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RELIGION AND SECURITY
The New Nexus in International Relations

Edited by
 Robert A. Seiple
 and
 Dennis R. Hoover



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these constraints and make the necessary concessionary adjustments. We also need to empower and bring to bear more effectively those assets we currently have at our disposal that are relevant to this new reality.

Before any of the above can happen, however, national security and foreign policy practitioners must begin to treat religion as a serious variable in the conduct of international relations. Our past disregard for religious considerations has left the United States ill-equipped to deal with religious differences in hostile settings (such as we are now confronting in Iraq) or with demagogues who manipulate religion for their own purposes, as did Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. By way of contrast, the French, when bogged down militarily in the Algerian war for independence, often sent their military chaplains to negotiate with the Muslim insurgents. Thus, even those who gave birth to modern-day secularism understand the need to deal with religious imperatives.

To help address these blind spots, this book provides a much-needed call to arms. It also makes a persuasive case for why religious freedom—as one of the above imperatives—should be treated as a defining element of national security. Unless nation-states give full rein to religious expression, they risk falling victim to political unrest and instability. Further, or stated a bit differently, this book argues that religious freedom actively enhances a nation's security by offering inclusion in political life to elements that might otherwise be excluded. Finally, chief among the other telling points that this book raises, is the attention it calls to the often-overlooked potential of engaging religious leaders in efforts to avoid or abate conflict.

As for the earlier-mentioned concessionary adjustments, one possibility would involve creating a new position within the U.S. Foreign Service: a religion attaché who could be assigned to diplomatic missions in those countries where religion has particular salience. In addition to reporting on relevant religious movements, these attachés could help U.S. missions deal more effectively with complex religious issues that typically get short shrift because of other seemingly more pressing business. A cadre of thirty such attachés at an approximate annual cost of ten million dollars could cover the globe and greatly enhance our ability to anticipate new religious developments and their prospective impact on the conduct of international relations.

Among the assets we already have at our disposal that could be brought to bear in more helpful ways are the chaplain corps of the U.S. military services. Historically, the role of military chaplains has been one of addressing the spiritual needs of the men and women of the command to which they are attached. With additional training and expanded rules of engagement, however, they could significantly enhance their command's ability to deal with the religious dimension of military operations.

Through greater and more effective interaction with local religious communities and nongovernmental organizations, chaplains could develop improved understanding of the religious and cultural nuances at play and help identify incipient threats to stability posed by religious frictions or nonreligious demagogues. At times, they might also be able to provide a reconciling influence in addressing misunderstandings or difficulties that may arise between the commands and local communities. Finally, they could provide informed and politically sensitive advice to their commanders on the religious and cultural implications of operational decisions that are about to be taken or that should be taken. In other words, in addition to their ongoing function of addressing human casualties after conflict has erupted, chaplains could also be viewed as important tools for preventing its eruption in the first instance.

As the events of September 11, 2001, suggest and as this book confirms, the stakes are enormous and the need for action is urgent. No longer can we afford to underestimate religious concerns in the practice of international politics. No longer can we afford the luxury of uninformed foreign policy choice.

Douglas Johnston
April 2004

Introduction: Religion Gets Real

Dennis R. Hoover

JUST AS THERE ARE FEW ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there are few scholars and practitioners of international relations who subscribe to secularization theory. Of course, the assumption of secularization theory—that as modernization advanced, the salience of religion would recede—was being challenged from many disciplinary angles well before 9/11. Already in the 1980s it had become de rigueur in articles and books about “culture wars” in American politics to make introductory remarks about the hapless record of the theory. By contrast, professional discourse about international politics, at least in the West, was somewhat slower to take religion seriously (this notwithstanding the splash made by the “clash of civilizations” debate in the mid-1990s). But 9/11 was a game-changer among observers of international affairs, specialists and spectators alike. Most such observers came simultaneously to a simple, if not simplistic realization: “There are religious fanatics trying to kill us.”

Thus jolted into a consensus that religion matters, it is perhaps no surprise that in the ensuing discussion the nexus of religion and security has been approached mostly in negative terms. That is, security imperatives are, by necessity, at the top of the agenda, and the definitions and paradigms of security are changing in ways that often implicate religion. Especially for Americans, the word “security” used to connote very clear and tangible military images—here, a tank; there, a war between armies; all of it overseas. Then 9/11 happened: educated suicidals, in the name of religion, attacked the United States in ways its military could not defend against. Now the images are much different, but no

less palpable—here, a metal detector; there, the postal worker's rubber gloves; all of it within our borders.

The result has been a new urgency about understanding the ways that violent religious radicalism (often inaccurately described as religious "fundamentalism") can threaten security. And Exhibit A in our display case of security nightmares is, of course, Islamist radicalism. Prior to 9/11 most Westerners assumed this particular threat was mainly an issue of rogue states in the Middle East. Today no one doubts that religious nonstate actors like al Qaeda and its ilk are truly global players to be reckoned with as well. Nor does violence within and between other religious traditions seem quite as far off as it once did, be it Hindus in conflict with Muslims (India), Jews in conflict with Muslims (the West Bank), Christians in conflict with Jews and Muslims (Eastern Europe), or Christians in conflict with Christians (Northern Ireland).

Unfortunately, while there is now broad consensus that the security establishment needs a strategy for containing and reducing violent religious radicalism, there is less understanding of the multiple nuances, alternatives, and dilemmas involved. There has been, perhaps understandably, much anger in the West directed at societies that harbor religious radicals; we wonder why governments in these places cannot (or will not) crack down and keep their own house in order. But if we take the time to understand how religion really works, we can see how crackdowns employing only "hard power" methodologies can be counterproductive. Consider, for instance, Central Asia. In Afghanistan under the Taliban, we witnessed a religiously intolerant regime blow up world-treasured Buddhist monuments, pin yellow stars on Hindus, and provide sanctuary to other intolerant Islamic terrorist groups that eventually attacked the United States as well as other Central Asian countries. With no history of statehood, let alone pluralism, Central Asian governments responded to these terrorist attacks by repressing their citizens' right to worship. In Uzbekistan, for example, as Chris Seiple and Joshua White note in this volume, a reactionary dragnet has oppressed many pious but otherwise non-threatening Muslims. In turn, this repression has ironically created the very environment that terrorists seek, one without mechanisms for political grievance as moderates become receptive to more radical means.

It is an oft-repeated cycle in our world, and in order to break it our analytical paradigms will need to go beyond naive versions of secularization theory. But that is only a start. We will also need to think more holistically about both religion and security. Most importantly, we must not limit our examination of the nexus between religion and security to threat assessments: religion is not only part of the problem; it is part of the solution.

The product of a national conference convened in 2003 by the Institute for Global Engagement, this book takes as its point of departure the following

thesis: nations that do not foster respect for religion will be vulnerable number of significant threats to stability and security. Conversely, nations find a way to protect a principled, robust religious pluralism in civil societies are the most likely to enjoy genuinely sustainable security. There is, put simply, positive nexus between religion and security, and the international community ignores it at its considerable peril. The hard-nosed, security-conscious realists have not always had much in common with the human rights community, as the two typically regard each other with suspicion. The tragic irony is that, especially with respect to religious human rights, they are often sides of the same coin.

This topic comes at a dramatic point in history as governments reconsider their role in the world and the security they provide for their citizens, nongovernmental organizations reconsider their strategies of engagement. Only ten years ago, religious freedom was discussed in mostly domestic terms in the context of highly politicized and tired debates (like school prayer) in culture war. Now we know we are in a real war, a war of mortars and missiles that is simultaneously intranational, transnational—and religious.

While not ignoring tensions between religion and security, this volume charge is foremost the exploration of positive nexus points, with a particular emphasis on resources within the Abrahamic faith traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—for recognizing and acting on such nexus points. The present war on terrorism has been described by some as a "civilizational conflict" that both reflects and exacerbates security problems between the Abrahamic traditions. The challenge to diplomacy is great, but constructive responses will arise by facing religious differences, not papering over them. The distinguished contributors to this volume bring diverse perspectives and expertise to bear, yet they agree that ultimately, sustainable solutions to these problems will be achieved not in spite of faith-based engagement in international affairs but precisely because of it.

The call to bring religion back in? to the study and praxis of international affairs is not entirely new. Indeed, Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson's influential 1994 volume, Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft, help start a wave in the literature that has yet to crest. Unfortunately, however many studies still err on the side of disciplinary insularity and theoretical eclectica. To be sure, specialization is entirely appropriate in some contexts; but religion in international politics is not one of them. Especially outside the West, where notions of compartmentalizing or privatizing faith are often entirely alien, religion's relevance operates at multiple levels; therefore, so many those who would study the role of religion in global public life. Focused in interdisciplinary approaches are needed—approaches that find a common language for the professional discourses of international relations and religion.

Influenced by Johnston and Sampson's work, some international relations specialists have paid lip service to the need to bring faith-based voices directly into the conversation, but too few have found a way to actually do it. Likewise, faith-based communities have too often contributed only moral platitudes on the margins of international relations, rather than engaging the field in depth, thereby earning an actual place at the table. This volume expands the table by bringing together under a unified theme leading scholars and practitioners in security, diplomacy, conflict resolution, human rights, and theology. It differs from existing literature not only in its balanced exploration of religion and security, but also in its candid approach to the incorporation of faith-based voices from the Abrahamic faith traditions. The interaction of these traditions is very much at the center of today's pressing security issues.

Divided into four sections, *Religion and Security* is designed to address sequentially four integral thematic couplings: (1) religious violence and religious repression, (2) religious pluralism and political stability, (3) religious influences on military intervention and postconflict reconciliation, and (4) religious freedom and civil society. The chapters in section I, "Religion and (In)Security: The Twenty-first Century Challenge," describe the key problems and dilemmas of the religion-and-security nexus in contemporary international affairs. Here the risks of misunderstanding either the peril or the promise of religion's influence are compellingly detailed. The remaining sections of the book then address in turn different dimensions of the interdependence between the flourishing of religion and a healthy stability in political society. These chapters break new ground and challenge conventional wisdom about the ability of religion—including religion that is taken seriously, even literally—to have practical relevance in the effort to build sustainable security and to advance human dignity.

In chapter 1, Pauletta Otis surveys the contemporary state of analysis and discourse regarding religion as a factor in security threats and war. She argues that both the U.S. government and the faith-based community tend to address religious issues and actors "in an ad hoc, haphazard, and superficial way." Reviewing the ways in which transnational religion and globalization are changing the traditional assumptions of the Westphalian state system, Otis concludes that "a useful appraisal of the role of religion in warfare will not be limited to a simplistic cause-effect equation (vis-à-vis the motivations of individual combatants) but will add a nuanced approach to religion's contributory effects in dynamic relationship to other factors." → [State - war]

In chapter 2, Philip Jenkins discusses "The Politics of Persecuted Religious Minorities" and argues that "the experience of religious minorities under persecution constitutes a major, if under-explored, element of the explanation of why some processes of nation-building fail." He explains that persecution

often creates an embittered minority that is subversive and receptive to idea of religious violence. Under pressure, the persecuted community may come to see itself as an agent of divine retribution upon the persecutors, creating political unrest, refusing to contribute to national life, or even becoming obsessive about martyrdom.

In chapter 3, a case study of the "crucible of religion and security" that illustrates many of the themes discussed by Otis and Jenkins, Chris Seiple and Joshua White analyze Central Asia generally, and Uzbekistan in particular. Whereas prior to 9/11 many Americans would have had trouble locating the region on a map, the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al Qaeda demonstrated that Central Asia is one of the most geopolitically important contexts of our time. Uzbekistan's experience trying to constrain Islamic militancy via a counterproductive crackdown also highlights the delicate balance of religious freedom and security.

Section II, "Perspectives on Pluralism: Making a World Safe for Diversity" begins with Manfred T. Brauch's chapter on Abrahamic pluralism in theological perspective. He argues that the diversity of the Abrahamic family will offer authentic and stable security when all members—especially theologians from each branch of the family—find the courage to deal honestly with areas of common ground in scripture, thereby enabling the choice of "embrace over "exclusion" in a way that does not sacrifice theological integrity. His primary example is the Abrahamic scriptural legacy of the prophet Isaiah, whose radical vision of blessing and reconciliation for the historic enemies Assyria, Israel, and Egypt was often deliberately mistranslated to suggest ethnoreligious exclusivity.

In chapter 5, Christopher A. Hall further explores themes of pluralism and stability from a specifically Christian perspective, while in chapter 6 Osama bin Bakar does the same from his position in the Islamic tradition. Hall argues against the view that holding and advocating ultimate Truth claims is necessarily incompatible with pluralism. Offering a "Christian dialogical perspective" on the virtues required in good religious diplomacy, Hall argues: "Pursuing differences do not exist, or worse that they don't really mean anything, will not result in consensus 'rules of the game' for pluralism; not more than ever, these norms of discourse are essential for linking religion positively to sustainable security." Bakar then describes an Islamic foundation for pluralism and religious freedom based on his analysis of Qur'anic injunctions such as "there is no compulsion in religion" and of traditions of Islamic discourse and diversity. He contends that true Islam requires not just grudging temporary acceptance but genuine respect and peaceful coexistence.

Section III, "Into the Breach: Restoring Sustainable Security," offers chapters by Jean Bethke Elshstain and Marc Gopin. Each examines different ways

Religion and War in the Twenty-first Century

Pauletta Otis

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY will be a time of religious violence and warfare. Indeed, as religious zealots and opportunists use the power inherent in religious ideology to escalate the forms, levels, and types of violence, there is potential for devastation and destruction previously unknown in human history. Although religion has long been recognized as one factor, among many, relevant to discussions of security and warmaking (for example, the *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello* criteria of just war theory), it is now emerging (or rather, re-emerging) as the single most important political-ideological default mechanism in global conflict. Yet the Western world has had trouble coming to terms with this reality. Some scholars maintain that the West has often been self-blinded to the reality of global religious issues because it is beholden to a ahistorical vision of a “secular” state and therefore unable to provide a full explanation of contemporary warfare. Conversely, others contend that the Western world is only too aware of history—but it merely shudders at the tragic mistakes of past generations without taking proactive steps to learn from them.¹

Pauletta Otis is professor of strategic studies at the Joint Military Intelligence College. Recently retired from the Colorado State University system where she was professor of international relations, she maintains an active speaking and publication agenda. She has lectured at the National War College, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. State Department Defense Intelligence Agency, and CENTCOM. Recent academic and professional publications include “The Academic in the Intelligence Community,” in *Bringing Intelligence About* (DIA/Joint Military Intelligence College, 2003), and “Religious Terrorism and the Religious Terrorist” (*Journal of Defense Intelligence*, 2002).

There are clear cases in which religion contributes to warfare but is not the primary explanatory factor. In Sri Lanka, the Hindu Tamil and Buddhist Sinhalese have had a tragic civil war that seems particularly intransigent. Religion is used as an identity marker, and some religious personages have exacerbated the polarization of the communities by use of incendiary language. Schools and places of worship have been variously destroyed or used as a basis for guerrilla operations. And yet, no one would say that the Sri Lankan conflict is basically about "religion" per se. Ireland is another case in point: the protagonists are separated by religious identity, leaders have been variously contributory to violence and to peace, religious institutions have been used by each as "Catholic" and "Protestant." Clearly religion plays a role, but neither side can really claim that the mandate for violence comes from scripture.

Likewise in Uganda, the Lord's Revolutionary Army uses and abuses children in religious rites and practices prior to sending them into battle for causes largely unrelated to religion. In the Sudan, the parties to the conflict are identified as Muslim and Christian, but neither the causes of nor the cures for the conflict will be found exclusively in their respective theologies. In 1991, Saddam Hussein seemingly became "religious" virtually overnight. Al Qaeda clergy. And, who would contend that the current situation in Palestine and Israel is simply based in the Talmud and Qur'an?

Religion is generally a negative contributory variable in conflict when used in conjunction with other factors. For example, religion can be used to rationalize terrorism primarily undertaken for political goals. It can be used to legitimize the use of weaponry designed to inflict maximum suffering, and it can be a mobilizing factor in genocide by defining the enemy in religious terms. Religion is a significant factor in suicide bombing and death squads, providing both a sense of mission and a promise of reward. Religion plays a role in ethnic violence because it typically is one of the major dimensions of group identification. In some societal contexts, it can undermine the state and thereby contribute to state failure when the leaders of the polity are not seen as "religious enough."²⁰

Finally, religion should not be analyzed solely in terms of its potential negative effects but must also be studied with regard to its "assets."²¹ Religion, more specifically, has power in relation to war and security as a direct result of its control of resources, interpersonal relationships, communications, and expertise.

The resources of religious leaders and institutions include control over goods and services, organizational capabilities, social networks that are community based (but may also be global in scope), and various types of

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charisma, agendas, and programs. The resources of a particular religion are direct result of numbers, reputation, coherence, and willingness to mobilize for political/religious purposes.

Religion is also an important power broker in human relationships. It helps define the attributes of a good and trustworthy person, prescribes rules concerning how individuals are to transact social, political, and economic business, and identifies "friend" and "enemy" according to its criteria. When state fail, or particular political notables are delegitimized, religious personages often help define who, when, and under what conditions a new political leader will emerge. Most importantly, religious leaders are also assumed to be in touch with the power of a Supreme Being and therefore to have special insight concerning social relations among God's children.

An additional asset of religion is that it provides for common means of communication and language among members of a group. Religious leaders have access to media, and know significant written and spoken expertise, nonverbal, symbolic communication. Religious leaders and institutions are often deeply involved in the education of children and the training of future generations. Parents rely on religious educational and medical institutions when government fails to provide those resources. Historical languages often provide a sense of continuity and may be used to great effect in motivational or in symbolic communication. Religious leaders are also accustomed to keeping confidences or secrets, and are trusted for their discretion. Most importantly, religious leaders often have more grassroots credibility in failed or fragile states than political leaders. They therefore have power above and beyond the sheer strength of numbers or observable resources.

Lastly, religious actors usually have expertise that is greater than that of the general population. They have an in-depth knowledge of people, places, and communities. For instance, religious leaders sometimes know more about food, water, and health than others in the community because people in need turn to clergy first. And they typically have intimate knowledge of the sensitivities of their community, including the personal history of community leaders and their families. They move easily in the community and have access to areas off limits to others. Quite literally, they know where the bodies are buried.

Religion, then, is a kind of "force multiplier" — it has significant social-cultural power and is able to affect war and peace more than is commonly recognized. Both on "our" side and the "other" side, religious leaders have the capacity to engage the topic of security, and to use their inherent power to move towards a more peaceful world. But will they actually do it, and will security leaders meet them halfway?

18. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 87.
19. Esposito, *Islam*, 15.
20. Chawkat Moucarry, *The Prophet and the Messiah: An Arab Christian's Perspective on Islam and Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 308–12.
21. Ovey N. Mohammed, *Muslim-Christian Relations: Past, Present, Future* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 35.
22. Esposito, *Islam*, 64.
23. Moucarry, *The Prophet and the Messiah*, 312.
24. Mohammed, *Muslim-Christian Relations*, 37.
25. John D. W. Watts, "Isaiah 1–33," *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 24 (Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference, 1985), 261–62.
26. Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 104–12.
27. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Isaiah 1–39," *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 317–20.
28. Walter Brueggemann, "Isaiah 1–39," *Westminster Bible Companion* (Philadelphia: John Knox, 1998), 165.
29. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1–39* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 381.
30. Brueggemann, "Isaiah 1–39," 165–66.
31. W. Schwarz, "Discussions on the Origin of the Septuagint," in *Studies in the Septuagint: Origin, Recension and Interpretation*, ed. Sidney Jellicoe (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), 110ff.
32. Arie Van der Kooij, "The Old Greek of Isaiah 19:16–25: Translation and Interpretation," in *LXX: VI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Other Cognate Studies, Jerusalem 1986*, ed. Claude E. Cox (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 127–28.
33. G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1956), 341.
34. H. Wildberger, *Jesaja* (Neukirchen Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), 729.
35. Bruce D. Chilton, "The Isaiah Targum" in *The Aramaic Bible*, vol. 2, The Targums (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987), xiii.
36. See Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 87ff, who documents the increasing anti-Semitism in the Christian community.

5

Truth, Pluralism, and Religious Diplomacy: A Christian Dialogical Perspective

Christopher A. Hall

ARGUMENTS ABOUT RELIGION are often explosive, particularly when they occur "within the family." And the Abrahamic family, for its part, has long been acutely argumentative. While some dissension is inevitable, perhaps even healthy, too often the casualty has been security. Indeed, the possibility surely exists, especially in light of recent events in Iraq and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that the foreseeable future will be one of continued violence shaped in large part by religious differences. Rather than the heritage of Abraham leading to peace, freedom, and security, his descendants may well continue to war against one another throughout our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

But is such conflict simply unavoidable? As Charles Kimball puts it, "Are religious people capable of building on the best in their respective traditions? Or are we doomed to live on religious islands, doomed to build contemporary versions of crusader castles until we find more effective ways to destroy one another in the name of God?"¹ Or is there a different path that can be charted, a new road map for the future that can be proposed, so that the descendants

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of Abraham discover in their religious heritage the seeds of peace and security rather than conflict, fear, and disrespect?

There are, of course, many signposts that will be needed along such a path, all of which are likely to be contested. In this essay, I will address one of the most controversial, namely, the debate engendered by what, for lack of a better term, we might call religious "witnessing." Religious pluralism means, inescapably, plural understandings of religious truth. Thus it is not surprising that an increasing source of friction among religions is rooted in disagreements over the dialogical ground rules for communicating sincerely held views of religious truth. Pretending differences do not exist, or worse that they don't really mean anything, will not result in consensus "rules of the game" for pluralism; now more than ever, these norms of discourse are essential for linking religion positively to sustainable security.

The Advocacy of Religious Truth in the Global Public Square

In attempting to help create an arena in which freedom and security flourish, I will focus particularly on a significant supporting element in such a construction project, the pursuit and advocacy of religious truth in global public life. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all grounded in the Abrahamic tradition and each claims to possess the truth. How can these truth claims be reconciled with the need to create a secure environment for all religious traditions to freely practice their faith and express and advocate their own religious truth claims? In discussing this question, I want to propose the practice of a particular form of diplomacy what in this essay I will call religious diplomacy.² This is a diplomacy in which advocates of religious traditions speak from their understanding of religious truth in such a fashion that adherents of other religious traditions are enabled to hear, investigate, and safely accept or reject the religious claims offered.² = Waldgrave 97

What requirements must be met if the religious claim to possess the truth is not to mutate into the dangerous and all-too-familiar attempt to impose that truth on others by means of force—political, military, or otherwise? More specifically, how can religious traditions rooted in the story of Abraham faithfully argue and advocate their truth claims, while simultaneously in love preserve the security of other religious traditions to communicate safely their own perspectives and practices? How can disciples of Moses, Muhammad, and Jesus learn to conduct more effectively the art and discipline of religious diplomacy? The command of Moses and Christ to love God and neighbor must, I believe, be wedded to the frank, open, and lively pursuit of truth. The union of love and truth is possible in a pluralistic religious environment, but

it depends on the self-conscious cultivation of diplomatic virtues that are sadly, too often honored only in the breach.

We must look carefully at what characterizes those people who wisely and lovingly inhabit an environment in which religious freedom and the pursuit of truth in love—and security—are protected and nourished. In this chapter I examine, from my own vantage point within the Christian tradition, the particular ambassadorial virtues and character traits that mark the religious diplomat operating within the Abrahamic tradition. To be sure, issues of methodologies and techniques within the various disciplines of security and human rights must be confronted if holistic security is to be achieved. Yet our best-laid methodologies will sooner or later short-circuit if we do not simultaneously address the question of dialogical virtues in interfaith relations.

We must acknowledge from the beginning that religious diplomacy is no pangea. It may fail. There are problems that will remain unresolved and intractable, simply because of the reality of human evil. As Jean Bethke Elshtain has astutely warned, the naive assumption that rational discussion and negotiation can resolve every conflict and disagreement is a recipe for trouble. "Practicing a reasonableness based on the calculations of the 'humanist' world of infinite negotiation and 'logical' explanation is often of little use in helping us to face harsh evidence unfolding before our eyes. Moreover, naïveté—including the conviction that horrific events are momentary setbacks and will surely be brought to heel by 'reasonable' persons (who shrink from speaking of evil)—can get thousands of innocents killed."³ Still, religious diplomacy a diplomacy grounded in the skills and virtues the Abrahamic tradition applauds, will realistically acknowledge the reality of evil and consistently draw on the highest religious values to act decisively against evil's horrors when they raise their head.⁴

Religious Diplomacy

Think, for instance, of the roles and functions diplomats perform for nation-states. Among other things, effective diplomats represent the interests and concerns of their country to other nations. Diplomats have generally rooted themselves in the history, politics, language, and culture of their own country, but also possess a high level of cross-cultural expertise. An ambassador from the United States to France will no doubt have a deep grounding in French politics, language, culture, and history. In addition to a sound knowledge base, effective diplomats will possess a wide range of skills: the ability to listen well, to communicate effectively, to understand an opposing viewpoint, and so on.

It is somewhat questionable, however, whether the secular diplomat necessarily must possess a large range of virtues in addition to knowledge and skills,

