

Week Four Handout

“Religion and American Foreign Policy through Christian Eyes”

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The Constitution:

The First Amendment and the Roots of a Secular Foreign Policy

Religion in Congress vs. America – The Data

Congressional Religious Belief	#	%
Christian	480	90.5
Agnostic (Unitarian)	1	0.2
Jewish	32	6
Muslim	2	0.4
Buddhist	3	0.6
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Hindu	1	0.2
Unaffiliated None	1	0.2
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Don't Know Refused	10	2
Source: CQ Roll Call & Pew Forum January 3, 2013		

U.S. Religious Belief	#	%
Christian	248M	79.7
Agnostic	43M	13.9
Jewish	5.2M	1.7
Muslim	4.1M	1.3
Buddhist	3.9M	1
New religionist	1.6M	0.5
Hindu	1.4M	0.4
Atheist	1.3M	0.4
Ethnoreligionist	1M	0.3
Baha'i	515K	0.17
Other	798K	.63
Source: World Religions Database Boston University February 9, 2013		

Key Documents

- Declaration of Independence
- Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
- The Constitution of the United States
- The Bill of Rights
- Washington's Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, RI
- Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in Danbury, CT
- U.S. Supreme Court Rulings
 - o Cantwell v. Connecticut (1940)
 - o Everson v. Board of Education (1947)
 - o Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Establishment Clause)

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Four Streams of Thought on Religious Freedom

1. The Puritan View (Theological)
2. The Evangelical View (Theological)
3. The Enlightenment View (Political)
4. The Republican View (Political)

Two Ways to Interpret

1. A “thinner” reading – Prescribe & Proscribe
2. A “thicker” reading – Word-by-word

Sources to Dig Deeper

John Witte, Jr. and Joel A. Nichols. *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*. 3rd Ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010.

Philip Hamburger. *Separation of Church and State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy

- International Religious Freedom Act of 1998
 - o IRF Office @ STATE
 - o USCIRF
 - o NSC @ White House
- White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, 2001
- JP 1-05 Religious Affairs in Joint Operations, 2009
- Office of Faith-based Community Initiatives @ STATE, 2013

Discussion Questions:

Around your tables, take the remaining 10 minutes to discuss the following questions.

1. Is it possible for the U.S. government to “separate” and be “neutral” in regards to religion in conducting foreign policy in today’s globalized world?
2. How should policy makers and government officials factor religion into their decision matrix without violating the spirit and letter of the First Amendment?