for instance, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York: Free Press, 1992).

²² The differences in personal outlook between Clinton and Bush could potentially be grounded in their respective religious traditions as well. Clinton's Southern Baptist denomination has historically been more separationist than Bush's Methodist tradition.

this collapse has had a much more profound effect on religion in Russian foreign policy. With its prevailing ideology thoroughly discredited, Russian leaders turned first to free market and liberal democratic principles to construct a new government. But it is Russian Orthodoxy that has provided a more enduring sense of national identity, which the state uses to pursue limited political ends both domestically and in foreign policy. Yet, the necessary cause in this regard was not the changing structure of the system from a bi-polar to multi-polar one as much as it was the collapse of the Union that precipitated *both* the movement to a multi-polar system and the resurging relevance of religion in Russian political affairs. What *can* be said about the nature of the multi-polar international system is that it has allowed for a greater variety of views about the appropriate relationship between religion and state, such that the overt participation of the Orthodox Church in the foreign relations of the state may be an effective method of interaction between Russia and similarly non-secular (and likely non-Western) states.

Of course the Russian Federation also experienced a change in executive leadership from the Yeltsin to the Putin administrations. Yeltsin is generally regarded to have been a populist above all else, with a generally liberal democratic ideology. It was Yeltsin that reached out to the Patriarch during the coup, re-establishing a politically relevant public voice for the Church. It was also under Yeltsin's administration that both the separationist 1990 Law on Religion and the accommodationist 1997 Law on Religion were passed. Marsh and Daniel demonstrate that Yeltsin opposed several versions of the restrictive 1997 law as being illegal according to the Constitution, but ultimately gave in

and signed the bill.²³ Putin has embraced the Russian Orthodox Church much more readily and it is under Putin that Orthodox leaders have expanded their diplomatic relationships with representatives of other nations. Because the roots of the ROC's emerging presence as a political presence and Orthodoxy's role in constructing the nation's identity were already established under Yeltsin, the change in administrations does not adequately explain Orthodoxy's function in foreign relations, but the change in administrations did enhance and deepen the ROC's power and presence at the foreign policy level.

The dramatic realignment of Iranian religion-state relations pre-dates the collapse of the Soviet system by a decade. The movement from a bi-polar to multi-polar world, then, did not bring about the Islamic Revolution nor influence the establishment of Iran as an Islamic Republic. A more limited influence of the changing international system on Iranian foreign policy was the decreasing ability for Iran to play one superpower off the other to gain financial aid or arms.

Changes in executive administrations have also had only a limited impact on religious salience in Iranian foreign policy. Partly due to Khamenei's consistent presence as Supreme Leader for the duration of the period under examination, and partly due to the total institutional integration between religion and state in Iran, differences in the ways in which the Rafsanjani, Khatami and Ahmadinejad administrations have incorporated religion in their foreign policies are relatively minor and reflect a difference in approach, not degree. Khatami tried to take a "dialogue of civilizations" approach compared to Rafsanjani's more traditional confrontational approach, and Ahmadinejad has taken a

²³ Wallace L. Daniel and Christopher Marsh, "Russia's 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience in Context and Retrospect," *Perspectives on Church-State Relations in Russia* (Waco, TX: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, 2008): 28-29.

more pietistic approach, highlighting specific Shi'a theological precepts to support his public statements. Khamanei's election to Supreme Leader after Khomeini's death was a much more significant change in executive leadership that resulted in a much more scaled back effort to export the Islamic Revolution.

Ultimately, in only one case did the intervening variables detract from the salience of religion in foreign policy. The collapse of the Soviet Union detracted from the ability of U.S. policy makers to emphasize American religiosity as a differentiator from the Soviets. In three instances, the intervening variables appear to exert a positive influence on religious salience in foreign policy: administration change in the U.S., administration change in Russia, and the movement away from a bi-polar system/Soviet collapse in Russia. Both intervening variables appear to exert little change in the religious salience in Iranian foreign policy.

Investigating Cross-Country Trends

Taking all three case studies together, two additional trends appear worth noting. First, all three cases show incredible resilience in their religio-political culture historically; in the case of Russia, this is true even across multiple decades of forced secularization. Second, secular interests exert their priority over religious ones in all three case studies, including Iran.

In his comparative study of Italian regional governments, Robert Putnam argues that political culture can be remarkably static across time, even to the point of outliving several vastly different iterations of government.²⁴ This observation bears out to some degree in all three case studies. The United States has had a relatively static religio-

²⁴Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

political relationship domestically. Several fundamental features of this relationship are as relevant in contemporary American political culture as they were at the nation's founding: a plurality of religions such that no single denomination can impose its will on the others (at a federal level); support for the separation of religious and political institutions for both religious and governmental reasons (again, at the federal level); and support for the freedom of conscience and worship for followers of all religious faiths. Religion's function in U.S. foreign policy is similarly consistent. In the vast majority of cases, religion does not play a role in the conduct of American foreign policy. In those cases where policy leaders reference the divine ordination of a particular foreign policy, other reasons must also be given for its enactment. President George W. Bush was not the first to tie God to freedom, and he did not rely solely on this argument to achieve his foreign policy goals. Furthermore, religious groups have achieved specific foreign policy goals through grassroots advocacy since American churches began sending missionaries to foreign countries in the early nineteenth century.

In Russia, the mutually beneficial relationship between the ROC and the state is not an innovation, but rather a resurrection. The ability for this model to retain political and cultural relevance across nearly a century of forced secularization is remarkable. Of course, the political awareness of the population and the basics of the Russian economy have changed drastically since before the Russian Revolution, and in time Russians may demand a less restrictive religious law and less onerous censorship. But despite Western sensibilities being offended by religious restrictions in Russia, the majority of Russians

support such measures.²⁵ Furthermore, the role that Orthodox clergy have played in supporting the Russian military and acting as cultural diplomatic emissaries to other nations dates back centuries.

In Iran, the extent to which the clergy currently hold political power is indeed an historical innovation, but one that is supported by several aspects of Shi'a political culture. First, Shi'ism came to be the dominant Iranian religion—over Zoroastrianism or the more popular Sunni Islam—only by Safavid Emperor Isma'il's political decree, paralleling the establishment of Shi'ism as Iran's official religion in 1979 by a political act. Political leaders have leveraged the state's Shi'a identity to differentiate from competitors for centuries as well, historically in relation to the Ottoman Empire and contemporarily in relation to some Sunni nations and all secular nations. The bureaucratic role of the clergy pre-dates Islam in Iran to the Mazdean magi of the Sasanian era, continued by the Shi'a ulama under the Safavids. The clergy have also retained strong ties with merchants, leadership in education and supervision of charity works. Finally, the ability for charismatic ulama to bring about mass political mobilization is well established throughout Iranian history and enhanced by the Shi'a tradition of lay citizens following a *marja*, or source of emulation, providing Shi'a ulama with a ready political following.

The second trend to emerge is the subservience of religious principles to secular ones at the foreign policy level. This is expected by many Christian and Muslim theologians; the eventuality that religio-political integration will result in the political

²⁵In a 2007 survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 52% of Russian respondents indicated that materials on sects and non-traditional religions should be banned, while another 35% would prefer the material be released, but with limitations. Jukka Pietilainen and Dmitry Strovsky, "Why Do Russians Support Censorship of the Media?" *Russian Journal of Communication* 3, no. 1-2 (2010): 53-71.

dominance and corruption of religion is often among their leadings arguments for religion-state separation.²⁶ U.S. separationism is meant to prevent this situation, but the limited instances in which religion does function in U.S. foreign policy, it does so at the pleasure of secular ends. In other words, religion only successfully influences foreign policy when there exist compelling parallel state interests for it doing so.²⁷ In Russia, it has been noted repeatedly that the state inevitably has the upper hand in the Church-state partnership. This does not mean that the Church has not benefitted from the partnership, but that it serves at the pleasure of the state. This was evidenced in a particularly grotesque way during the Soviet Era when Orthodox clergy provided false witness to the world regarding religious oppression at home, presumably as a strategy to preserve their faith tradition.

In Iran, the hierarchy of goals is not as clear. The state regularly sacrifices secular goals to advance the Islamic Revolutionary, resulting in economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. Still, the Expediency Council has the power to advance policies that are overtly anti-Islamic for existential reasons. Iranian leadership also has wide leeway to interpret secular policies as religious ones, whether they truly serve the Islamic nature of the Republic or the Revolution. After repeatedly declaring the war with Iraq as a war against secular socialist that could only end in Islamic victory, Khomeini later justified peace by claiming the war had become a burden to the Revolution.

²⁶James Madison advances this argument in *Memorial and Remonstrance*, as does Iran's Aldolkarim Soroush.

²⁷One exception might be the Israel lobby's power to influence U.S. foreign policy resolutely behind Israel, a situation which Mearsheimer and Walt argue works *against* U.S. national interests. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

Research Outcomes

Using constructivist Roxanne Doty's "how possible" language, this dissertation asked how it becomes possible for religion to be a salient feature of a state's foreign policies. It sought that answer by considering the domestic religion-state relationship in three disparate cases. The historical evidence and comparative analysis reveal that religion indeed played some functional role in the foreign policies of all three cases during the time period under consideration, roughly 1989-2009. As expected, religion exerted the greatest influence in Iranian foreign policy and the least influence in American foreign policy.

It further revealed that the domestic religion-state relationships conditioned religion's legitimization, mobilization and identity creation functions at the foreign policy levels in all three cases, with one exception. The Russian Orthodox Church is able to provide significant legitimization to domestic policies as the spiritual pillar of a symphonic relationship with the state; at the foreign policy level, however, Russian leaders do not justify their foreign policy actions by reference to Orthodox theology or values. Rather, the ability for the domestic symphonic relationship between church and state in Russia to influence foreign policy is better reflected in the ROC's mobilization and identity creation roles.

This research revealed further that, in some circumstances, larger changes in the structure of the international system can enhance or detract from the salience of religion in foreign policy, as can changes in political leadership. Additionally, the relationship between religion and politics is part of a state's larger political culture, and as such, should be assumed to persist and to continue to exert influence on state policy even

across changes in distinct political institutions. Finally, in all three cases, religious goals or ideology were subordinated to the state's secular goals when exerted at the foreign policy level. This indicates religion's salience in foreign policy will be greatest when secular and religious goals are aligned.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions and Prospects for Future Research

According to Jakobsen and Pelligrini, secularism is a “discourse that invokes powerful moral claims and evinces manifold political effects”.¹ Academics and policy makers have had a difficult time giving up on secularism because the concept is so essentially tied to the similar concepts of freedom, universalism, modernization and progress. Current scholarship is breaking away from this model and investigating the various ways in which secularism and religion exist in the modern world, along with the implications of this co-existence for political systems. By comparing the foreign policies of three cases exhibiting various stages of secularization, this dissertation adds to the literature on religion in modern world politics.

This dissertation investigated the salience of religion in the foreign policies of three modern nation-states and the effect the domestic religion-state relationship may have on that salience. The results indicate that the domestic religion-state relationship can condition (both negatively and positively) the ability for religion to provide legitimation for foreign policy, the ability for religion to mobilize political actors on behalf of or to implement foreign policy, and the ability for religion to create a nation-state’s identity in a way that impacts the state’s relations with other states.

In the United States, the legal separation of religion and state domestically conditions the ability of political leaders to legitimate foreign policies on religious

¹Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pelligrini, eds. *Secularisms* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2008): 7.

grounds; when presidents do resort to religious argument or rhetoric it is necessarily vague and supported by secular arguments. True to the religious public square side of the American religion-state model, religious groups retain significant power to mobilize political actors to support or implement both domestic and foreign policies. Notably, in the post-Cold War world, American political leaders do not rely on religion *per se* to create a unique identity vis-à-vis others, but rather the religion-state relationship itself.

In Russia, the asymmetric symphonia that has emerged at the domestic level in the wake of the Soviet Union is largely replicated at the foreign policy level. Where the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state have coinciding purposes, they can each rely on this resurrected partnership to produce mutually beneficial results globally.

In Iran, the deep integration of Shi'a Islam into the function of the Islamic Republic is naturally reflected at the level of foreign policy. In its ability to legitimate foreign policy actions, its ability to mobilize political action from both a top-down and bottom-up perspective, and its formation of the core of the state's identity, Shi'a Islam plays a salient role in Iranian foreign policy.

This dissertation has also served to generate new hypothesis and avenues of future research. In addition to the domestic relationship of religion and state, this work identified two intervening variables that appeared to affect the salience of religion in foreign policy: the changing structure of the larger international system, and turnover in executive administrations. Either of these topics would warrant an independent full-length analysis. Additionally, in this work, religion was determined to be a "salient" if it performed a legitimation, mobilization or identity construction function in the state's

foreign policy. Each of those religious functions could again be broken into separate investigations.

This work could also be extended in two ways. First, new case studies could confirm or detract from this dissertation's research outcomes, especially if a secularist/laicist case study were added to more fully incorporate the entirety of the religion-state continuum. Alternatively, adopting a quantitative methodology with a large sample base of nation-states could provide statistical validity of this work's findings.

Carolyn Warner and Stephen Walker state "Religion's influence in the interactions of states is one of the great and least understood security challenges of the twenty-first century."² This research suggests that, in the post-Cold War era, scholars and policy makers seeking to better understand religious influence at the international level would be remiss not to first understand fully this same dynamic domestically.

²Carolyn M. Warner and Stephen G. Walker, "Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy: A Framework for Analysis," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7 (2011): 113.

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