

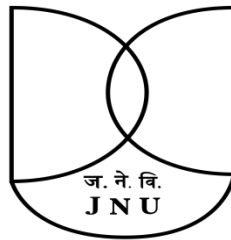
**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY,
1998-2016**

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University

for award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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2021

Declaration and Certificate

Date: 19. Jan. 2021

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “**Religious Freedom in U.S. Foreign Policy, 1998-2016**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.



Souravie Ghimiray

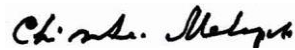
CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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Supervisor

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List of Acronyms

CPC	Country of Particular Concern
DoS	Department of State
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
EPC	Entities of Particular Concern
FBO	Faith-based organization
FCC	Federal Council of Churches
FRPA	Freedom of Religious Persecution Act
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IGOs	International Governmental Organizations
IRF	International Religious Freedom
IRFA	International Religious Freedom Act
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OIRF	Office of International Religious Freedom
UN	United Nations
UNDHR	United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Aid
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
USIP	U.S. Institute of Peace
WHFBO	White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The concept of religious freedom gained importance in the wake of religious resurgence all over the world. The right to religious freedom, was recognized as one of the oldest human rights and was included in the Peace of Westphalia (1648). In another 150 years several pathbreaking statues in various countries enshrined religious liberty, and in the course of 1900s religious freedom found its place in most of the countries especially after the World War II through their constitutions. However, this right got neglected in countries during the course of World Wars and Cold War. The countries which granted religious freedom became vulnerable to several variables such as history of relations between the state and the religion, the types of regime and its stability, the degree of religious pluralism at the local level, and political influence of the dominant religion. The infringements of basic fundamental rights too often led to wars and suffering in the world. In some cases, governments suppressed minorities in the name of protecting national security of a country. Such measures have caused long-term problems like unending cycle of violence, poverty, instability, extremism.

Religious freedom entails the right of an individual to believe or not to believe in religion, to preach and practice without any fear of punishment, to be part of any religious communities, to pass religious tradition to children. Religious freedom for all religious communities includes *inter alia* to establish schools and places of worship train clergy, and to persuade other religious communities for conversion. All the religious communities have the right to equality and protection from law against forceful or violent proselytism. This right guarantees the right to religious communities to take part in debates regarding public policy.

Although, religious liberty may not have gained sufficient attention in the past due to the lack of focus on religious variables in international politics. One of the reasons was the over emphasis on the ‘secularization thesis’ which hoped that religion would fade into irrelevance along with the process of modernization. But the rise in religious persecution by authoritarian regimes and non-state actors revealed that religion was

central in understanding those conflicts. Johnathan Fox and Shumel Sandler (2004) viewed that among all other social sciences the discipline of IR ignored the role of religion in International politics. This was caused mainly by the combination of factors like the influence of western centric worldview of social sciences in IR, and too much emphasis on behaviorism and the use of quantitative methodology in pursuing IR. These approaches often ignored variables that could not be quantified including the variables of religion. U.S. after gaining the status of superpower in mid 20th century tried to promote religious freedom as a part of their foreign policy especially after 9/11 attacks. President G.W. Bush in *National Security Strategy* (NSS) (2002) referred to religious issues as a part of national security agenda, with the aim of resolving religiously driven conflict and eliminating threats from violent religious extremism. The notion behind supporting religious freedom was to ameliorate bigger problems concerned with terrorism, authoritarianism that was intrinsically linked to economic deprivation, inter-communal strife, religious extremism and other form of discrimination which had a potential of fomenting violence and conflicts.

The U.S. addressed issues surrounding religion in various diplomatic, humanitarian, development work, security initiatives before 1998 IRFA. But this Act was the first major step in incorporating religious issues fully in the U.S. foreign policy. The Act centralized religious freedom with the aim of helping the persecuted and used various tools to enhance respect for this right promote respect for religious freedom by all. This Act was created with the primary aim of opposing religious persecution, religiously motivated discrimination, removing intolerance, freeing religious prisoners and promoting religious freedom. While there was a rise in the awareness on the importance of religion in conflict prone regions, but the lack of effective means in recognizing religious factors sometimes led to negative perception regarding motives of US IRF policies. Problems arising out of religious causes and discrimination prompted establishment of religious liberty by the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1947, due to the plight of the Jews in Nazi Germany pushed for establishing this right as a fundamental inviolable right. But the U.S. took several decades before making it a part of its foreign policy mainly due to the Cold War rivalry between the two superpowers- U.S. and the Soviet Union. Soon after the end of Cold War the

suppression of religious communities all around the world got wide attention which led to the incorporation of IRF in the U.S. foreign policy.

The negligence of religion in foreign policy agenda persisted despite the eruption of religiously linked conflicts in the world. The reluctances of U.S. officials evinced the past failing in addressing the problems connected with religion, as religion was viewed to be monolithic and complicated (CSIS Report 2007). The subject of religion was approached with narrowed interest. For instance, the Iraq and Afghanistan counterterrorism policies were overemphasized with hard power strategies and ideational factors such as religion necessary to counter ideologies of terrorists were not given much focus. Thomas F. Farr (2008) maintains that the lack of religious freedom is inter-connected to persecution, religious violence, and terrorism, which indirectly places religion within the ambit of national and international security. Without embracing religious liberty, establishing democracy cannot be a fruitful pursuit at a time when religion is increasingly intertwined with violent extremism and political violence. Moreover, the U.S. counterterrorism policy and Democracy promotion has not been successful despite spending large resources towards unrealized goals in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unsurprisingly, Washington did not fully focus on issues triggered by religion and religious freedom whilst dealing with countries like Iraq and Pakistan which was basically mired in religious extremism and had anti-religious freedom outlook.

Misunderstanding religion has led to missed opportunities or proved even counterproductive. For instance, in 2006 a missile strike in Pakistan religious school killed 80 people resulting in abandoning of a peace deal to be signed that day. Attacks on religious institutions has proved detrimental, making the rest of the population feel disillusioned and making them side with the Taliban. Underestimating the importance of religion in mitigating conflict has interfered with national security objectives. The knowledge on religious issues in the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracies and circles during the Cold War was almost negligible and religion was considered unimportant in the foreign policy narratives.

Engagement with religious actors abroad was avoided because religion was viewed as something that was best kept in private and the separation of Church state interpretation was followed very strictly. But just after the Cold War there was a

drastic rise in religious engagement and focus on religious actors and issues increased. During the Cold War period, concerns for religious issues, actors and norms were not paid much heed. Before the 1990s there was lack of interest in understanding about religious dynamics that had deep links with eco, political and security concerns. It did little to reach out to religious communities and leaders concerning religious issues to promote peace and cooperation. This however did not mean that religious issues were completely unnoticed, but it was done in an ad hoc manner.

There was a search for new paradigms by the U.S. foreign policy establishment in the new order after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Francis Fukuyama's (1992) ideas on the "end of history" envisioned the victory of political liberalism facilitating peaceful and prosperous era. In Samuel Huntington's work on "clash of civilizations" thesis (1993), his account of civilizations based on religious identity and history created popular debates around civilizational dialogue and future wars based on civilizational lines. Coincidentally there were ethnic-religious conflicts taking place in the former Yugoslavia and spread of Islamic movement in the Middle East. This gave focus on the issue of religion in international politics and U.S. government started to take note of cultural and religious significance in international politics. The renewed issues related to religion propelled religious freedom in the forefront.

The importance of religious freedom increased in the cultural sphere especially with the contested problems arising in the field such as issues of proselytism, and role of women as affected by religion. The events leading to September 11, 2001 led to a massive shift in the thinking related to religion, security and freedom, it showed that modern civilizations are indeed vulnerable to attacks by actors such as Al Qaeda who were deeply influenced by religion among other reasons in perpetrating the attack. The raw visual impact of the attack created too much hype and the religious aspect could not be hidden any longer.

The religious resurgence became more evident in global politics, there were host of events that indicated the importance of religious variables such as, the rise of religious right groups in various countries, rise of political Islam, demise of atheist communism, spread of religious movements in Eastern Europe, etc.. Ethnicity and religion tend to have close connection in various conflicts such as between the Serbs and the Croats in former Yugoslavia, Shia and Sunni in Iraq, Christians and Muslim

in Indonesia. Intercommunal violence has been one of the gravest forms of violence. The decade of 1990s was tumultuous due to interreligious conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, persecution in Algeria and Sudan and intercommunal killings in Northern Ireland. There is plethora of examples where religious causes have led to violence and death of thousands. For instance, the intercommunal violence led to death of Copts in Egypt in 2000, in Nigeria sectarian violence killed hundreds in 2002. In 2011 the rise of ISIS as an evolved form of Islamic terrorism killed thousands causing enormous chaos and destruction in Syria and Iraq. In Western countries the potential link between religion and violence is seen during the occasional bombings and suicide attacks motivated by religion in the United States, Japan, Switzerland, France, and Belgium.

The research so far has indicated that the U.S. government's approaches to religion and religious issues in places of instability, violence and conflicts have improved over the years. Several U.S. agencies have understood the role of religion and have incorporated practices enabling the officials to address the problems associated with religious issues. For example, intelligence community addresses religious conflicts as a major global problem, the military progressively developed strategies to approach religious leaders for stability operations. USAID incorporated religious sensitivities into its democracy promotion objective by actively working with faith based organizations.

The U.S. State department transformed to some degree after the inclusion of the IRFA in 1998, this Act installed the Office of International Religious Freedom (OIRF) within State Department. It mandated an independent body of "U.S Commission on International Religious Freedom" (USCIRF). Under the IRFA, engagement with religious communities and issues has increased since its formation and US government aimed to promote IRF by developing programs involving topics related to religion. The research entails to understand the attitude of U.S. government towards ever increasing role of religious actors in 21st century through its foreign policy. It traces historical perceptions of the U.S. government towards the idea of religious freedom in foreign policy decisions and provides a basis for understanding the need for "promotion of religious freedom" all over the world. It covers the concept of religious freedom from the founding period of U.S. and goes on to analyse its evolution through several periods till the passing of the IRFA. This study focuses on

the U.S. institutions, Presidents, global events and phenomena in addressing the promotion of IRF and its outcome.

Survey of Literature:

Importance of Religion in the Study of International Relations:

Realist theories views states as unitary actors and foreign policy is important to fulfill the objective of gaining material power. But in contemporary times non-material forces such as religion have gained wide significance and co-related to national security. The primordial identities are resilient to the force of modernisation and the rapid social transformations led to the abandoning of traditional social norms and structures. But this transformation could not kill the primordial identities. In fact, religious identities have been under resurgence since the late 1970s, as revealed by the increase in significance of religious right groups in the U.S. and internationally the installing of theocracy in Iran in 1979 have underscore the limits of secularization paradigm. Fox, J. and Sandler, S. (2004), “***Bringing Religion into International Relations***”, has demonstrated the importance of religion in International politics. Fox and Sandler along with the works of other authors like Huntington (1993), Goff and Dunn (2004), Hall and Jackson (2007), Lapid and Kratochwill (1997) have analyzed the role of religion, culture and identity in global politics. They have questioned the secular bias that was the norm until now in vast areas of social sciences and international relations research, with its foundation rested on modernization and realist theories.

Jurgensmeyer, M (1994), “***The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State***” have explored religious nationalism in three global regions: The Middle East, South Asia, and the former Marxist states, with each region including several case studies. These case studies has provided the foundation for analysing common patterns of religious revolt, the tendencies toward violent confrontations, and structural factors that explain when and why religious movements are compatible with socialist ideology. He has acknowledges that there might be difficulties in comprehending the idea that religion can form a legitimate part in the workings of nation-state.

In Monica Duffy Toft et.al (2011), “*God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*”, The authors have mentioned the influence of religion in international politics, and they have argued that the religious actors contribute in a good way for enhancing the democratization process. The book also included case studies of the relationship between religious terrorism and the state in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Israel and Saudi Arabia. The authors view that in order to accommodate religious actors, countries should learn to co-exist and not dismiss them as irrelevant. The fact is to learn to live with religious actors because they will be part of public life in the future shaping public life to a great extent and will shape political outcomes. Fox, J. (2001), in “*Religion as an Overlooked Element of IR*”, views that religious beliefs of leaders and policymakers have influenced their worldviews and decisions. He cites the concept called “*psychological premiums*” described by Weber in which religions place psychological premiums on actions that guide in evaluating one’s actions and behavior. These belief systems are very important for our mind to process thoughts that we tend to overlook any ideas that may be opposite to such beliefs. Hence, religiously inspired views of policymakers can lead to intractable policies such as war and aggressive actions.

U.S. Government and Religious Freedom:

After the end of Cold War the U.S. foreign policy makers lacked consensus at arriving at the meaning of religious freedom and could not internalize the reality in which the U.S. was engaged where religion played a significant role. Additionally, there were difficulties in bringing religion in the ambit of international politics- mainly due to the role of various schools of thought in U.S. diplomacy ranging from realism, liberal internationalism and neo-conservatism that did not paid much heed to religious dynamics. Farr (2008) in “*World of Faith and Freedom- Why International Religious Security is Vital to American National Security?*” mentions the importance of International Religious Freedom Act. Farr mentions that IRFA although have not been able to fully implement religious freedom policies but it has been significant to lessen violent persecution in countries like Vietnam, Serbia-Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The importance of religious freedom is increasingly recognized globally and affirmed by various declarations and treaties. The articulation of this right was recognized by

the overwhelming majority of world constitutions, still many states fail to fulfil these rights. By examining various laws related to religious liberty Hertzke, A.D. (2013), in *“The Future of Religious Freedom: Global Challenges”*, views that the law has been helpful in protecting the rights of minorities. The book maintains that religious pluralism and freedom are interconnected phenomena and facilitating religious pluralism has helped in securing the religious rights of people and communities. Philpott, et al (2011), in *“God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics”* maintains that the present century is a ‘god century’, this characterization is due to reasons such as return of religious issues in politics of the world since 1960s. Philpott views that religious conflicts need to be eliminated or at least reduced to avoid bigger future conflicts. And religious freedom in the US foreign policy needs to be revamped.

John Whitte Jr. and Nichols A. Joel (2010) in *“Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment”* present an introduction to the history of religious freedom in the United States. The book is significant in understanding the concept of religious freedom. It traces the conceptual and legal history of religious liberty from the colonial period to present day and includes topics such as funding of religious schools, display of religious symbols on public property and the relationship between religious organizations and the law. The authors have discussed the Supreme Court cases that has set the standards for these issues through their First Amendment interpretations.

Farr, T (2006), *“The Diplomacy of Religious Freedom”* views that if U.S. aims at spreading Democracy then it must first understand the powerful religious communities. He maintains that the foreign policy bureaucracy viewed religion as a private matter and beyond the bounds of policy analysis and action. The 1998 IRFA required U.S. foreign policy to promote religious freedom but the act was not fully pursued by the State department to advance religious freedom. The effective implementation of IRFA was affected due to the preference of other policies which was considered to be more important, like the war on terrorism and other national security policies. Similarly, Jose Casanova (2010) in *“Balancing Religious Freedom and Cultural Preservation”* perceives that religious freedom may not align well with all the countries and the meaning may be interpreted differently by different countries. Hence, the implementation of this policy has to be contextually specific. Especially

the idea of religious freedom emphasizing on individuals has come into conflict with the indigenous population in different countries. This right was seen as a foreign concept and the author suggests that U.S. instead of pressuring religious groups in protecting religious freedom it needs to accomplish more by exhibiting ‘global denominationalism’ rather than promoting religious freedom.

Pastor, E.R. (2005), “*The Flawed Interpretation of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998: A European Perspective*” particularly mentions that U.S. has been acting unilaterally in implementing the Act in the promotion of IRF. The U.S. has approached the topic of religious freedom rights in a unilateral manner of monitoring countries. But it also aims at multilateral engagement like NGOs and religious activist groups for effective implementation of this policy. Due to the tendency of acting unilaterally it has raised suspicion on the motives of U.S. which may be other than promotion of religious freedom.

The idea of religious freedom is useful for developing democratic rights and institutions, and maybe important in supporting “democratic peace” theory. Some of the writers like Inboden (2012), has correlated between religious freedom violation and threat to U.S. national security. He argues that the greatest number of countries violating religious freedom has posed a potential threat to U.S. and yet this understanding was absent from the U.S. government and strategic community, which remains a difficult problem. Despite having rooted in pluralism it has made little progress in advocating religious freedom. In “*Religious Freedom and National Security*” Inboden views that religious liberty is often described as the “first freedom” that undergirds other democratic freedoms, and not just merely a substitute for other civil liberties but rather a foundational issue in its own right.

Daniel Philpott (2007) in “*Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion*”, argues that in some religions promotion of democracy is acceptable while in others it can provoke political violence. The factors mainly connected with such condition refers first to the degree of autonomy between state and religion and second it is in relation to political theology or an ideological disposition of a religion towards the state. Ultimately, Philpott argues that the most stable relationship between religion and state occurs where there is religious freedom and a majority religion that supports a secular state. Similarly, Khan (2016) in “*Religious Freedom as a National Security*

Imperative: A New Paradigm” analyses that the national security of U.S. can be bolstered by helping build religiously pluralistic world. He takes up the case of Pakistan which enforces hostile treatment to religious minorities and can actively serve as a blueprint for understanding the religious freedom policy. He points out that laws like anti-blasphemy in Pakistan’s has been very much related to the problem of terrorism and violence. The logic behind such law was based on the faulty premise such as maintenance of public order in Pakistan’s.

Seiple (2004) in “*Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations*” talks about the relationship between religion and security by focusing on religious pluralism and stability, religion and military intervention. Several authors in this edited volume has discussed about the persecution of minorities in several countries. Chris Sieple and Joshua White has offered study on the state repression of religion and crucial role of security and religion in Central Asia.

Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy:

There is an understanding in the recent times that religious groups enjoy tremendous hold on policy-making in Washington. Due to this the officials in the U.S. government has started to take notice of the religious issues abroad. For instance, John Kerry stated in 2013 that he would give a high priority to religious engagement during his tenure. He maintained that the U.S. bureaucracy has gradually started to acknowledge the importance of religion. And recommended that the future administration has to involve individuals willing to collaborate religion and foreign policy. Birdsall, J. (2016), “*Keep the Faith: How American Diplomacy Got Religion, and How to Keep It*” views that the American diplomats have realized the importance of religion and its link with the issues of religious extremism, but he views that it relates to many other issues. Abrams Elliott (2001) examines the influence of religion in U.S. foreign policy, and it focuses on the past experiences of the U.S. government in dealing with the topic of religious persecution and challenges faced by the government in dealing with this subject.

In Albright, M. (2006), “*The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on God, America, and World Affairs*” argues that U.S. cannot bifurcate religion from public policy, and for its own interest the U.S. should develop a healthy relation with the Muslim majority countries by focusing on diplomatic measures to deal with religious

and secular leaders. The U.S. is seen to be crucial in establishing democracy especially in the Middle East and it needs to have a wider engagement with democratic Islamic governments. Douglas and Sampson (1994) in “*Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*” shows the importance of religion in conflict regions. The author views that there was a minimal understanding of religious dimension in Iranian politics by the U.S. government. He notes that the diplomacy in reaching out to the mullahs was inappropriate and was mistakenly perceived as a way to modify Islamic fundamentalism. In addition, no serious attempt was made in connecting with the religious leaders in Iran or Pakistan. Finally, in 1979 Iranian revolution culminated, further, dividing the lines between Shia and Sunni across the Middle East. Another instance was the failure of U.S. government in recognizing the importance of religious elements in Nicaragua in the 1980s. Washington failed to pay substantial attention to the Nicaraguan church and its influence in the revolution. The author views that the victory of Sandinistas was due to the wide support from the church and lay forces of the Nicaraguan Christian Democratic Party.

Larry Diamond, et.al (2005), titled “*World Religions and Democracy*”, includes chapters from various renowned leaders and scholars including His Holiness the Dalai Lama draws relationship between liberal democracy and religion. The opening chapter by Alfred Stepan entitled, — “*Religion, Democracy and the Twin Tolerations*” explains concept of differentiation but mutual respect between political officials and religious authorities. The rest of the book deals with sections on Eastern religions, Judaism and Christianity, and Islam. Jean Bethke Elshtain, et al. eds. “*Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World*” draws from experts on the topic of religion, morality and politics. This collection of essays analyses if religious morality and ideals should influence foreign policy or not. Contributors including Michael Walzer, J. Bryan Hehir, and Shibley Telhami examine the ways in which moral argument has been necessarily embedded in foreign policy decision-making.

Allen Hertzke (2004), in “*Freeing God’s Children*” describes the role of faith-based movements to oppose human rights abuses globally by repressive regimes and non-state actors. He views that what started as Christian movement to raise issues against religious persecution of Christians gave rise to a larger movement of defending human rights. It led to inclusion of all the world religions due to the alliance of

diverse religious groups in support of religious liberty and eliminating persecution and intolerance. He illustrates this with case studies that helped in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

In another work by Douglas Johnston *“Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik”* views increasing role of faith-based diplomacy with focus on religious issues in global politics. He notes that extreme secularism in diplomacy in the name of separation of church and state may not be beneficial if the aim is to lessen violence related to religious issues, especially because religious concerns are often deeply entrenched in ethnic conflict. Understanding the role of religious actors in global events is important for preventing future violence. Johnston examines several contemporary case studies in which religious tenets could be applied in the name of peacemaking. Similarly, Marshall, Jennifer A. and Thomas F. Farr. (2009) in *“Public Diplomacy in an Age of Faith- Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy”* views the importance of public diplomacy in religious freedom promotion. Due to the excess secular perceptions of decision-makers and neglecting religion in foreign policy has led to psychological distance between the U.S. and rest of the world. Even though Americans were largely religious, foreign policy failed to notice such dynamics. They prescribed a set of 10 approaches needed to have an effective public diplomacy based on religious freedom-including effectively communicating the benefits of religious freedom to religious majorities and tapping religious traditions for values that support civil society and less constitutional government.

Johnston, Douglas’s (2001) *“Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement”* offers a practical blueprint for implementing his concept of faith-based diplomacy. He offers a new framework for engaging with religious communities as a guiding point for US policies abroad. It gives an overview of increasing efforts towards religious engagement of military chaplains and faith-based NGOs and Religion Attaches to embassies stationed in several countries. The spiritual engagement of US foreign policy is an important character of renewed policies through which religious freedom can be pursued. Greges, F. A (1999), *“America and Political Islam- Clash of Cultures or Interest”* gives a crisp view of the U.S. policy towards Muslim countries. Greges has given an account of the inconsistencies between the U.S. officials rhetoric and actions

regarding the role of Islam in political process. He points out that the discourses of Presidents such as H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton which mostly tried to reach out only to the moderate Muslims, and didn't need the importance to view Islamic resurgence. Both the administration rejected the clash of civilization hypothesis and viewed the superiority of America in bridging the spiritual gap between the two civilizations. On the other hand, U.S. support of IRF created a new space for religion in international law and incorporated global religious freedom as one of the important components of its foreign policy, Salleh, A. M. (2011), "*The International Religious Freedom Act 1998 and the Role of Religious Movement*", has highlighted the impact of the IRF Act to U.S. foreign relations with other countries specifically with the Muslim countries. In addition, it also gives an overview of the role of American evangelicals in the formation of the Act. But their role has been limited in the implementation of the Act, rather its implementation through foreign policy was based on the considerations of U.S. national interest and viewed that the freedom to practice religion was important in promotion of peace and security all over the world.

Rationale

The purpose of this study has two main goals; firstly, it examines the idea of promotion of religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy narrative and analyses the role of US government's effort in promoting this right. Secondly, it examines the policy of international religious freedom in lessening religious persecution and intolerance globally. So far, the literature on religious freedom has paid some attention to the importance of religion in international politics but may not be sufficient in measuring the outcome of such a policy. The literature also suggests that the U.S. foreign policy makers have finally recognized the importance of religion in international politics but there is a scant research on how and why such a transition took place in their attitudes. This study highlights the religious freedom agenda in foreign policy prior to the 1990s which is missing in the literature.

There is social manifestation of religion that seems to affect societies in various ways. Religion forms a base for identity and according to Huntington the civilizations based on identity have driven politics post-cold war. The religious freedom can be best understood from the ideational factors like beliefs and worldviews rather than through

a hard realist assumption. Role of culture and religion, matters in this context and focusing on these factors and relating to the foreign policy can be quite complex. The policymaker's policies regarding the culture and traditions of other states plays a crucial role for any foreign policy to have positive outcome. Analyzing the belief systems of the policymakers for decision-making process is crucial and especially for a policy dealing with ideational factor like religion. The study draws attention on the relation between religious freedom policy and the worldviews of the Presidents to answer how this right became part of the U.S. foreign policy. This thesis starts by analyzing the U.S. foreign policy establishment and explains the realities of U.S. globally affecting the understanding of religious freedom. It pays attention to the norms and values of actors involved in making of US foreign policy.

The research aims at elaborating the concept of religious freedom by tracing its evolution from the pre-independence era in America and goes on to highlight the ways in which the U.S. government has dealt with the question of religious freedom. It focuses on the involvement of role of religion in global politics within the timeframe from 1990s to 2016. This period has been chosen specifically due to the passing of the Act in 1998 and various events that happened globally which had direct or indirect impact on the U.S. interests. In addition, this period witnessed the gradual change in the attitudes of the U.S. policy-makers and practitioners from undermining religious factors to the recognition of the significance of religion in global politics which culminated in the passing of IRFA of 1998. In analyzing the reasons for such a transition, the study will find out the conditions that led to such a change in the outlook of the policymakers.

Given the increase in the rate of religious violence mostly inflicted upon minorities and the aims of IRFA in addressing this issue, the research will identify the ways in which the U.S. government has addressed religious issues in humanitarian, diplomatic and security initiatives. It has tried to cover most of the aspects surrounding religious freedom in global politics and it links important foreign policy issues such as democracy promotion, counterterrorism and public diplomacy. It analyses the importance of religious freedom in engaging the religious communities in eliminating religious persecution, discrimination and intolerance in the world. Overall, the research aims to study U.S. foreign policy objectives and how religion as a component has affected the foreign policy making of U.S. Although this research may

not lead to bridge the caveat that has been there due to the lack of inclusivity of role of religion in the study of International politics, but it aims to be useful in enhancing the understanding of religion as a variable in international conflicts and events. It has analyses the U.S. foreign policy establishment's role and perception about religious issues and account for the changing realities internationally.

Research questions:

The study intends to delve into some of the critical questions concerning religious freedom in the US foreign policy context. These questions are only indicative in nature and the study will analyze many other questions relaxant to the topic.

- How is U.S. different than other civilizations and does religious and cultural factors condition the worldview of the U.S. foreign policy makers?
- Why does the U.S. government perceive Islam as a threat to the western interests?
- How have U.S. foreign policy practitioners interpreted Theocratic governments?
- What is the approach of U.S. to religious groups in other countries and internationally?
- What are the reasons for not considering the significance of religion by the U.S. government in the past?
- What institutions and initiatives have been developed to engage with various religious state and non- state actors?
- Is there any consensus between the foreign policy makers on the idea of promoting religious pluralism?
- What are the obstacles in pursuing promotion of religious pluralism abroad?

Hypotheses:

- Promotion of religious freedom has not helped reduce extremism in various parts of the world.
- Promoting religious freedom is a tool of U.S. interventionism.

Methodology:

Research Design:

The research design for this study is mainly exploratory, non-experimental. Due to the lack of control over subject presented in the study this design is compatible for this research. The study develops understanding of specific policy of religious freedom in the foreign policy of US, which will strengthen insights and familiarity on the field of religion and foreign policy and leaves room for future research and creation of new ideas.

Qualitative Research:

The research is mainly qualitative in approach, the framework under qualitative approach seeks to explore phenomena and given the context and the area of research- this approach will be conducive to study phenomena linked with religion. Under this research various non-numerical data was collected from the secondary sources. But several quantitative information was used while carrying out the research mostly in the form of already existing survey reports, statistical reports and interview.

Collection of Data:

The information was used form both primary and secondary sources, the primary source include materials like Presidential speeches, government hearings, official records, U.S. government databases. The secondary sources for the research was taken from reviewing and analysing of secondary information available in published forms, including data from books, media, journals, etc., in addition, electronic data and already available surveys conducted by various organizations, also provided data sources for the research.

Chapter Outline:

This study is divided into six chapters including introduction and conclusion. The introductory chapter or Chapter 1 gives an overview of the thesis. It discusses about the aims and objectives of the study, and provides a background knowledge on survey of literature, research questions and hypothesis, methodology, and research puzzle.

The second chapter - “*Emergence of Religious Freedom in U.S.-Domestic Context*” briefly analyses the historical context in which religious freedom emerged in the US. Religious intolerance was one of the vexing issues prior to the enumeration of religious liberty in the Bill of Rights. The chapter is crucial in understanding the influence on the founding fathers and their support of this freedom. It helps in building the narrative that ultimately led to the incorporation of this freedom in foreign policy.

The third chapter - “*Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy in the Context of Religious Freedom*” gives a broad overview of the link between religious freedom and U.S. foreign policy. It is divided into three main themes and sub themes. The first is the intellectual sources that tend to support or align with the policy of religious freedom, the second is the ideational roots of religious freedom and the third theme is the empirical sources relating to the global events.

The fourth chapter- “*Institutionalizing Religious Freedom: Internal and External Factors*” discusses the role of global events and causes that led to changes in the foreign policy thinking and incorporation of religious freedom in foreign policy of U.S. It analyses the global events and covers wide range of topics from religious persecution, to human rights abuses in the world, that led to actors in the US to push for legislation concerning international religious freedom. It focuses on External factors such as the resurgence of religion in global politics, role of Islam, international norms and internal factors as a result of the external ones such as the desecularisation of U.S. foreign policy, role of NGOs and transnational religious activists, etc.

The fifth chapter- “*International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA): Advancing Religious Freedom*”, analyses the major legislation, and implementation part of the US religious freedom policies under various Presidents and bodies mandated by the Act. It discusses important policy issues linked with the IRF policy and where it lags in effectively promoting religious freedom abroad.

The Sixth chapter- “*Conclusion*” is the final chapter that summarizes the findings from the study.

Chapter 2

Emergence of Religious Freedom in U.S.-Domestic Context

Introduction:

The Virginia statute for the religious freedom of 1786 was the first document to enshrine religious liberty as a natural right. The provision of religious liberty is considered as the precursor to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which was significant in establishing that all men had equal right to practice religion dictated by their conscience, free of coercion. led to the establishment of the idea that all men are equal and entitled to exercise any religion according to the dictates of their conscience, without any force or coercion. Since then, the idea of religious freedom got central focus in America and was recognized as the hallmark of American democracy.

The founders of the United States agreed that the religious freedom and conscience formed the basis of liberty. It was one of the first freedoms to be inserted in the Bill of Rights. They viewed that the protection of other basic rights like freedom of speech, was not achievable if it failed to honor the human conscience. This right was considered inherent and absolute for every person of faith to follow, and it became the cornerstone of American democracy that survived two centuries of immense challenge. Religious freedom is not free from internal problems in America itself. But by the end of the millennium, religious freedom defined not only domestic politics but also the foreign policy in the form of “International religious freedom Act of 1998”.

The founding fathers consulted and drew from various sources, including history, philosophy, and Christianity in dealing with questions of tyranny and preservation of liberty. Their solution was separating Church and State leading to division of power and avoid mixing politics and religion. For removing intolerance and assuring religious liberty, the First Amendment of 1791 gave individuals the ability to not just

dissent but also the right to choose the religion they wish to follow without any coercion or force.

The United States' Declaration of Independence (National Archives n.d.) holds the legacy of liberal ideas and Judeo-Christian principles that "*men are created equal*" and "*endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.*" Certain rights are inherent and cannot be granted or taken by any form of authority including the state or kings. Thus, This document establishes that "*to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men.*" Hence, the main aim of the liberal state includes protection of such rights of a person.

The mixing of politics and religion in the U.S. has a long history from the time when Puritans from England set foot in America to avoid religious persecution. Likewise, people of faith and leaders participated in several social movements to fight for the rights of individuals in the past century. The beleaguered Pilgrim from Europe set foot in the U.S. with the fear of persecution, and it became a symbol of religious freedom. The founding fathers of the U.S. -Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, inherited the legacy of Pilgrims and carried the idea of religious freedom in the crucial documents of the "Declaration of Independence" and the U.S. Constitution.

This important precept got institutionalized in the U.S. foreign policy after two centuries in 1998 under the International Religious Freedom Act. Since then, the Act guided U.S. foreign policy on issues of religious freedom abroad. For finding out reasons behind the significance of religious freedom and its place in U.S. foreign policy, this chapter is a background to the foundation of U.S. religious freedom. It lays an overview of the important legislations and ideas that helped in shaping religious freedom in America. For that reason, it investigates the very first instance when religious freedom became an integral part of the American Constitution, leading to the First Amendment.

American Colonies and Religious Intolerance

Throughout American history, various religious groups arrived in America to escape religious persecution. As early as 1564, the French Protestants arrived in the U.S. due to religious persecution. In the 1600s, Puritans came to the U.S. due to the fear of

persecution for religious dissent in England. The settlers of New England (consisting of six states) were mostly Puritans and established a society with both church and civil governance, mainly based on the congregational understanding of church polity. Every town had congregations selecting their own ministers with compulsory church taxes. The Puritans had developed their community in a foreign, but others were not welcomed, hence, the groups of other faiths were not accommodated, it severely restricted religious pluralism in the country.

The colonies in America were formed by those escaping religious persecution in Europe, due to the attempt of the Church of England to establish single religion in the country; the other variants of Christianity were forced to flee. Out of the thirteen British colonies, eight had official or established churches. Religious groups enjoyed a strong hold in the colonies by enforcing strict religious laws throughout the colony and local town. The dissenters were often met with punishment or asked to adhere to the form of Christianity, and non-Christians were persecuted.

Apart from the Christians, Jews also arrived in the U.S. to escape persecution in search of religious and civil liberty, but they had to face a lot of hardships and discrimination because of their religio-ethnic identity. The number of Jews was less than 2000 (Corrigan and Lynn 2010) in the 18th century, but the religious difference did not go unchecked. With the increase in the number of Jewish immigrants, social forms of anti-Jewish prejudice started to surface, leading to the rise of anti-Semitism, mainly by the Christians who wanted to defend their religious and racial purity of America.

Colonial America was largely divided on the issue of religion, and every colony had different sect of Christianity. The size of the colonies was big enough for several sects to flourish. For instance, the Anglicans of Church of England resided in Massachusetts and in Virginia, there were Puritans. In Pennsylvania Quakers lived, Baptists were in Rhode Island, Roman Catholics got refuge in Maryland. Every colony had a prominent religious character and supported a single denomination's power.

In Massachusetts the Congregationalist widely persecuted the dissenters. They banned Catholics from the colonies, along with other non-Puritans (Carter 1987). In Boston,

persecution of four Quakers took place between 1659 and 1661 for standing up for their beliefs (Davis 2010). Other dissidents were brutally horsewhipped or jailed. By the 1680's, such violent treatment stopped, but intolerance and hostile treatment of other sects persisted.

By contrast, the Church of England was under the English Crown in Virginia and it had a strict social oversight. Virginia and New England both had religious establishments, but they stood as opposing systems. In New England, the establishment rose from the grassroots level while in Virginia, the authority came from above with governmental control of religion. In the colonies, differences persisted among Anglican and Puritans, and between 1680 and 1760 Anglicanism and the Puritans became the leading denominations in the greatest number of American colonies. In the eighteenth century, Virginia became the most intolerant colony. (McConnell 1990): The number of religious sects increased in the colonies, with sects such as Quakers, Baptists and Presbyterians entering the colonies the authorities stopped the right of these rights to preach. They became victim of violence and intolerance. The Virginia system of intolerance spread to other parts, including Maryland and Southern states.

In New York and New Jersey, the religious intolerance was still at minimum levels compared to any other colonies. Due to the prevalence of religious diversity, religious tolerance was practiced to some degree. Even though some counties had established churches, New York was still better at tolerance levels compared to Virginia. Protestants were mostly allowed to practice their faiths including Quakers and Jews.

There were a host of states founded by different religious groups, and some sects faced persecution or discrimination in most of them. Some became a haven for dissenters and followed relaxed rules for religious freedom. Maryland was the first haven for dissenters; a Catholic proprietor was the founder who helped Catholics to flee and take refuge from England. However, the proprietor was removed, and the Church of England was put in place, soon intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion increased against Catholics. By the eighteenth-century Maryland too became one of the most intolerant colonies to live. Rhode Island was founded by a dissenter called Roger Williams; it was founded mainly for the dissenters escaping

Massachusetts. Similarly, William Penn in Pennsylvania and Delaware helped Quakers to live.

The colonies were established in order to accommodate different religious groups, but some offered freedom to groups beyond their own. In Carolinas, with the assistance of John Locke, a group of proprietors founded this colony with the aim of fostering the Enlightenment principle of toleration. But instead, a rigid system of intolerance similar to that of Virginia prevailed in both North and South Carolina. Despite this eventually, the colonies in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode Island, Carolina and Delaware had freedom of religion.

Some of the colonies enacted laws for the protection of religious freedom. For instance, Rhode Island's Charter of 1663 (Farrand 1937) was the first charter to include the "liberty of conscience." Before that, in Maryland, the term "free exercise" was included in the legal document in 1649 to protect the Roman Catholics. The provisions in colonies of New Jersey, and Rhode Island included language that aimed at protecting religious rights, and in other colonies such a provision did not exist. The Church of England was the main orthodox church according to the Fundamental Constitution of Carolinas and it barred atheists to live in the colonies.

The Fundamental Constitutions had exceptionally wide freedom to choose among religions, but there was no freedom to all the people (McConnell 1992). Atheists or non-believers were banned from the colony, and every single person was asked to enroll as a member of at least one church. Under this system, churches were required to register their membership with the authorities, and any religious assemblies that did not register would "not be esteemed as churches, and its gatherings were punished as riots.

Some of the colonies, where there were no established churches, there was a wide range of religious groups living in relative harmony. The bright examples of religious pluralism were the middle colonies (except in the four counties of metropolitan New York), and William Penn's colonies were particularly associated with religious freedom and harmony. Under his 1701 Charters of Privileges (McConnell 1992), Pennsylvania and Delaware protected the religious profession of all theists (but confined public office to Christians). This set an example for other colonies where it

exhibited a high level of tolerance, and these colonies also had the highest number of immigrants compared to others and more prosperous too. This example caught the eye of statesmen in other colonies. Madison later contrasted the religious repression of Virginia, which turned away useful settlers, with "*the allurements presented by other situations*" (Carmella 1991), referring to Pennsylvania.

In the preceding years America saw growth in new denominations, and according to historian Sydney Ahlstrom (1972) who views that in 1700 there were varieties of sects in the country. Like Dutch, German and French Reformed; Congregationalists and Baptists; Lutherans; Jews, Catholics, Rosicrucians, Anglicans. By the mid-seventeenth century, many states in America became a refuge for different Christian sects. Whenever the dissidents were clamped down by the church authorities, they would flee to more tolerant states like Maryland and Carolinas. By the mid-1700's more than two million people lived and worked in the thirteen American colonies.

The influence of Protestant Christianity in U.S. history was longstanding, widespread, and dissenters saw it as coercive. Religion norms and ideas permeated in every facet of life including law, political activism, labor practices, education. Christianity defined the moral principles and limited the rights of reformers and activists (Sehat 2011). As the number of immigrants grew, and along with them, several religious denominations increased, it also increased conflicts on religious lines. The concept of religious freedom and freedom of speech was unknown to the Puritans as was to the Church of England. Rather execution and banishment on religious grounds were very much prevalent in America.

Locke and Religious Toleration

Due to the rising religious conflicts, the propagation of religious tolerance became essential in America, and Locke's idea of toleration was significant in limiting the powers of government to facilitate religious tolerance. The influence of the reasoning from the Enlightenment era was felt in the works of John Locke and "*A Letter Concerning Toleration*" (1689). It made pleas to the Christians to give up religious persecution and intolerance. Locke was considered the canonical philosopher for addressing religious questions. He made a case for the "separation of church and state" and argues the distinctness of both the institutions. His idea was profound in

influencing the Bill for religious freedom placed by Thomas Jefferson's, which became one of the main documents for inserting a "religious clause" in the First Amendment.

The pre-Enlightenment religion which was based on intolerance in America was challenged at many levels. John Locke was one of the earliest advocates of religious right; he saw the issue of religious intolerance and rivalry as one of the biggest political problems. It unnecessarily created hurdles for good governance and public peace. He believed that religion should be made more tolerant and rational but less involved in the earthly workings. This would lessen the dissension against other denominations and was less likely to create political problems. Locke advocated toleration of religious dissenters with exceptions of Catholics and atheists and non-supporters of religious tolerance. The religious strife was due to the tendency of the religious and governmental leaders to step into each other's boundaries and intermeddling.

Locke's discussions for toleration are possibly best-known and echo the ideas on principles of belief. *Locke wrote, "Such is the nature of the understanding," "that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force."* (Hackett 1983) He differentiates between the role of religion and government, justifying the need for separation of two different entities. Political society is concerned with the "externals" of earthly life where individuals create governments to safeguard their lives and secure liberty. Religion, on the other hand, consists of "an inward persuasion of the mind," which requires an individual to attain salvation with faith and reason. It involves the human conscience, and something so personal that forceful imposition of religious beliefs is futile. The "Letter on Toleration" was the main document that words such as "life, liberty, and property" was derived from. It was later modified to read "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" when it was included in the "Declaration of Independence". (Vance 2017).

Locke's contemporary William Penn similarly stressed that using force in matters of religion is futile. Persecution in the religious means was a category mistake, since "*the understanding can never be convinced by other arguments than what are adequate to her nature.*" In the preface to his work called "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience", Penn wrote of "faults purely intellectual", which even punishments

could not change. *"I do not intend, that any person or persons should be in the least harmed for the external exercise of their dissenting conscience in worship to God, though erroneous: for though their consciences be blind"* (Murphy 1998)

According to Locke, every person has his or her opinions of beliefs based on evidence that is persuasive enough to arrive at such conclusions. The beliefs of people are influenced by observing evidence, and imposition of such opinions cannot be successful when it comes to dealing with beliefs. Only opinions can be extended in arguments and accepting it completely cannot be achieved fully even if a person wishes to.

Disestablishment of Church

The American Revolution immediately created tension between the church and the government, especially in states with the Anglican establishments and Church of England was discredited and along with its loyal supporters. Constitutions of several states eliminated the special preference and support to Anglican Church. Every state had a different constitution and hence differed in policy regarding state-supported religion. The conflict between various states and denominations continued after the War, and the persecution on religious issues continued; Virginia had the largest population of Anglicans belonging to the Church of England, and it carried out persecution against Presbyterians and Baptists.

Anglicans assaulted Baptists, and this created a deep animosity on social and theological lines. The compulsory taxes according to Madison was likely to produce "pride and indolence in the Clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity." (McCommell 1992). The establishment was viewed as an instrument in the hands of the state, the state organs and the gentry had a full authority over churches of dissenting denominations in places like Virginia and other colonies where there were Anglican establishments (Gelfand 1987).

State financial support for the Church was inherently linked to control. (Marshall 1991) The "Baptists' declaration" against the Virginia assessment proposal observed: *"If, therefore, the State provide a Support for Preachers of the Gospel, and they receive it in Consideration of their Services, they must certainly when they Preach act*

as Officers of the State, and ought to be Accountable thereto for their Conduct, not only as Members of civil Society, but also as Preachers. The Consequence of this is, that those whom the State employs in its Service, it has a Right to regulate and dictate to; it may judge and determine who shall preach; when and where they shall preach; and what they must preach." (National Archives 1776)

Even in Europe, the church-state was deeply interlinked and its functions could not be differentiated. In comparison the U.S. had less integration in church-states relations. After the revolution, several states abolished the system of special preference and taxes to the Church of England. Several Constitutions of South and North Carolinas, New York and Georgia from 1776-1778 removed the preference system. Some states still followed 'established' religion, but with reservations such as in South Carolina, it continued to have established religion but prohibited the governmental support to the church. Other states such as New York and North Carolina too removed establishment (Laycock 1986). By 1834, most of the states followed disestablishment and church-state separation became quite common in the American system.

The idea of Disestablishment originally came from the American system and no other country had it before America. Ideas of federalism, two houses of the legislature, branches of government, an independent judiciary, all had been existing from before in theory and in practice but Disestablishment had no precedents. The Founding Fathers strikeout radically in a new direction because they did not want to see established church modeled after Europe and especially the British system. This did not imply driving religion from the public square. But it meant placing religion as a matter of individual conscience rather than statecraft. The edifice of established churches and religious compulsion came crumbling down once such principle was granted. This was a radical break not only from established European practice but also what was happening in America.

The Disestablishment did not imply a lack of religiosity, and the number of religious adherents did not decrease in the U.S. Under Evangelicals, the number of churchgoers expanded. In 1850 church membership comprised 35 percent of the population, and by 1906 the number of churchgoers was 51 percent. By the year 2000, 62 percent of the American populace belonged to religious institutions, though not specifically Christian churches (Finke and Stark 2005). Evangelical theology wanted intervention

by the adherents in the public life intending to shape the world following the religious conscience. The religious ideas of providence and duty mattered to the foreign policymakers, and they deployed these ideas for getting support in political or military decisions, and most importantly, to get agreement on a progressive colonial mandate.

Gary Wills (2007) viewed two main approaches related to the issue of religious freedom in America, the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. The top-down approach viewed religious freedom as granted by the government, which had limited space for dissent. The problem with the top-down approach was its limitations as it would leave religious freedom right at the state's discretion. For example, even those with religious freedom had to pay taxes compulsorily for the church, or could not hold public offices, colleges, and privileges.

Garry Wills views that the only way to establish religious freedom was from the bottom-up approach, which the first amendment did- that it forms the rights of every individual and the rights of conscience. He views that the fight for religious freedom then became true to its meaning by discarding any state limits. True government neutrality toward religion was difficult to achieve, but it was encouraged continually to maintain it. By freeing religion and the state from each other, it made space for the important liberty of religious freedom.

The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, 1786

After the “Declaration of Independence”, the existing laws of Virginia needed a revision. The first General Assembly appointed a committee of four people, including Thomas Jefferson, to redraft the laws. Thomas Jefferson had drafted the statute, and James Madison guided the Virginia Statute through the legislative process. Bill number 82 presented in the Virginia General Assembly dealt with religious freedom, and upon its passage, it later played an important part in the First Amendment of the American Constitution. The freedom to unrestricted liberty to share views was harbored in the notion of religious freedom, which was primarily drawn from this statute and was enacted five years before the First Amendment. This statute provided with the provision of full separation of church and state and aimed at giving religious freedom to the people.

A turning point came in Virginia, which became the precursor of religious freedom. It started with the question of paying church taxes by different Christian denominations in Virginia. In 1784 the new Episcopal Church was allowed by the state legislature to take over the property of its Anglican predecessor. But only about one-third of the state's believers belonged to the Episcopal Church, and the crucial questions were whom all should pay taxes in such a case. The Episcopalians initially proposed an ingenious compromise whereby Virginians would be taxed, but only to support the denomination of their choice (Feldman 2005). Some supported the compromise but eventually was defeated by a coalition of Evangelical dissenters and Deist revolutionaries.

The opposition to pay taxes got support from Thomas Jefferson, he placed a bill in the legislature providing religious freedom too all in Virginia (1779). But the bill faced resistance from the opponents who viewed the bill to be extreme. Among them was Patrick Henry, he criticized the bill and instead proposed "general assessment" that was meant to provide religious instructions through tax support in Virginia. By 1785, Madison was driven to the cause of religious liberty and he placed a petition in Virginia entitled "A Memorial and Remonstrance."

The Patrick Henry bill (Munoz 2009) for general assessment intended to support a strong state-church network by giving every taxpayer option to support the church of his/her choice. Then it would have allowed multiple church establishments to use government money and not just Episcopalian church. The Future President James Madison stepped into the matter, and his counter bill "Memorial and Remonstrance" although could not get through the legislature but eventually created strong opposition that emboldened Madison to reintroduce Jefferson's Bill for "Establishing Religious Freedom" was passed finally on January 16, 1786 (Rastoga 2014). Its initial purpose was to make religion a matter for individual conscience and disestablish church. It ultimately became a model for the First Amendment after it got passed in the Virginia Assembly.

The statute was significant towards religious liberty because it allowed the people in Virginia to practice their faiths without any force, it separated Church and the State, and it allowed to amend this law in the future. After the bill was accepted by the Virginia General Assembly 1786, Jefferson wrote- the law "*meant to comprehend,*

within the mantle of its protection, the Jew, the Gentile, the Christian and the Mahometan, the Hindoo and Infidel of every denomination." (Davis 2010). This was the first attempt to separate state and church functions fully by removing government control in religious affairs.

The main aim of the separation of church and state, however, didn't imply that religion was undesirable or discredited. Most importantly the significance of religion was upheld in the Declaration of Virginia and religion was seen as a divine precept: *"That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other."* (National Archives)

Thomas Jefferson and James Madison supported the "Disestablishment of church" and endorsed a secular state with no involvement of religion and politics. Jefferson tried to participate in the drafting of the new Constitution for Virginia and sent at least three drafts of a constitution that included provisions of religious freedom. This bill recognized for the first-time religious freedom as a natural right and the right to hold public offices without any fixed criteria of religious opinions. Jefferson famously wrote,

"We the General Assembly of Virginia do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.." (Oberg and Looney 2008)

James Madison was an ardent supporter of religious freedom, he wanted full separation of state and church. He argued that Christianity is likely to flourish more in the absence of state support and makes a point in the "*Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments*" arguing - that religious establishments allowed "*pride and indolence in the clergy,*" and the view that survival of Christianity relied on the

state patronage was "*adverse to the diffusion of the light of Christianity.*" (National Archives 1785) His ideas concerning religious freedom were akin to Locke's Letter on toleration, but his idea of religious freedom covered a wider range than Locke and supported the complete separation of Church and state.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (1791) and Religious Freedom

The First Amendment was adopted along with the Bill of Rights in 1791, it guaranteed that the government will have no control to make laws on the establishment of religion or preventing its free exercise. This was the first law that established the foundation of religious freedom in the United States. With it brought to the forefront the American beliefs and the individual rights of citizens to follow whichever faith they desired. It did two remarkable things by including the free exercise clause and establishment clause. It created tolerance in its fullest sense and not just advocating tolerance but bottom-up tolerance that gave people the right to choose their own religious opinions without the interference of any authority. And secondly, it separated church and state.

The First Amendment articulated that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In its most basic understanding of the clause on establishment it aimed at preventing governmental support to any religion and the free exercise clause allowed free from all sorts of government restrictions and interference. The Bill of Rights applied these provisions only at the national level and it was extended to the states after 1947.

The free exercise of religion gives the citizens to practice any form of religion and rituals associated with it. The free clause allowed "opinion, expression of opinion, and practice were all expressly protected" (McConnell 2002). The Clause was significant in protecting beliefs and actions related to any religion. Also, the wording of state constitutions suggested that "free exercise envisions religiously compelled exemptions from at least some generally applicable laws." (Posner and McConnell 1989). The Free Exercise Clause helped to protect religious expression and belief, and it helped in maintaining the free expression of one's beliefs.

The First Amendment is considered as one of the most litigious and symbolic of all the amendments, and it ensures fundamental right of religion, along with freedom of press and speech, and peaceful assembly. The first amendment was significant in fulfilling the religious liberty of individuals not only by guaranteeing free exercise of religion but associating it with the freedom of expression. It gave individuals the right to speak freely and express their views, including controversial issues. Although there has been a number of cases subjected to litigation in the courts regarding these rights, overall, these rights have been upheld appropriately under the U.S. democratic system. The Supreme Court while interpreting the free religion clause has made efforts to employ rules in a way that disallowed the intervention of government in religious freedom and at the same time it tried to prevent portraying government as a supporter of a particular religion (Urofsky 1990).

Without the Bill of Rights and freedom of religion, the confederation did not protect the rights of the individuals against the state. Because of the weaknesses of the Confederation constitution pertaining to religious freedom and tolerance, the leaders organized the Philadelphia convention in 1787 with the aim of amending some Articles. But there was a divide between the Federalists who supported the constitution and the anti-federalist who did not. The Federalists gave concessions to ensure the ratification of the document, which led to the First Congress that led to the proposing of Bill of Rights which ultimately came into force in December 1791.

The constitutions ratified before the 1787 imposed limitations for holding elected office to people of all faiths. Out of the fourteen constitutions, eleven of them prohibited agnostics and Jews to hold office, seven prohibited Catholics, and nine put restrictions on civil rights for persons of various faiths. Many states declined to enfranchise Jews, Unitarians, and agnostics. Schools were under religious organizations that imparted religious practice as a natural form of instruction. Non-theists were not allowed to hold or pass the property in trust and could not open philanthropic institutions for spreading religious views and beliefs. Hence, the limitations of religious liberty was evident during the time of the Revolution (Sehat 2011).

Madison eloquently gave out reasons for avoiding the state to stop any support relating to religious activities, including Christian instructions in schools.

Recognizing the view of the American state as a shelter for the dissenters, he viewed that Patrick Henry's proposal was "a departure from that generous policy, which offered Asylum to the persecuted and oppressed of every Nation and Religion" (Stag 2010). Madison's views became an important part in the American political philosophy- which meant reverberating support of the secular state. Madison strongly argued that "the religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every...man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an inalienable right." He viewed that the involvement of the state in religious matters was threatening to religions (Munoz 2009).

The founders were aware of the dangers of mixing religion and politics, and they rose against a country in which a single entity was both the head of the state and church. America was secured as a secular state due to the recognition of a divisive past, Washington wrote in 1790: "All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunity of citizenship. ...For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens." (Vaughan, 1998).

In the newly independent America, despite the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom through the Bill of Rights, the States had their own set of laws concerning religion. With the fourteenth and the fifteenth amendments, the states gradually incorporated the portions of the Bill of Rights. But before that, the nation's states raised taxes to support the churches and had religious tests to obtain a government job. While in states like New York, Catholics were banned from public office until 1806. In Massachusetts, only Christians had the right to be in public office, while Catholics were allowed in government offices only if they converted. In others like Maryland, the Catholics enjoyed civil rights but Jews did not enjoy such rights (Greenawalt 2006). Still, the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment lacked in establishing full separation of church and the state in the manner advocated by Madison and Jefferson. Due to the principles of federalism, all the states got an immense reservoir of power to control several aspects of the life of its residents and allowed the religious partisans to draw from the source of federalism to engrave their moral ideas on state constitutions.

States continued to punish for blasphemy, and moral regulations became a connector between religion and the state. There was no legitimate claim for an official state religion. However, the supporters viewed that ethical Christianity's moral aspect was necessary for the preservation of the state that needed the support of the simultaneous agency of politicians and statesman (Wiley and Putnam 1838). This connection between the moral code of Protestant and state power was common. The states wielded power to prosecute blasphemy, and in whatever manner they saw fit, religious freedom was largely constrained. Due to the disputes relating to religious liberty at the state or local level, the federal government had limitations until the New Deal. The First Amendment could not fully guarantee religious freedom until the 1920s when finally, the Bill of Rights was introduced at government levels. In a way, the major part of U.S. history did not have full religious liberty in the way it was supposed to be when the First Amendment came into existence.

Conclusion

The U.S. has legal commitment to religious freedom from long time. America's founders installed religious freedom as the seminal freedom enshrined in the Constitution; it gave an important place among the rights written in the Bill of Rights. The founders believed that by guaranteeing the right to search for transcendent truths it allowed to attain human purpose and was vital for strong democracy. They also had faith in the universality of the idea of human dignity given by the creator and certain natural rights. These rights were inalienable in nature because it was not created by any government or state or king.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution consists of two important ideas or principles of "Free Exercise Clause" and "Disestablishment". The U.S. Declaration of Independence upheld the legacy of both political liberalism and Judeo-Christian principles. This foundational document advocated the idea that "men are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights". Thus, such a right was neither ordained from the king nor from the state. In order to guarantee these rights, the governments were chosen by the people. Therefore, the first aim of the liberal democratic state aimed to protect the individual and her natural rights. The state was seen as the instrument to serve individuals and guarantee their freedom.

Although the Puritans came to find religious freedom and peacefully adhered to their religion, they did not have the culture to practice tolerance; there were unavoidable conflicts explicitly rooted in religion. The problem of intolerance in American colonies worsened and conflict between different denominations became stark. Nevertheless, the Puritans became so important in the U.S. history that their vestiges still lingered after the Enlightenment. Most influential churches until the mid-19th century were mainly Puritans, and almost every prominent thinker came from New England before the World War I. The influence of Puritanism on American values helped much in shaping the American conscience.

The American Revolution had a powerful religious theme, and it provided moral support to the oppressed to oppose the colonist, unlike the French revolution, which was defined by its hostility to religion. From the viewpoint of the colonist, the American Revolution was not just a war of political independence but a war that was required to enhance the religious pluralism in the colonies. In order to protect religious diversity, it was necessary to cut off England and maintain the Christian denominations co-existence. The conflict pitted several American Christian sects against the Anglican, which wanted to put uniform Anglican religion in most of the colonies.

The idea of religious liberty was interpreted from the biblical stand, where the idea prevailed among the revolutionary clergy that god ordained civil liberty and religious liberty. The Church of England was seen as a necessary evil and considered to be harmful in the progress of colonies. America accepted religion along with liberty, reason, and open government. It revealed that the U.S. was the only country so far that was not just modern but also traditional in wanting to keep religious principles intact. The clauses on religious tolerance of the First Amendment safeguarded the faiths of American people, and avoided encroachment of this right by the government. Despite this, religion has played a significant role in the social and political structure.

Unlike any other country, the U.S. had a unique blend of Judeo Christianity mixed with political liberalism that attracted the victims of religious persecution to land in America in search of religious liberty as early as the 16th century. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that religion and liberalism were two distinct elements mostly at odds with one another, but Americans "*have succeeded in incorporating to some*

extent one with the other and combining admirably". Similarly, James Bryce saw a secure connection between American religion and American democracy. He viewed that "*religion had a huge influence in probably more than it does in any other modern country, and far more than it did in the so-called ages of faith*" (Fischer 2012) However, this does not mean that the U.S. has been immune to religiously rooted conflicts as mentioned in one of the sections above.

The two presiding figures of the religious freedom act were Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Both were neither engaged in pragmatic politics, nor were they in a battle to sideline religion. Nonetheless, they had a conviction that Disestablishment was good for both state and the religion (Wills 2007). Jefferson repeatedly emphasized that Disestablishment was good for religion because it would promote competition and punish idleness. Madison also viewed that Disestablishment would be good for the state because it would free religion to promote public morality unencumbered by state patronage and corruption. Moreover, the establishment aided the instrument for the control of the state over religion. Both Madison and Jefferson viewed that the authority in forming government was with the people and they emphasized on the fact that human conscience needed to be respected and government did not have the power to meddle with it.

The religious liberty mentioned in the "Bill of Rights" has guided the policymakers throughout the history of the U.S., and it finally went to give a universal character post-1945. The U.S. has given utmost importance to the universal dignity of a person, and it is at the core of its human rights policy, which includes the right to religious freedom. The governments which protect religious freedom are usually respect other important human rights too. Encouraging stable and healthy democracies was important, and Freedom of Religion and Conscience was seen as a basic right in the post-World War II era. This right was formed as an international human right policy. The idea of religious freedom embraced the principle that the main role of a government aims to help religious communities to follow their own religion without any hinderances.

The incorporation of international religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy reminds that during the creation of religious liberty by the founders, they knew what they were seeking to establish a right most likely to get opposed or reinterpreted, hence the

founders try to include as many religions as possible. Jefferson, in his words rightly meant in the Virginia Statue that religious liberty was meant to protect everyone including the “Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mohometan, the Hindoo and the Infidel of every denomination”. These principles of the founders echoed in universalizing religious freedom centuries later.

Chapter 3

Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy in the Context of Religious Freedom

Introduction

The discussion in this chapter goes into a deeper exploration of policy approaches by the U.S. in relation to religious freedom issues. Both global and domestic factors worked simultaneously leading to institutionalizing of religious freedom in the U.S. foreign policy. From its initial minimal acknowledgement, religious freedom gradually got a central role in the formulation of foreign policy and more attention were given under different leaderships. As one of the inherent human rights, religious freedom has been embedded in the American political culture for a long time and has manifested in defining events of political relevance in the course of global history. The intellectual source of the origins of international religious freedom can be found in the underlying theoretical assumptions that drive policymaking and define the paradigmatic understanding of global affairs, such as whether it is a competitive, power politics world (“realism”) or one where peace and cooperation can be achieved over time (“liberalism”). On the other hand, the role of values and norms were significant in understanding a fundamental right related to ideational phenomena like religion. Religion has influenced the perception of policymakers in making foreign policy decisions. Depending on a number of factors, like: what issues and concerns were raised and how they were thought and applied by the policy makers the importance of religious norms, values and ideology has been highlighted. Religious freedom has variety of sources related to foreign policy and in this chapter, it is divided into three main themes and sub themes. The first is the intellectual sources that tend to support or align with the policy of religious freedom, the second is the ideational roots of religious freedom and the third theme is empirical sources relating to the global events.

Intellectual Sources of US Foreign Policy

American foreign policy debate embraced a realist-idealist contest throughout its history but in practice the fundamental approach to U.S. foreign policy has been derived mainly from the realist formulations except in moral policies of the interwar period marked by Wilsonian idealism. There were categories of thoughts operating in the U.S. foreign policy environment and several elements were combined to have ideological positions. Presidents like Theodore Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan and G.W. Bush took a conservative stand on foreign issues- like the assertive military approach and at the same time they premised their arguments on “liberal internationalist” notions for aggressively transferring liberal values. However, both realists and idealists can be internationalists, or isolationists but to understand foreign policy it is necessary to generalise facts in broad categories despite its limitations. Realists view that we live in an anarchical world where modern sovereign state system is a necessity and protecting national interest is a must for the survival of the states. Such interests are secured by following the rules of diplomacy and war which is vital to mitigate the effects of conflict or wars. It gives importance to national over individual interests and universal norms such as human rights are provisional when national welfare is threatened. Given the primacy of states in the global politics, there has been some gaps in realist categories that cannot be explained sufficiently. For example, the manifestation of religion in the rise of Khomeinist Shiite theocracy in Iran. As such the world order under realist assumption has put religious ideas and action in subordination.

Idealists, on the contrary, view individual welfare is of greater concern than the national interest and security. They tend to view that foreign policy is guided by the internal processes based on political structures, ruling elites and distribution of political power. The focus is on the objective validity of universal laws and norms applicable to international and domestic spheres. Liberal internationalists, the descendant of Wilsonian idealism, has set the moral tone in establishing the beginning of normative concern for IR. It indicated to the world that U.S. prioritises values and norms through international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy. The liberal internationalist believes in influencing policies of a state through the medium of international organisations and norms. Part of promotion of norms includes

democracy promotion and human rights especially after the Cold War. The role of religion was seen with skepticism and traditional religious communities as obstacles in to adopting liberal policies.

Both the realists and liberal internationalists share the same views regarding the spiritual dimensions of religion in foreign policy. The realists view religion as irrelevant in understanding “power” similarly liberal internationalist see religion as an impediment in adoption of liberal policies. But both the approaches significantly avoid religion in setting their foreign policy goals. Despite these lacunas, the U.S. created a law on religious freedom as a basic aim of American foreign policy by the end of 1990’s and was seen that if pursued in the right manner then it can serve as national interest (Hertzke and Philpott 2000). This change occurred due to the events both in the domestic and international facets allowing the U.S. to accept ideas for change and consequently affecting the national interest of the country. The section below gives a view of realist and liberal internationalist thinking of U.S. foreign policy related to the subject of religion before it got institutionalised as IRF.

Realism:

The dominant schools of realism and neo-realism have explained the entire period of cold war marked by the intractable tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and their contested ideologies at play in the international system. They have provided with explanations for the ongoing tension in the international system and the behavior of all the other actors in that system. Realism provided with necessary and effective intellectual substructure for the containment policy during the Cold War. But it had its drawbacks too and most of all it failed to predict the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union (Farr, 2008). To take it further it assumed the permanency of the bipolar world of U.S. and Soviet Union within which realism made claims comfortably.

Realists tend to view that domestic circumstances of other states was not a major factor in the U.S. foreign policy decisions and military actions were used only when key national interests were threatened. They viewed cold war as a great power struggle between the two countries rather than ideological struggle between the idea of freedom and communism. Realist did not take into consideration the internal dynamics of the Soviet Union especially the condition of political freedom and human

rights which had a role in the fall of Soviet Union and its satellites between 1989 and 1991.

Realist like Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans J. Morgenthau, George Kennan gave a leash to realist approach in explaining international system by associating with thinkers such as Thucydides, Hobbes, Machiavelli. They argued that IR is characterized by power politics, anarchy and competition among states and much of the realist thinking was associated with understanding the causes of war: the security dilemma, power “balancing” vs. “bandwagoning,” the role of human nature in the Darwinian sense of struggle for survival, hegemonic stability theory, and the like. They were significant theories for their time; but other factors were de-emphasized by them (like domestic politics, ideology, culture, and identity) and a lot of it was untouched throughout the cold war. It was not until the end of the cold war, a big shift occurred in the international system which was very unexpected in the IR theory- first the global resurgence of religion and second of all surfacing of religious extremism in the form of Al-Qaeda in the 1990's who used religious justification in perpetrating attacks. As such the religious reasons were not paid attention during the cold war by the realist theory.

Ellsworth and Simes (2004) viewed that in the beginning of the 21st century some realist scholars attempted to adjust their thinking due to the rising threat from terrorism and the increasing popularity of democracy. The prevalence of democratic movements put focus on institutional developments within societies, but impact of religious aspects for analysis was almost nonexistent. Realism attributed religious needs of people just as mere manifestation of political appetite. For such reasons, realism misunderstood or overlooked contemporary manifestations of role of religion, such as the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan, or the role of Confucianism in East Asia, religious groups in China, the activities of Wahhabi faction in Saudi Arabia, and the emergence of transnational Islamist terrorism. The world order assumed by realism has also contributed to their subordination of religious ideas and action.

Traditionally realism argued that the internal developments were not considerable guides for the external behaviour of governments (Rosen 2005). The beliefs of individuals and communities did not matter a great deal to realists for understanding international affairs unless those beliefs were driven to explain the levers of power.

This gap permitted realists to give minimal role to religious actors and religion. Reinhold Niebuhr and George Kennan, for example, did not think that religion was linked with flourishing of democracy and human rights. The consensus during the cold war gave meaning to the objective reality of national interest but the end of the cold war emphasized that non material and ideational factors came to dominate more than previously thought to be.

There was a tendency, particularly since the al Qaeda declared war on the U.S. in the 1990s using religious justifications, to consider religion in a negative light such as the driver of conflicts, the cause of parochialism, superstition, unjust hierarchies, and war. This was biased and unwise in at least two ways. First, such an approach narrowly circumscribed religious variables as “subjects” for micro- study, usually without deeper understandings of culture and wider analyses of cross- and transnational trends. Second, the “religion as problem” thesis neglected the many positive roles and effects of religious multidimensionality in world affairs: like humanitarian assistance, education, peacemaking and peacebuilding, moral conscience, and Track 2 diplomacy, to name a few. In short, realism in U.S. foreign policy could have regarded religious factors as “religion as opportunity” moment in world affairs, due to which humility, religious awareness, and a willingness to learn and collaborate, promise new partnerships, better understanding, and the advancement of American ideals and interests could have been easier to achieve.

Liberal Internationalism:

The core idea of liberal internationalism is embedded in promoting values in foreign policy rather than solely defending national interest. It justifies the U.S involvement in international affairs if it supports ethical reasons motivated by moral principles (Scott 1998). The Liberal Internationalists tend to believe in having a peaceful and prosperous world by adhering to the principles of right and wrong. In its extreme form it can be understood in messianic terms with the impulse to remake the world in America’s image in order to save humanity from bigger evils. In moderate form liberal internationalism can be understood that the U.S. should be actively involved in the political affairs of the world to protect its interest. This can be fruitfully achieved by providing leadership. It also means the willingness of the U.S. to intervene politically, militarily and economically by exercising leadership in the world and

transferring American values and promoting its institutions abroad. To quote President Harry Truman for protecting the freedoms of people “the free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.... If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world-and we shall certainly endanger the welfare of our own nation”. (Kegley and Wittkopf 2005).

Liberals were the forerunners of liberal internationalism who gave importance to peace, prosperity and human development informed by rationalist and progressive aspects possible through human advancement and evolution of individuals. They have attempted to fulfill these aims through international law like Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war, contributing in creating international institutions such as League of Nations, promoting democratic reforms and rule of law through President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen points. Drawing from the liberals, liberal internationalist in the U.S. foreign policy from the late 1940s focused on promotion of democracy and human rights. It was believed that the promotion of democratic values could lead to a better governance and international peace. The world order needed international organisations for democracy promotion and human rights. This school has given importance to multilateralism over unilateralism. When it comes to human rights, supporters of liberal internationalism has emphasized modern concerns such as population control for reducing poverty and discrimination and removing problems related to environmental pollution and damage.

The ideas of President Wilson pertaining to liberal democratic peace, and the promotion of democracy have found expanding support and embraced by different administrations over time. Intervention was also justified when acted out on humanitarian grounds. The Clinton administration’s support of liberal internationalism extended to include interventionism in the case of Bosnia and Serbia (Farr 2008). Liberal internationalists have a keen interest in the domestic policies of states, and they were more interested in public diplomacy and emphasis was laid on the role of international norms to improve unstable conditions in other countries. President Clinton for example gave a lot of importance to human rights issues and addressed various social and political problems. Upholding most basic values and opposing grievous suppression of those values outside its borders has been a key characteristic of the U.S. As Jentleson (2007) points out that U.S. may not assume the

role of moral police but at the same time it may also not ignore the injustices and sufferings ailing the world.

Despite liberal internationalist attempts to encourage human freedoms and human rights, there has been some inherent problems in some societies while dealing with religious freedom. The problem of liberal scepticism in dealing with religion emanated from the political role of religion especially after the rise of religious terrorism. There were narratives through which some religious communities like Islam and fundamental ideologies used by extremist groups were misunderstood leading to negative outcomes. Two liberal scholars, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2003) argues that Huntington “clash of civilizations” wrongly viewed that Islam cannot accept democratic values, and the real reason according to those authors were the lack of liberation of women and gender inequality. Such views when shared by policy makers about a religious group can lead to wrong assumptions because according to the World Values Survey (Farr 2008) Islamic feminists do not want to seek liberty by embracing the values espoused by western liberal standards.

Promotion of religious freedom forms a part of the liberalization model for enhancing the democratization process and opening new spaces for human liberty. But the liberal secular perspective of religious issues often misrepresented the actual scenarios. According to Human Right Watch, “the secular human rights movement sometimes sees conservative religious movements as an artifact of history and itself as contemporary, ahead on the infinite road of human progress and modernity”. Some human rights activists were “tempted to dismiss such [traditional] faiths and cultures as obstacles to economic or human rights modernity.” (Uzzell 2005).

Liberals viewed that traditional religious communities created hurdles for liberal policies. Despite this, after the reelection of G.W. Bush the liberals became more skeptical about religions role, especially, due to the increase in religious terrorism. Under President Bush religious freedom was placed at a higher platform compared to other human rights arguably due to the Christian lobbying backed by a strong domestic constituency of churches. The liberal internationalist called for the promotion of freedoms and human rights but when it was referred to freedoms associated with religion in the wider world, a deep divide existed in linking human rights and religiously informed moral judgements. The critics of IRFA saw it as a

means to protect mainly Christianity abroad from persecution, due to the huge support for this law by the Christian activists but this law eventually included all the world religions.

Neoconservatism:

Among all the approaches to the U.S. foreign policy, neoconservatism seemed to be more open about ideas related to religion, especially as a core theme for valuing democracy and religious freedom in the U.S. foreign policy. The original neoconservatism as an idea rose during the 1960s and 1970s as an opposing idea against the radical New Left. It was against the federal government which increasingly focused on the new social order laden with value free ideas instead of moral society (Ehrman 1995). This prompted them to focus on the need to return to ideas on traditional moral values, social stability and republican virtues (Winchell 1991; Epstein 2005).

Based on the idea of a moral society the neoconservatives upheld the idea similar to liberals and emphasized - "that political liberty requires the moral foundation of a virtuous citizenry" as well as 'a concern for the common good" (Gerson 1997). But neoconservatives departed from liberalism in several ways especially on the moral foundations of the social order. Liberals tend to promote moral and cultural tolerance and avoid making moral judgements. Liberal gave importance to social engineering to develop individuals without the importance of civic virtue and overtly focusing on individual rights over common good. (Kristol 1983).

Neoconservative thoughts did not emphasize much on global wellbeing but on attaining democratic governance at home. They viewed international organizations and processes with propensity to hinder the process of national development. On the other hand, the Liberal interventionist aimed at spreading freedoms to the outside world and build a strong global architecture by following the rules-based order (Bosco 2012). The contemporary neoconservatives differed from its original manifestation, because they placed greater importance to foreign policy rather than domestic issues (Wolfson 2004). The shift took place at the end of the Cold war with the demise of the Soviet Union, and the U.S. came out as a stronger power than the Soviet Union. The

neoconservatives increasingly lacked in defining themes to defend the American values at home and abroad for the survival of the U.S.

The neoconservative thought gave importance to foreign policy after the end of Cold War, this marked a shift from its earlier stance of emphasis on domestic issues. But in the domain of foreign policy, neoconservatives formed into two different camps- pragmatic neoconservatives who favoured realist foreign policy with limited interventionism only if the national interest were at stake. The other one was the radical neoconservatives who were inclined towards more hawkish and interventionist foreign policy. Yet despite the differences between the two strands of neoconservatism both the strands believed in exporting American values linked with liberal democracy with free market economy and protection of individual rights and freedom (Farr 2008).

During the 1980s, other neoconservatives focused on promotion of democracy and the idea of American exceptionalism in the foreign policy, these ideas greatly influenced Regan's international program for democracy promotion, such as the National Endowment for Democracy. Its aim was to provide aid to NGOs for democratic development abroad and was designed to channel funding of nongovernmental efforts to provide democratic development overseas. Prominent neoconservatives such as Elliot Abrams helped mold that policy.

There was an attempt by the neoconservative thinkers like Michael Novak, Richard John Neuhaus to imbibe religiously informed moral judgements as a crucial factor for the success of democratic institutions and saw liberal secularism as a threat to the American democracy (Farr 2008). These intellectuals were Catholics but they approached the role of religion in the U.S. foreign policy in non-sectarian fashion. They pointed out certain truths about objective morality from catholic tradition which aligned with people of good will despite the differences in their religious conviction.

Often neoconservatives described and characterized foreign policy with militarism and neo-imperialism. The adherents of neoconservatives were seen mostly during the Republican presidential administrations and their influence peaked during G.W. Bush administration. Prominent neoconservatives during the Bush administration included Elliott Abrams, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Paul Bremer, and others like Dick

Cheney and “Secretary of Defense” Donald Rumsfeld. Although not identified as neoconservative but aligned closely to the supporters of foreign policy pertaining to support Israel and promotion of American values in the Middle East.

Neoconservatives were seen to develop a deeper knowledge of the role of culture and social institutions in the development of American foreign policy compared to the realists. The Protestant evangelicals exerted significant influence in G.W. Bush presidency, he often used religious policies to address social problems (Kougentakis 2007). The Bush administration’s period compared to any other period had the mission of spreading religious freedom mainly due to adversary such as Al Qaeda which was directly linked to Islamic extremism. Through a religious standpoint an entire period was allocated to the neoconservatives with the main agenda of promoting religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy.

Religion and Foreign Policy in the U.S.A.

Period	Mission	Adversary	Means
Pre-revolutionary colonial America (1600-1776)	Millennium	Papal antichrist	Example as ‘city on the hill’
Revolutionary and founding era (1776-1815)	Empire of liberty	Old world tyranny, ‘hellish friends’ (native Americans)	Example, continental expansion, without entangling alliances
Manifest Destiny (1815-48)	Christian civilisation	Savages or ‘children (native Americans)	Example, continental expansion, without entangling alliances
Imperial America (1898-1913)	Christian civilisation	Barbarians, Savages (Filipinos)	Overseas expansion, without entangling alliances
Wilsonian Internationalism	Global Democracy	Autocracy, imperialism	International Organisations and alliances

Cold war liberalism (1946-89)	Free world	Communism	International Organisations and alliances
Bush and neo-conservatism	Spread of religious freedom and human rights	International terrorism often linked to extremist Islam; totalitarian states, such as North Korea	Unilateral action with ad hoc alliances

Source: “J Judis, ‘The chosen nation: the influence of religion on US foreign policy’, *Policy Brief*, 37, march, 2005, p3.”

Howard LaFranchi (2006) argued that there was a shift from secular to religious foreign policy goals with focus on religious freedom and human rights issues. The foreign policy catering to religious freedom of other countries encouraged the establishment of democratic institutions, but some skeptics in neoconservatism such as James Q. Wilson (2002) who contended that religion and democracy was irreconcilable. He viewed that applying same American model of liberalism and religion to Islam especially in countries like Turkey, Morocco and Indonesia succeeded by banishing religion from the public arena in the absence of ethnic conflict and with strong secular leaders. Democracy and human rights according to Wilson were achieved by political process by removing religion off the stage of politics. This view helped to understand the reason for marginalization of Islam in the democratic culture. Wilson observed that “The neo-conservative solution, involved overhauling the way the region thinks about politics, so that terrorism would no longer seem reasonable” (Wilson 2002).

Roots of Religious Freedom in U.S. Foreign Policy

Democracy is essentially linked to human rights and the rule of law because it provides policy directions to realize ideals of religious freedom. Religious freedom is shaped by various existing ideas and it is entrenched in the democratic traditions. While religious freedom in the US domestic context is regarded as a fundamental right, in the international context it takes the form of a foundational human right (Farr 2001).

The idea of religious freedom has changed quite a lot in the past five centuries. It has changed in its scope, implementation, and applicability. Malcolm Evans (2004) views that this right has passed through several stages of - "(i) The *cuius regio, eius religio* model: International peace treaties for territorial separation of people of different religious persuasions, e.g., Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed apart in different countries and providing for measures of toleration for limited protestors and their rights to orderly emigrate, (ii) The minority protection model: International (bilateral or multilateral) treaties for the protection of religious minorities within the state territory of a hegemonic ethnic or religious majority; and finally: (iii) The human rights model: International (global or regional) treaties that codify international standards and provide for international monitoring of universal human rights of individual human beings and of religious or life-stance communities to freedom of religion or belief".

The above-mentioned models show the evolution of religious freedom internationally and it was deeply embedded in the religious context. Christian churches promoted the modern protection of religious freedom. At one end of the spectrum there was toleration of private faiths for certain dissenters or heretics vested on the discretion of kings and on the other end the regime of human rights protection existed, which is the modern form of religious freedom taken up by the governments and international institutions.

Religion has not only backed humanitarian concerns but even issues relating to military force at least since the beginning of the Cold War period when Soviet Union started to challenge U.S. interests. In the first half of the previous century, the rivalry between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. was interpreted in the religious terms of Christian America and godless communism that helped in raising fears of communism in America. It was important for building support base to resist its ideological advancement. Although religion had an indirect influence, it was instrumental in affecting the mindset of policymakers, concerning international human rights and foreign policy.

Certain events in American history were crucial in involving religion in politics, for instance, the Civil War which intensified faith at a popular level and affected the course of American religion. Even in public, there was a huge presence of religiosity

since its formation and by 1860 the number of churchgoers increased four times more than the voters for the presidential election and had two times more clergy than the military personnel (Preston, 2012). The income of churches came almost at par with that of the federal government. The Americans belonging to different denominations differed over religion but overall agreed on the importance of religion in politics. The period of Wilsonian internationalism embedded the goal of global democracy against the autocracy and imperialism in the world, and laid a great emphasis on the power of human rights. Post-2000 Bush and neoconservatives attempted to spread religious freedom and human rights against international terrorism and totalitarian states.

Liberal Democratic Values:

The fundamental right to religious freedom is considered as the legacy of the liberal thought that prevailed during American Revolution and influenced in the making of U.S. constitution. Thus, religious freedom as a universal political right is a recent phenomena and is associated with the liberal democratic state. The ideals of American values have been associated with Democratic Universalism and it is almost undisputed that the liberal democracies facilitate human progress more than any other form of system. It facilitates the rule of law equally to all where civil liberties and freedoms are respected. Democratic values thus have been intrinsic to the U.S. and necessary for a prosperous and peaceful world. The philosophy with which American constitution was framed, similar framework was considered apt for developing a democratic set of countries primarily based on individual liberty. The expansive global role of the U.S. has been greatly defined by the idea that promotion of democracy in the world should be the main principles driving U.S. foreign policy since the 1940s (Schonberg 2009). Those principles of universal applicability of democratic values is rested on the belief that it can take root anywhere in the world leading to a peaceful world.

“Democratic processes may in some countries bring to power parties or leaders whose ideologies are not shared by most Americans. We may not welcome these changes; we will certainly not encourage them. But we must respect the results of democratic elections and the right of countries to make their own free choice if we are to remain faithful to our own basic ideals. We must learn to live with diversity, and we can continue to cooperate, so long as such political parties respect the democratic process,

uphold existing international commitments, and are not subservient to external political direction. The democratic concert of nations should exclude only those who exclude themselves by the rejection of democracy itself” (FRUS, 1977-1980)

“The great democracies are not free because we are strong and prosperous. I believe we are strong and influential and prosperous because we are free”- Jimmy carter, (FRUS 1977-1980).

The liberal viewpoint holds that religious freedom of an individual should be protected by the state without any interference. Accordingly, it is imperative for the state to allow people to choose their faiths due to their ability to think and decide. Respecting dignity of a person is the duty of the state. In a pluralist society the need for religious freedom increases because of the problem of lack of order arising due to the differences in peoples religious differences. John Rawls “Theory of Justice and Political Liberalism” can be applied in the context religious freedom (Murphy 1998). Rawls’s liberalism tend to put restriction on the individual freedom but also stops the excesses of individual liberty. According to Rawls, constitutional democracy allows religious views to coexist--“Each person has equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same for all; and in this scheme the equal political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value.”

The need for religious freedom is justified on the grounds that constitutional democracy for example does not allow anti-social behavior nor lets religions that permits human sacrifice. Hence, the state should respect peoples’ choice of religion and allow them to practice it peacefully if it does not harm another human being in any manner. In a multicultural setting the role of government can exceed to curb the rising tensions due to differences between various groups and often times the state tend to impinge on individual freedoms. Democratic liberalism can help in ordering such problems and limited government with the rule of law can restrain the government.

According to John Garvey (1996) the liberal idea includes a broad concept of religion including no religion or disbelief, the agnostic aspect of liberal viewpoint broadens religious freedom by reaching both to believers and non-believers of different faiths.

There is an underlying link between Christianity and liberal understanding of religious freedom, even though the liberal thought might adopt the rational viewpoint of natural right. Liberal thought centers religious freedom as the right to select which is known as free will in the Bible. Further the liberal thought of John Locke, John Milton and Voltaire did not break away from religion, and they created a synthesis between reason, religion and natural right (Soriano 2013).

The foundation of religious liberty has emerged from the religious teachings and aligns with the belief that men are born free and equal before the almighty. Based on these convictions the religious liberty was justified in the Virginia declaration on the natural rights of man. These profound rights have been similarly found in other faiths and not just limit to Jews or Christians- Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists alike, together with atheists and agnostics (Novak 2006). For all are given their liberty directly by the Creator, in the act of creating human beings. Hence, allowing the individual to accept or reject any faith according to their own conscience.

By the end of the 20th century the rate of formation of new democratic government was slowing due to the strengthening of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. Although the number of electoral and liberal democracies essentially remained the same between 1998 and 2006 (Puddington 2006) lack of protections for civil and human rights in electoral democracies saw rise in human rights abuses. By 1975 about 40 countries in the world were liberal democracies and most of them were in the west, this was due to the presence of maximum number of communist countries in other parts of the world which lagged behind to imbibe liberal democracy. But with the ‘third wave’ of democratization by 1990’s, the Soviet Union dissolved and number of liberal democracies stood at 88 countries (Farr 2002). This movement of countries towards liberal democracies resonated with the idea of ‘liberal peace’ which claimed that the liberal democracies tend to have high inter-state trade and commerce, and due to the membership in international organisations such countries did not wage war against each other.

The compliance of human rights in general and religious freedom showed that the prospect for peace expanded. Grim and Finke (2011) found that the violent religious persecution and conflict rose due to the governmental restrictions on religions. Religious freedom had a pacifying result (Little 2016), with reduction of social and

governmental restrictions on religion, violent persecution was reduced. The compliance of religious freedom has been intertwined with other rights mainly freedom of speech and assembly, making it a much larger component of civil liberties. The supporters of liberal democracy viewed the importance of liberal institutions and limiting the powers of the state as a necessary condition of liberalism. It helped to bring adequate rule of law, protections of human rights and civil society.

Human Rights Norms:

Human rights emerged as a part of the U.S. foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II especially after the Nazi atrocities. Human rights were not seen as an appropriate topic for international scrutiny before the World War II. The League of Nations addressed certain human rights issue pertaining to minority rights, but it could not garner enough support and attention to make it as a legitimate topic for international action. Under Franklin Roosevelt, the unfulfilled plan of Wilson was accomplished with the founding of the U.N. Roosevelt articulated his “Four Freedoms” speech, later reaffirmed in the Atlantic Charter (Johnson 1987). The second freedom enlisted freedom of religion as a basic fundamental right of an individual. It was included in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (UNDHR) in 1948 and in the “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights” (ICCPR) in 1966. As a consequence, U.S got a leadership role in the U.N. and got represented in all its organs and virtually in all commissions and committees of the United Nations (FRUS 1951).

As a signatory of UNDHR and ICCPR, U.S. established a tradition to promote religious freedom through the modern human rights framework. It undertook measures to establish religious freedom for four decades. While the leadership started in the Congress during the Cold War due to the concerns arising for the plight of the Jews and later due to protestants in Soviet Union. The religious organizations played a key role in the inclusion of this right in the UNDHR. The Noldes Joint Committee on Religious Liberty played a significant role in giving the idea of religious freedom a global recognition (Lauritzen (2008). The “Joint Committee on Religious Liberty” was formed in 1943 by the “Federal Council of Churches” (FCC) and the “Foreign Missions Conference”. Later these two organisations were merged into a single body

known as the “National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.”. The Joint Committee played a crucial role for including religious freedom in the UNDHR.

The FCC created the “Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace”. It developed the “Six Pillars of Peace” which had a mix of strategic measures such as the “reformation of global treaties” and “control of military establishments” with principles such as “autonomy for subject peoples” and the “right of individuals everywhere to religious and intellectual liberty.” Another group, the “U.S. Commission of the Churches on International Affairs” (CCIA), helped promote religious freedom (Nolde 1968). Out of nine recommendations by the Nolde's committee four were included in the final charter. Those were- statement of moral aims, codification of international law, commitment to decolonization, and anticipation of fundamental human rights. The international support of religious freedom helped in recognizing it as one of the basic fundamental human rights with a universal character.

One of the highly prominent President, whose foreign policy was strongly influenced by human rights ideals was Jimmy carter. His most dramatic initiative was concerning human rights issues, and he made it the cornerstone of his foreign policy. He signed several international human rights treaties (Carter 1992) including the ICCPR and the “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights”, and submitted to the Senate in 1977 which finally got ratified in 1992. Under President Carter the State Department began issuing reports on human rights spanning number of countries, and voted to deny giving aid to the egregious violators of human rights, he suspended or eliminated bilateral aid to others, and, in several cases, imposed trade sanctions.

The Congress enacted legislation making the State Department to issue reports on an annual basis. In 1979 the issue of religious freedom appeared in the annual human rights report regarding Saudi Arabia, and its condition of minorities, one of the reports stated briefly "Islam is the established religion of Saudi Arabia and Saudis are not permitted to practice other religions, although non-Muslim foreigners have been able to hold private and discreet religious services. " (Department of State 1979). Since then, the reports have expanded significantly in covering religion related human rights abuses. The State department staff working on human rights affairs got enlarged and prepared annual human rights report for each country that received U.S. assistance.

Congress enacted human rights legislation against countries with severe human rights record by imposing banning of military and economic aid and multilateral loans.

Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Guatemala were the first countries with human rights concerns. Argentina was the main target in the 1970s against whom Congress passed a bill eliminating military assistance (Flood 1986). New criteria were setup by the U.S. policy makers for financial aid decisions as a result of the human rights legislation in the mid-1970s. Similar pressures were used effectively in other Latin American countries—Chile (after 1976), Uruguay, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic. U.S was the only country to act unilaterally when it came to human rights issues (Keohane and Goldstein 1993). The Regan administration was viewed to undermine the human rights laws but it continued to survive during the Reagan and Bush administrations. Although the public diplomacy of the Carter administration was separated from the foreign policy, it largely remained a bilateral issue.

Religious persecution got substantial attention during the Cold War. The U.S. State Department gave in to congressional pressure to allocate greater focus on human rights issues including persecution of religious minorities. Also, it aimed at integrating both issues into the nation's policy of containing Soviet Communism (Durham 2004). But for some period, human rights were essentially excluded from the U.S. foreign policy agenda especially from 1953 to 1973. David Forsythe (1988; 104) argues that during the Cold War, the human rights issue was "collapsed into its anticommunist policy." But apart from anticommunism the internal politics too blocked the adoption of human rights policy.

In 1951 Senator John Bricker of Ohio sponsored a constitutional amendment to protect states' rights against treaties authorizing "any international organization to supervise, control, or adjudicate rights of citizens of the United States." (Kaufman and Whiteman 1988). The Bricker amendment was supported by coalition consisting of conservatives concerned about states' rights, isolationists, and segregationists who feared that the ratification of U.N. human rights treaties would give the federal government the authority to impose civil rights standards on the states. The Eisenhower administration, worried that the Bricker amendment would tie the hands of the executive branch in the making of foreign policy, hence, he successfully blocked the passage of the amendment.

The congressional support for human rights in the 1970s was significant in incorporating language of religious freedom in the final Helsinki Act. In 1976, the Helsinki Commission, was created that often criticized governments abroad on various human rights abuses. American diplomats helped to include language on religious freedom in the “Helsinki Final Act” (1975), the “Vienna Concluding Document” (1989), and other OSCE documents.(Gunn 2002). U.S. participated along with other states in most of the international agreements related to religious freedom since the 1980s such as the 1981 “United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.” (Sullivan 1988); 1986, “UN Special Rapporteur” on religious intolerance. Until 2001, the U.S. participated in the “UN Human Rights Commission” and assisted in creating resolutions against violations of religious freedom (Department of State 1997).

The right to religious freedom has evolved from the abuses and discrimination faced by the religious community especially the Protestant leaders. Congress has at times put strong pressure on the executive to take issues of problem of religious communities into deep consideration under threat of legislation that would restrict the foreign policy powers. In mid 1980s there was a movement in Congress to expand human rights issues to Romanians on religious freedom, this was due to the increasing suppression and imprisonment of Protestant leaders. Both the houses of the Congress passed a law to deny most favored nation status to Romania .In order to oppose Soviet Union from human rights abuses, Congress commended Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the Voice of America for giving attention to religious freedom in the Soviet Union (Fraser and Salzberg 1979).

The Congressional Human Rights Caucus addressed broad range of human rights issues since 1983 mostly related directly to religious freedom. From 1985 it has been holding hearings on matters related to religious persecution and discrimination in host of countries like Tibet, China, Sudan, Pakistan, Vietnam, Syria, Russia, etc. The Congress has contributed in the making of institutions dealing with the issue of human rights and religious issues. Since 1988, the “U.S. Institute of Peace” (USIP) was created by Congress to promote peace, it launched a special initiative entitled “religion, ethics and Human rights.” USIP sponsored conferences and seminars dealing with topics such as religion, human rights and intolerance. Among many of

the initiative from the Congress USIP has contributed in the detailed study of religion and human rights issues in several countries and investigate on issues surrounding religion and human rights (USIP 1994).

Whereas the United States has actively involved and taken lead on the drafting of international agreements but itself has followed delayed response in ratifying international agreements pertaining to human rights. It took US Senate many decades to ratify ICCPR. This kind of approach shows ambivalent towards the issue of human rights. Suppression of people of faith had become “the neglected stepchild of the human rights movement.” This resulted in campaigns led by conservative Christians and Jews to solve the problem of diplomatic reticence through legislation. However, with the end of the Cold War religious freedom stood as a significant human right due to the increase in abuses of religious minorities. Especially after the lifting of Soviet rule the long standing ethno- religious rivalries in Balkans and Central Asia came to the fore. In addition, religion was having greater impact on societies and governments which was not evident previously. When U.S. adopted external human rights policy in the 70s one of the key feature of this policy was denial of military and economic aid to countries involved in human rights abuses of its citizens, this instrument has continued in the International Religious Freedom domain.

Christian Worldview of American leaders:

The ideas and beliefs of key decision makers in foreign policy is important in understanding the debates over a set of foreign policy issues. Steven Spiegel (1985) views that the perception of leaders are crucial variables in the making of foreign policy. Ideas take the form of worldviews which has the greatest impact on human actions. The worldviews are rooted in the symbolism of a culture and deeply affect modes of thought and discourse, it is linked deeply with people's minds and their identities. Goldstein and Keohane (1993) argues that world's major religion for instance have deeply impacted human societies in a number of ways and so did the new conceptions of sovereignty at the “Peace of Westphalia” in 1648 for building a new world order. The worldviews of leaders and Presidents helps in shaping the reality and recognizing what those worldviews consists of is crucial in the context of religious freedom and its evolution through decades in the U.S. foreign policy.

Unlike most of the Western countries the U.S. is regarded as a religious country. Since in the U.S. 'religion is crucial religious organizations plays a significant role in politics (Telhami, 2004: 71). Religion has often wielded indirect influence and been instrumental in constructing the mindset of policy makers. In the modern history of the U.S. President Jimmy Carter was prominently known as the only president to make religion a central point of focus in his campaign. According to carter's speechwriter, Hendrick Herzberg (n.d) "Carter believed in peace—in preventing war—and in human rights". The conduct of foreign policy was strongly guided by the values of sense of religious and moral duty. Some of such values have been reflected in carter's Middle East policy, in 1978 he brokered the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, which has often been viewed because of his religious inclination. By convincing President Anwar Sadat for recognizing Israel in return for Sinai Peninsula, Carter facilitated in stabilizing the Middle East and securing Israel.

There were other Presidents like Ronald Reagan who was influenced by the religious right and shared many of conservative evangelicalism's principles. During his administration, the religious influence in foreign policy got pronounced due to the growth of Christian right groups (Payne 1995). His foreign policy gravitated towards hard realist stand and was characterized by 'peace through strength'. Jerry Falwell and the Religious Right provided substantial support to the Reagan administration in foreign affairs, especially his struggle against the nuclear freeze.

President Theodore Roosevelt was seen to be a realist, someone who calculated the national interest objectively and was known to distinguish between central and peripheral interest without having much consideration for morals and values. However, he believed in religious ideology to create a foreign policy which could spread the message of social gospel (Preston 2012). He was an internationalist who viewed that U.S. had no other choice than to get engaged with the rest of the world and viewed that the American foreign policy should be rooted in righteousness especially those policies which would bring progress to the rest of the world.

President Eisenhower viewed religion as an important source for democratic politics and this view was reflected throughout his presidency and in foreign policy (Jacobs 2001). For him, religious liberty and the concept of free enterprise was essential for freedom and was a significant protector of civil liberty. Eisenhower chose John Foster

Dulles as his secretary of State who was a devout Christian and headed the FCC “Commission on a Just and Durable Peace”. The recognition of Israel by the U.S. also fit with the newly formed Judeo-Christian ethic, Truman’s most important influence on humanitarian worldview came from twin motives of religious tolerance and the horror of the Holocaust. Religious morality stood at the center in Truman's worldview, and this applied to international politics too, and believed that without morals, there could be no peace (Preston 2012).

A moral lens was provided by the Protestant theologians of the new world order to interpret international affairs was driven by the belief that U.S. had the responsibility to spread freedoms and human rights in the world through engagement (Johnpoll, 1970). They were also critical of the pacifism followed by the liberals who advocated isolationist policies during World War II. The theologians argued that the U.S. had to take responsibilities of the new world order and it was important to be permanently part of the international institutions like the U.N. which was necessary to lead the countries of the world(Harris 2000).

The public intellectuals who were part of the protestant establishment like Reinhold Niebuhr, John Bennett, Henry P. Van Dusen, Francis P. Miller, John Foster Dulles, to name a few helped in shaping the American political culture. These personalities were crucial in developing the idea for the Marshall Plan, the Bretton Woods system, and the United Nations. According to Heather Warren (1997) towering figures such as Reinhold Niebuhr and other groups of Christian realists and liberals helped in establishing support for the U.S. hegemonic leadership in the early Cold War years. Niebuhr is often associated with other “realists” like George Kennan and Hans Morgenthau. (Krauthammer 2004). His cultural and religious influence had a significant impact on perspectives concerning religious freedom and toleration. He believed that toleration and religious freedom meant the preservation of a domain of conscience (Berg 1995). He viewed that excessive focus on secularism can be detrimental by putting unduly pressure on culture which can interfere with religious freedom.

Although religious affiliations sometimes has not affected the decision makers for example, Richard Nixon despite being a Quaker was not a pacifist. He decisively bombed Laos and Cambodia in 1970 which led to an escalation of the Vietnam War.

George W. Bush is United Methodists – a denominations vehemently opposed to war. But Guth (2007) has demonstrated that religious affiliations and religious worldviews heavily influence voting on several social, economic, and foreign policy issues in the U.S. House of Representatives. The member of the Congress belonging to Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants, and white Roman Catholics sects have immense influence of theological perspectives in making choices.

President Reagan intuitively understood the increasing religious freedom in shaping a nation's ideology and relationship to the rest of the world when it came to Soviet Union but he failed to realize the same principle in Afghanistan. Reagan supported the Mujahideen to resist the Soviets during the cold war without paying attention to their local politics which later backfired in the form of Al Qaeda. The alliance between the Reagan administration and the Taliban was seen in a positive light to oppose Soviet aggression. Casey, who was the head of the C.I.A transformed low-level U.S. support for the mujahedin into a massive and increasingly sophisticated military juggernaut (Persico 1990; Coll 2004). The support of radical Islamists in Afghanistan from the Arab states and the Middle East exclusively served as a tool to contain communism.

After George W. Bush's the conservative evangelical leaders were once again able to play the part of White House insiders, unlike the left-leaning religious activists who had dominated in the Clinton era. (Page 2005; LaFranchi 2006). The Christian conservatives pushed three big ideas on foreign policy issues- unilateralism, fervent promotion of America as exceptional and belief in the idea of God's chosen nation. The third was the promotion of human rights, especially religious liberty which mostly meant individual rights. Moreover, mission boards and faith-based aid organizations began receiving vastly larger amounts of public funding to dispense to developing countries and development projects around the world (Farr 2008; Hertzke 2004; Marsden 2019).

Bush's language in discussing the war on terror and the Iraq War was suggestive of his religious beliefs. His emphasis on religious freedom around the world as a human rights issue and his relative lack of interest in social and economic conditions may also have been a consequence, at least in part, of his religious convictions (Rock 2011). In deploying religion in foreign policy narrative, George Bush speeches were replete with a religious message and phrases in fighting against the enemies of the

U.S. he spoke of launching a crusade against the Islamic terrorism. Americans, supporters and critics alike, thought of Bush's rhetoric as exceptional and that his use of religion to frame and justify foreign policy was a radical break with the American diplomatic tradition. The apocalyptic mentality prevailed in Bush foreign policies which also aided in promotion of religious freedom.

Unlike Bush, Obama did not have the strong religious rhetoric but his worldview was influenced by religious theology based on rational commitment rather than emotive or doctrinal attachments (Guth 2011). Obama was influenced by Christian realism of Niebuhr leading him toward a nondogmatic, ecumenical religious liberalism that meshed well with a basic ideological "pragmatism" (Kloppenber 2010). He paid special focus on faith based organizations and approached religious leaders that backed religious freedom in foreign policy. He emphasized the idea of religion's power to bring positive change in public life.

The religious influence has sometimes stemmed from the personal beliefs of individual policymakers. But it was also the result of political pressures emanating from below, as religious Americans comprising of —liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and those of many other faiths have constantly put their views on the policymakers and politicians. Religion can be possessed by anyone, and hence it has acted as a common denominator for dialogue between policymaking elites and the wider public.

Global Issues and Evolution of Religious Freedom in U.S. Foreign Policy

The idea of religious freedom was prevalent in the U.S. foreign policy before it was institutionalized under the "International Religious Freedom" (IRF) policy. The principle of religious liberty has been rooted in the American conscience and history ever since the American Declaration of Independence. But considerable attention to issues related to religious freedom was lacking abroad and had sporadic awareness before the 1990s. In the Cold war period the Jackson Vanik amendment was passed in 1974 against the Soviet Union's action to curb the Jewish emigration to Israel, this legislation was widely considered as a precursor to the IRF Act which institutionalized religious freedom in the foreign policy by the end of 20th century.

There was a shift in giving priority to the needs of individual, led to the focus on individualistic human rights since 1940s. The awareness for religious freedom was evoked partly due to the rise of Nazism and massive persecution of Jews.

Several political events helped to define major foreign policy changes like the Vietnam War abroad, and the Civil rights movement at home. These events gave a push for greater focus on human rights issues, including religious freedom. The increasing involvement of religious groups such as evangelicals in the social-political area advocated right to religious freedom to be in the mainstream. In the preceding decades, U.S. had presidents like Jimmy Carter (1977-81), whose foreign policy was centered on human rights and humanitarian values. His policies mellowed down the ongoing aggressive engagement internationally due to the cold war and was notable in prevailing pacifist sentiment (Garry 1993: 170).

The Christian and Jewish groups, to a great extent, influenced the support of religious freedom in every single administration. During the 1980s and 1990s particularly, religious organizations and lobbied to divert U.S. foreign policy on religious persecution abroad. The rise in religious conflicts and persecution of minorities in the world appealed for taking humanitarian consideration seriously in the 1990s. While in the 1980s the foreign policy of U.S. dealt with struggle defined by the Cold War, from the mid-1990s it was majorly focused on various human rights issues – including religious freedom, violent persecution and repression of minorities. In the Clinton administration, religious freedom got massive support not just from the progressive religious groups but from the conservative evangelicals too due to the suppression of Christianity in China (NAE 2002). In the G.W. Bush era the strategy of spreading democracy included religious freedom as a basic tenet and was involved with the religious actors in Islamic countries to curtail religious extremism through aid, diplomacy and warfare.

The Philippines and Religious Freedom:

One of the first attempts in advancing religious freedom took place in the Philippines. After the Spanish American War of 1898 Philippines was relinquished to America through the Paris Treaty. Under the American jurisprudence principle of separation of church and state was introduced in Philippines relying on the First Amendment. It

aimed for the free exercise of religion in places where Spanish sovereignty had ended (U.S. Department of the Interior n.d.). In the Constitution of 1899 this clause was included recognizing the liberty and equality of all religions and the separation of church and state. This export of religious freedom to the Philippines led to the Disestablishment of the centuries-old system of unified church-state relations.

The religious freedom was promoted in the Philippines through various other acts in the preceding years like the Philippines Bill of 1902, "*That no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed.*" (Crawlaw 1902). The Jones law of 1916 and the Tydings Mcduffie law of 1934. Through these pieces of the legislative decree, the intervention in the Philippines allowed U.S. to influence with secular democratic ideals, and install the 'wall of separation between the state and the church' (Blount 1913). However, the Catholic Church position was strongly affected and its influential position got diminished due to U.S. intervention.

Religious pluralism began to replace the enforced Roman Catholic monopoly, with the Philippine Independent Church forming a breakaway, a populist variant of Catholicism and Protestant churches were established. By spreading Christianity through the missionary work. The insurgency in the Philippines failed to get critical support and allowed Filipino Catholics to collaborate with the U.S. occupation. They successfully introduced the idea of religious freedom in the Philippines in a society which was largely dominated by Catholics. This ultimately led to the proliferation of other religious denominations which was mostly American in its origins. The occupation of Philippines also became a starting point for the missionaries to spread Christianity in other parts of Asia.

It was widely accepted that the right to religious freedom is the *sine qua non* for a Democracy. The very conviction that destiny, duty or fate mandated America to follow interventions abroad became part of the U.S. foreign policy narrative. Part of the American interventionist policy was seen as a mandate by the divine to lead the people of the world and be that nation which held the trusteeship for the world progress and as guardians of world peace. The American foreign policy did not solely

advocate peace for the world but was also guided by a commercial interest in pursuing an intervention.

By the end of the 19th century America's imperial turn came when the first foreign War with the Philippines was fought, the idea that the duty to spread the benefits of Christian civilization was present in American thought and was intensified in the American foreign policy in particular. The foreign policymakers were progressive but had interventionist and imperialistic aims. The most notable strategist of that period Alfred Thayer Mahan also believed that the role of Christianity and in particular Protestantism was an important aspect for moral grounding required to attain national greatness.

Anti-Semitism and Persecution:

The need to defend the religious rights of Jews surfaced from the oppression faced by Jews in Romania and Russia. Jews were persecuted especially in the Western Christian societies but the late 19th and early 20th century witnessed a high-water mark in animosity against them. In the U.S. too Jews had to face anti-Semitism but they formed a strong organization to promote the cause of religious liberty abroad more urgently than any other religious groups.

In Romania Jews were subject to acts of violence and government imposed strict restriction on political and economic rights. Romania after gaining independence in 1878 codified religious liberty in its charter due to pressure by other countries (Preston 2012) but the Jews continued to suffer from persecution and even genocide. In Russia in 1881 pogroms were carried out against Jews. This led to a widespread migration to U.S. and by late 1800s about 90 per cent of the Jews fled from Romania to the U.S. The U.S. State Department urged Russia to permit Jews to emigrate to other countries but of no avail (Jelavich 2009).

After John Hay became the Secretary of State in 1898 he protested against the continued violence against the Jews in Romania and condemned Romania's unflinching disregard for the Jewish subjects and their right to religious liberty. Hay gave the news to the American diplomats in Europe about the condition of Jews in Romania- this case was pleaded in the foreign offices of London, Paris, Vienna and

Berlin. He argued that the U.S. government was issuing protest against the treatment of Jews and it "cannot be a tacit party to such an international wrong" (FRUS 1902). The Russian anti- Semitic laws extended to the foreign Jews denying customary protection of foreign Jews entering Russia and especially Jews with American citizenship. In Russia, the State Department took notice of the increasing persecution, restrictions and harassment of the Jews and protested the discrimination of Americans citizen based on religion. But the pogrom of 1902 that killed more than 45 Jews and made thousands homeless effectively molded the public opinion against the tyranny and horror of the Russian government.

The ferocity of the pogrom propelled the American public to raise funds for helping the Jewish refugees. President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary Hay worked with prominent Jewish leaders like Leo Levi, Oscar Straus and Simon Wolf to discuss the petition to be presented to the Russian government. The petition had a language clearly stating the protection of religious freedom as a significant right which needed to be secured at all costs. One of the passages articulated: "...that none shall suffer in person, property, liberty, honor or life, because of his religious belief; that the humblest subject or citizen may worship according to the dictates of his own conscience, and that government, what- ever its forms or agencies, must safeguard these rights and immunities by the exercise of all its power" (Stults 1971).

However, the petition did not do much in changing the attitude of the Russian government but it was not a complete failure. The Jewish problem became an issue of religious freedom and the major source of tension between the two countries. By the end of 19th century the Jewish activist had grown to a considerable number in U.S. and they formed the American Jewish Committee to put pressure on the government to address the problem of Jews in Europe. For Americans the religious prejudice was the question of principles and appeals to Romania was important to safeguard the religious rights of Jews. But for the U.S. State department mass immigration was a bigger concern than just the principles of human rights associated with anti-Semitism (FRUS 1902). Other European countries did not accept the Jewish immigrants and America was the only hope for the beleaguered Jews. The State Department in order to reduce the number of Jewish made several requests to Romania and in that process the idea of religious freedom got wider popularity abroad(Clymer 1975: 75–80).

The Jewish involvement for advocating rights of European Jews had tremendous effect in influencing the immigration policy in the U.S. and paving the way for a liberal immigration policy. For similar reasons Jews have consistently promoted an internationalist foreign policy by steady focus on the problems of foreign Jews. The American society was transformed due to their immigration. From 1930s to the 1960s Jews influenced a trend towards secularization, the persistence of immigration policy also affected the homogeneous Christian culture in the U.S. and at the same time they stood to defend the rights of a religious group. (Hollinger 1996). The problem of Jews was complicated but at the same time fulfilling, and little did American politicians and diplomats realize then, but such mix of domestic politics, religion, and human rights set the standards for conducting foreign policy in the future.

Wilsonian Peace and the League of Nations:

Woodrow Wilson's effort to enshrine religious freedom in the League of the nation's covenant was the first-ever effort facilitating the creation of international regime for religious freedom. Wilson persistently attempted to remove religious persecution and intolerance as the sources of War. He was a great supporter of peace and an idealist who believed in the democratic ideals as a necessary condition for the establishment of freedoms that would lead to a peaceful world. His famous fourteen points out of which six advocated mutual dependence and reciprocity. These points were considered as the best possible means to ensure permanent peace. In adopting the League of Nations, the framers of the League made religious liberty as a fundamental feature essential for world peace. Wilson included a provision in the Covenant of the "League of Nations" by:

"Recognizing religious persecution and intolerance as fertile sources of war, the Powers signatory hereto agree, and the League of Nations shall exact from all new States and all States seeking admission to it, the promise that they will make no law prohibiting or interfering with the free exercise of religion, and that they will in no way discriminate, either in law or in fact, against those who practise any particular creed, religion or belief whose practices are not inconsistent with public order or public". (Dickson 1995)

Wilson was committed to promoting religious liberty and tried to do so in the Council of Four at the Paris conference. Wilson played a major role in the conference by being the only head of the state representing the ideas which rested on moral grounds, he personally drafted clauses for the protection of minorities from religious persecution, which was to be enforced and protected by an international body like the League of Nations. In U.S. just before the League of Nations another organization called the League to Enforce Peace was born in 1915 (Holt 1917) out of the destructive universal war. It became a forerunner of the League of Nations in advocating religious freedom. Soon World War I provided an opportunity to build an international organization to maintain peace in the world and prevent future wars. President Wilson advocated religious freedom for the countries that had been dismembered from the Austro- Hungarian and Russian empires.

The effort was the removal of religious persecution and intolerance leading to conflicts and wars through international institutions and legal mechanisms to guarantee religious freedom. His efforts to enshrine religious freedom in the League of Nations Covenant during the Paris Peace Conference was the first attempt at creating a modern international legal regime of religious freedom (Su 2013). The failure of Covenant, however, did not mean that less had been achieved. The idea of religious freedom in the Covenant only meant the need for building institutions to address the issues of religious persecution in the international society.

World War II and Mounting Religious Persecution:

The rise of Nazi ideology during the 2nd World War was not only threatened Jews but to all religions, including Christianity. The Nazis not only conjured the images of catastrophic World War I, but they revived awful memories of genocides in the past, targeting the religious minorities. Like the Greeks and Armenian Christians in Turkey, Jews in Romania and Russia, Cubans under Spanish. However, compared to these atrocities, hounding of religious groups in the 2nd World War like Franco's repression of Spanish Protestants, Japan's cruelty against Chinese Christians and the Nazi brutality against German Jews raised the horrific specter to a new level.

The church was brutally suppressed in Polish areas taken over by Nazi Germany. Ninety per cent of Polish priests in the region were killed, put into concentration

camps or forcibly expelled (Zieliński 1995). Thousands of priests died in prisons and concentration camps. Grand work of religious art and sacred objects were confiscated or destroyed. The Nazi saw no place for the Christian Churches and made full effort to destroy the Polish culture. (Kershaw 1983).

During the first term, Roosevelt administration found it difficult to respond to the Nazi policies due to higher priorities at home without expending political capital or worsening religious issues. He had to focus on the economic recovery at home while following the procedure of non-intervention in the internal matters of other countries. This led to a struggle in addressing the Nazi actions adequately. However, Roosevelt promised on relaxing visa restrictions for German immigrants and admitting them in 1933. The German Jewish Children Aid helped distressed children resettle in the United States, and until mid-1938, the U.S. continued to resettle Jewish children in the country (Breitman and Lichtman, 2014). Despite the prevailing anti-Semitism in the U.S., leading to bureaucratic and administrative problems, Roosevelt was the only leader who tried to attempt to find a home for the Jewish refugees in the late 1930s. By the end of 1930s U.S. was the only country that excepted refugees and Jews accounted for about half of all the immigrants in the U.S.

The situation worsened in the Soviet Union relating to religious liberty. However, organized religions were never outlawed, but the Communist regime confiscated church property, harassed believers and propagated atheism in schools. Priests and monks who opposed the policies were sent to Gulag and executed, by 1926, the Roman Catholic bishops were no more to be found in U.S.S.R. (Das 2016). The main target of the anti-religious campaign was the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1920s and 1930s which had the largest followers, who were either persecuted or sent to labour camps. Several thousand churches were closed or converted into Museums of atheism. By 1939 only about 500 churches remained out of 50, 000 (Library of Congress 2016). The Soviet Union suppressed Islam by force.

Earlier in 1933, Roosevelt believed that the Soviet Union would eventually allow an increase in religious freedom, (F.R.U.S. Nov 16 1933). Roosevelt wanted to secure the liberty of conscience and religious worship, and freedom from persecution on account of religious faith or worship. Roosevelt was persuaded by the American public to offer Lend-Lease to Soviet Union if they respected religious freedom. but

due to the lack of support of Russia in the Congress the Lend Lease faced difficulty in getting ratified. Roosevelt suggested "that Russia does have churches and does permit religious worship under the Constitution of 1936. If Moscow could get some publicity back to his country regarding the freedom of religion....it might have a very fine educational effect before the next lease-lend Bill comes up in Congress" (F.R.U.S. 1941).

The religious currents fueled the onset of the Cold War after 1946. In addition, the failure of Atlantic Charter to mention religion at the end of the World War II was perceived as a failure on Roosevelt's efforts in promoting religious freedom and was seen as appeasement of Stalin by trusting the Soviet Union getting reformed into a liberal democracy. In January 1941 in his State of the Union Address, he announced crusade for the Four freedoms in his arsenal of democracy speech: (Roosevelt 2018)^[1] "The first is freedom of speech and expression- everywhere in the world." "The second is freedom of every person to worship god in his own way...." "The third is freedom from want...." "The fourth is freedom from fear...anywhere in the world".

Roosevelt talked about religious freedom to be the baseline for liberty and freedoms was the basis for promotion of religious liberty; and its absence meant a threat in the international system. He was certain that in the aftermath of the World War every person should be guaranteed- freedom of speech and expression, religion, freedom from war and fear. After the War there was an interest in protecting religious freedom globally and it permeated in the foreign policy in the years to come. Roosevelt believed that democracy would follow where there is religious liberty. With Roosevelt insistence, the State department included religious freedom in the inaugural of Universal Declaration of the United Nations in 1945. The idealism of sacred peace and the righteous war of Roosevelt created a synthesis which allowed for the acceptance of intervention but only on the most progressive terms. This led to the foreign policy which had both nationalist and internationalist character. Aside from posing a seemingly existential threat to religion and democracy, the war had raised difficult questions of faith and morality.

Religious Freedom amidst Opposing Ideologies during the Cold War

The defeat of Hitler in the Second World War stopped the mass persecution of Jews, but the problem persisted under the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. It returned to those territories where the anti-religious campaign was carried out in WWII and it spread to additional territory after the War because of the addition of Eastern Europe. The American diplomats in Russia and Eastern Europe saw the violation of religious freedom under the communist regime and it was clear then that the Government failed to grant religious freedom cannot be democratic in any sense. The infringement of religious freedom in Eastern Europe presented a clear case of totalitarian aggression. American diplomats reported the violations of religious freedom in Warsaw, Moscow and Budapest and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. It urged the U.S. Congress to put considerable pressure on the State Department to pay attention to the issues of human rights, including the problem of religious persecution and these issues were integrated as a part of the more prominent policy for containing the Soviet Communism.

President Truman promised to rebuild Germany along the liberal democratic principles with a political system based on the foundations of free speech, free press and more importantly on freedom of religion (Zieliński 1995). During the Cold War, the U.S. sometimes worked in secrecy in addressing the issues arising out of religious persecution for containing the spread of communism. Political and religious actors against communism joined hands to counter the common international foe. The succeeding U.S. administration formed secret alliances with Pope “Pius XII” and “John Paul II” to balance Soviet Union. U.S. supported political parties in Europe with a religious worldview like the “Christian Democratic parties” in Western Europe and the “Catholic Union Solidarity” in Poland, or Islamists groups such as the “Mujahidin” in Afghanistan, to cut off the spread of communism and Soviet influence in various parts of the world.

The issue of religious persecution got stressed internationally due to Tito's repression of Catholic Church in 1945 in Yugoslavia. The Pope wanted support of U.S. in influencing Tito's government for religious liberty to the Catholics living in Yugoslavia. The Vatican tried to establish a relationship with the U.S. in order to stem religious persecution in Yugoslavia (Gallagher 2003). The Vatican and U.S. became

came close during this period leading to intelligence support in exchange of American diplomacy. After the Nazi suppression of Jews there was a plea in the U.S. by the Jewish community to fight against anti-religious totalitarianism. However, anti-Semitism was prevalent in the U.S. too. This problem got resolved due to various factors like the active lobbying of Jewish organizations and support by religious institutions like the Federal council of churches to end anti-Semitism in America. Jews in America had for generations supported American democratic principles and actively vouched for religious freedom. President Eisenhower made religion as a part of the strategy and the administration took heed of his injunction to capitalize on the religious issue.(Inboden 2008). The “Operations Coordinating Board” OCB was crucial in providing information about the religious factors in formulating policies outside the U.S.

After Eisenhower there were other U.S. Presidents such as Nixon, Kennedy and Johnson who did not pay much heed to the religious changes of the 1960s. Several administrations did not want to toy with the idea of religious freedom and was unwilling to go beyond the complications surrounding the issue of religious liberty. Also, because they were not willing to risk the détente over the issue of religious freedom with the Soviet Union. For Nixon and Kissinger Détente led to the skimming of issues like religious liberty and maintaining leverage in the newly formed relationship with China, which was of more value than religious-related issues.

In 1974 Congress passed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, an addition to the Trade Act of 1974 which was passed to put pressure on the Soviet Union regarding the emigration issue. The Amendment was, passed in the wake of the launch of the "diplomat tax" in Soviet Union that imposed unnecessary emigration fees on those who had studied in there and were seeking to depart. Justified as a repayment of the government's education costs, it was designed to combat the "brain drain" of Soviet Jews leaving for Israel and the West (Sales 1990). Although, the amendment's main objective was not explicitly related to religious freedom, it became significant in upholding fundamental right for the religious minorities based on religious discrimination to travel. It is considered as the first legislation in America inspired by the UNDHR. The Amendment led to a significant approach for examining human rights issues through Congressional hearings (Gaer 2012).

The continued harassment of Jews in the Soviet Union propelled domestic currents and lobbies in the U.S. to vouch for the Soviet Jews (Kochavi 2005). The question of religious freedom of minorities got attention in the Congress through Helsinki Accords. The Helsinki Accord was signed by 35 countries in 1975 which included freedom of religion and conscience without discrimination based on race, sex or language. "Each East European country promised to protect minority rights, allow religious worship, and grant political and economic freedom for all of their citizens."² In China, after the Civil War in 1949 under Mao Zedong, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) heavily suppressed religious practices, and the persecution of believers increased severely. The attack on religion intensified during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 70s. It was only after Deng Xiaoping in the 80s that Cultural Revolution policies against religion was eased and religion was regulated less strictly (Vause 1989). Under Chinese Communist party the constitutional rights were overlooked whenever need be (Rowe 1996). In Tibet there were severe restriction on religious freedom. The Tibetans widely condemned communist Chinese rule and wanted Government headed by a religious leader. They were heavily suppressed by China during 1987 anti-Chinese demonstrations.

The Tibet issue got attention in the U.S. "House of Representatives" while amending appropriations bill. Congressman Daniel Mica questioned the Chinese Government with the rising human rights violations in Tibet. The Congress noticed the issue of human rights violations and its failure of protection of religious freedom by China (Vause 1989). The House reiterated the request made earlier to China for engaging in a direct talk with Dalai Lama. This amendment was passed along with the House amendment condemning China due to its failure to give religious freedom to the people of Tibet. The amendment helped in recognizing Chinese failure to grant religious freedoms, and it set the tone for the passing of the IRFA later in 1998.

Post-Cold War and Extension of Religious Freedom in U.S. Foreign Policy

By the early 1990s the conflicts moved from the externally influenced ideological ones to internally based ones mostly centered around ethnic and religious issues. Such conflicts increased in countries such as Yugoslavia, Algeria, Burundi, Haiti, Turkey,

Mexico, Nigeria, Liberia, Somalia, and Rwanda. In these places, severe internal strife was witnessed and during the 1980's and 1990's, there was an increasing number of American religious organizations which was working to promote US human rights policies. During the 1990's some religious groups and individuals from various faiths lobbied in Congress, to widen interest of U.S. foreign policy on persecution abroad. And as a result, the State Department started to intensify its focus on religious freedom.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, however the abuses of minorities increased, one of the reasons was the long-standing ethnic-religious rivalries, especially in the Balkans and Central Asia that was suppressed during Soviet Union control. The idea of religious freedom was established by the U.N. but it was not enforced with vigor. Abuses and persecution related to religious issues were not paid adequate attention, while religious freedom got a secondary place in the human rights movement. In U.S, religious freedom as a basic human right gained popularity due to campaigns led by conservative Jews and Christians. They took up the issue of religious freedom and persecution while demanding an end to diplomatic caginess through legislation. Ultimately the efforts of various domestic religious groups, Christian institutions, U.S. Congress and the White House led to the formation of “International Religious Freedom Act” (IRFA) in 1998.

The Christian groups in the U.S., especially the evangelicals, influenced President H.W. Bush to develop a foreign policy in which religious minorities voices could be heard. But, Bush was an arch realist and prioritised order over justice. Bush victory over Iraq in the Gulf War was seen to be controversial among the religious groups because of their support for anti-war stance and against the use of force. In the 1990s political activism of faith-based groups reached new levels. On foreign policy, Christian groups advocated three main ideas, and one of them was the promotion of religious liberty.

In 1997 two Republicans- Frank Wolf and Arlen Specter gave testimony on "Freedom from Religious persecution Act". The Wolf Spectre Act as it came to be known ensured that the U.S. required to pay attention to the millions around the world suffering due to religious violations. It was recognized that the problem of religious persecution was addressed inadequately even through mechanisms like U.N. and it

was carried out in the wider context of human rights diplomacy which did not pay attention to religious freedom. The Wolf Spectre Act recommended the formation of a new office in the White House and gave authority to punish the governments for religious persecution through economic sanctions. The fear persisted that the policy for promotion of religious freedom would clash with other rights such as rights for women and children pursued by the Clinton administration. And most importantly, there was always the danger of dealing with a sensitive topic of religion and nudging traditional religious communities to press their moral understandings of faith on how human beings should live, exhibited U.S. foreign policy to be overbearing.

Following next year the Congress unanimously passed the “International Religious Freedom Act” (IRFA), which was a more inclusive and compact approach to the problem of religious persecution than the Wolf-Specter Act. The Act gave the State Department new measures to tackle the problem of religious persecution. After the passing of the IRFA however, the U.S. had to put pressure on allies countries to stop persecution. In China, the situation worsened because of Chinese policy on imposing various restrictions on religious activities and suppression of religious groups. It directed President Clinton to form a delegation to visit China in February 1998 at the invitation of President Jiang Zemin to discuss on the topic of religious freedom. The problem with China was its narrow idea of religious freedom as the state restricted and limited the practising and activities of every form of religion. Religion in China was regulated by the Religious Affairs Bureau, which constantly invigilated the activities of religious organizations, its believers and restricting unregistered churches. The delegation of Clinton made requests to free the detained pastors and monks due to their religious activities

The role of religion became important in the presidency of George W. Bush, and religious groups became very prominent in foreign policy. Bush wanted to emphasize religious role in American life and increased government funding to the religious groups. He relied on religion to shape America's foreign policy as a response to the 9/11 attack. He advocated a return to an almost unilateralist policy of "America first", with assertive nationalism (Devuyst 2010; Pfiffner 2004). Bush was not very keen on pursuing humanitarian interventions abroad and he seemed more confined to the domestic policies, mostly focusing on "faith-based initiatives" that helped in

increasing the role of the religious organization at home for federal welfare policy. The 9/11 attacks however greatly changed this stance of Bush, and had to get involved in the Middle East to fight extremism.

Foreign policy under President Barack Obama had a strand of liberal Christianity, and he rejected the fundamentalist version of American religious tradition. Obama supported issues aiming at progressive political causes both at home and abroad, the liberal Christians called for collective action between the people of faith and no faith, and for the common good. The strand facilitated the prospects for a stable cooperative international system. Obama, used religious language as well and was influenced by longstanding traditions similar to that of Niebuhr's Christian realism. He gave attention to faith based organizations and promotion of religious freedom.

On his visit to China, Obama referred to a different concept from the canon on religion and foreign relations: the importance of religious liberty. Obama saw it as one of, the preconditions for political liberty. and along with political liberty, peace would prevail at home and abroad. He also stressed the importance of religious pluralism for maintaining harmony in international relations. In his most famous foreign speech, in Cairo in June 2009³, Obama conceded that in past America had made errors but due to the tradition of American Judeo-Christian civil religion and most importantly its emphasis on religious tolerance helped in maintaining peace. Echoing two centuries of American political thought, he told the audience that "freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one's religion." The universality of religious liberty and its centrality in the democratic peace meant that all faiths required accommodation.

Conclusion

It took almost two centuries of religious conflicts and persecution for the U.S. to include religious freedom as a foreign policy agenda. Before the 1990s, most religious aspects in the international setting were taken up largely by the religious institutions and groups. Various IR schools had differing views regarding religious freedom and some did not give much attention to the contribution of religious factors in the U.S. foreign policy. But the vestiges of religious freedom were seen in the U.S. intervention since the annexation of the Philippines where separation of church and

state principle was applied drawing primarily from the religious liberty law of the U.S. constitution. Since then, the foreign policy of the U.S. had to deal with several issues relating to religion often propelling the government to make decisions to alleviate the discrimination and injustices faced by religious, ethno-religious groups. Sometimes it was the national interest for which religious freedom came as a useful means, for instance in Yugoslavia where the US and Vatican were driven by their own interests, for the US the end was to fight communism and for Vatican, it was to secure religious freedom of Catholics under harsh Tito's government.

Towards the end of the cold war and with the significant decline in the ideological competition between socialism and liberalism, scholars gave more attention to cultural aspects, including religion. The religious freedom, as viewed by the U.S. was cardinal for facilitating individuals based on religion to his/her own human dignity and adopt religious views without any fear of punishment. It prohibited states interference in pursuing religion and allowed a group or an individual to profess and practice any religion. After this principle was acknowledged as a universal right through the 1948 UNDHR, it made a great impact on the evolution of international religious freedom, which helped in accommodating as one of the key foreign policy agenda.

The foreign policy makers were often influenced by their own set of values and beliefs in making decisions. Presidents like Jimmy Carter who was known for advocating human rights and humanitarian policies internationally had deep religious beliefs which was reflected in his foreign policy. On the other hand, the religious right influenced President Regan's views who was known to follow aggressive foreign policy stance against the communists. A moral lens was provided by the Protestant theologians of the new world order to interpret international affairs and was driven by the belief that spiritual foundation was greatly needed. Figures like Niebuhr, President Carter viewed themselves as a "prophetic" band of critics of the existing social order which was mainly characterized by the optimistic and liberal theological tradition. They contributed in the formation of U.N. through the active involvement of U.S.

American administration and organisations involvement after the end of World War attempted to restore peace in the world and avoid the horrors of Jewish persecution or any other religious groups in the future. The special relationship between the U.S. and

religious liberty was aimed not just for the Americans but for the wider world. The American sensitivity towards the right to religious freedom helped in shaping the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Beginning with Article 18 of the 1948 UNDHR, freedom of conscience and religion was included. The same right found its place in the following treaties such as the ICCPR, the “Helsinki Accord”, the “European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,” and the U.N. “Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief” of 1981.

U.S was prompt in noticing religious freedom violations of Christians and Jewish communities in Russia, China, Romania but lagged in recognizing such issues for other religions. The U.S. government was slow in noticing the deteriorating situation in Iran until it was too late. For several officials in the White House, the emergency was not a profoundly serious problem until it became critical with no room left to maneuver. Due to the deep misunderstanding and ensuing faulty policies of the U.S. government, it led to the misreading of the revolution from its very beginning(Guerrero 2016; Bill 1982). The rise of extremism among the Shia clerics and their rise to power were given bare minimum attention. It was at that time that neo- Shiism took roots in the Iranian politics and the clerics wielded immense political power. They succeeded in casting conservatism over the Iranian society and drove the secular intelligentsia and educated professional out of their jobs and from the country.

It was not until the middle of 1990's that the idea of religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy got full attention. Most of the variables associated with religion were either left out or not given full consideration. Even the scholars did not recognise the significance of religion in shaping U.S. foreign policy behaviour before the 1990s. It was due to the understanding that religion had no impact on U.S. foreign policy, which ran parallel to much of international relations theory. For more than half a century, realism has been the leading perspective on the interactions among states and prescribed a foreign policy that gave the highest priority on national security because the international system and foreign policy was based on hard calculations of power and interest. While other ideational aspects like culture and religion was attribute with minimal role.

United Nations too started addressing the discrimination arising due to religious reasons specifically only after the 1960s when the Swastika epidemic of 1959-60 swept the entire world, including the U.S. where there were reports of physical attacks on Jews. The global wave of anti-Semitism forced the “U.N. Commission on Human Rights” to develop a universal instrument addressing such actions. The proposed UNDHR try to address this issue into two parts; one part addressed racial discrimination and the other discrimination on the grounds of religion.

The U.N. Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom was developed as a universal mechanism for enforcing religious rights that addressed problems for countries needing urgent action for religious persecution. Advocating religious freedom did not emerge naturally in U.S. foreign policy either, rather a host of religious actors and their activism propelled the U.S. foreign policy into a direction where religious freedom was necessary for serious consideration. For example, Jewish organizations supported IRFA of 1998 and its implementation. Some of IRFA's supporters stated the movements by the US Jews as a model for the legislation. The Jewish support widened the inclusion of other religious groups in the Act or else the earlier version of IRFA would have led the U.S. to focus only on prevention of religious persecution of Christians. Congress broadened the focus of IRFA to identify the worst violators of religious freedom in countries abroad.

Religious organizations have tremendous influence in the foreign policy of the United States . Religious beliefs in the U.S. have become part of the culture of society, and have deeply affected its values and the ways in which its citizens view their country and the world. Religious institutions throughout the history of U.S. have educated, mobilised adherents, and actively lobbied in support of their policy preferences. Furthermore, policymakers themselves were influenced in their foreign policy agendas, by their own religious beliefs and values. U.S. has engaged with the idea of religious freedom in foreign policy in various ways in different situations and with different religious communities. Historical and ideational aspects have conditioned the way this idea got support in the U.S. foreign policy establishment and it continues to be a vital aspect with the increasing persecutions based on religious lines.

Chapter 4

Institutionalizing International Religious Freedom- External and Internal Factors

Introduction:

The terrorist attacks perpetrated by terrorist groups inside the U.S. in 1993, and 2001 resulted in highest number of deaths in the history of terrorist attacks in the U.S. The events of September 11, 2001, and subsequent attacks in other countries turned the focus on international terrorism. The U.S. governments started to take a keen interest in understanding religious regimes and religious movements, especially in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa. In these places, religion had always played a major role even in places with secular governments and ideologies, but the increasing focus on religious terrorism questioned the prevailing motivation of religious actors and interests in public debates about the future of societies.

The rise in religious persecution and repression in the 1990s and the study on this issue by academicians, policymakers explored the dynamics of this problem further. Persecution, physical violence, political factionalism, religious fundamentalism, and other exclusionary ideas tended to dehumanize people. Making them seem less worthy of respect and protection. Intolerant ideas tend to lead to harassment, discrimination and even persecution. Several studies showed that genocide and mass injustices resulted in slow and gradual process of increasing dehumanization of particular groups (Hafer and Begue 2005). The institutionalizing of International religious freedom depended on various factors both at the domestic and international level, which will be elaborated in this chapter.

The countries with less number of minority religious population have been at greater risks of violating religious freedom. It has been argued that some governments with state religion tend to engage in the repression of religious minorities and discrimination and are inherently more prone to intolerance and violence than others. In this context, Muslim majority countries were at higher risks compared to other

states which explained the higher incidence of human rights violations and religious freedom violations in particular. Islam- one of the major religions of the world resisted the currents of modernization, the Iranian revolution was one such example that tried to undo the changes brought by modernization. By restoring the previous order based on Islamic values, it opposed increasing western influence in its society and culture.

The Inclusion of IRF was necessary to deal with events involving religious issues related to ethnoreligious conflicts, religious terrorism, persecution of religious minorities, state suppression of religion in various countries such as China, Yugoslavia, Serbia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Russia, and many others. The role of non-state actors like NGOs and religious organizations contributed to highlighting the importance of promoting religious tolerance and securing religious rights. The existing ideas and narratives backed by secularist worldview that treated religion in reductionist terms got invalidated due to resurgence of religions all over the world. Phenomena associated with modernization process like globalization helped in resurgence of religion especially when it came to cultural globalization. For example, the Christian sect of evangelical Protestantism, while preaching in various corners of the world, acted as a vehicle of cultural globalization.

The coalition of Christian religious groups and government insiders in the U.S. focused on the persecution of Christians abroad in the early 1990s and they aimed at resolving this issue by championing the cause of IRF. Ultimately, this change in the U.S. foreign policy establishment saw a gradual movement towards the direction of desecularization. It moved from overtly secularized foreign policy, and the government started to make policies involving religious actors and issues. Such a change in the foreign policy made the passing of IRFA possible (Bettiza 2013).

The increasing engagement in a structured manner through policy frameworks was understood as a growing salience of American foreign policy. The efforts by the “White House” or the “State Department” to involve religious groups and inter-faith dialogues facilitated in promoting religious tolerance in the Middle East. Towards the end of 1990s the mainstream ideas on the persecution of Christians were incorporated in religious freedom by involving other world religions too such as Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism who feared persecution in the world. This chapter aims to identify

various factors leading to the institutionalizing of international religious freedom. It will analyze the external phenomenon such as global resurgence of religion, religious persecution, globalization, secularization, role of Islam, and internal factors such as marginalization of religion in the American foreign policy in the past, desecularization and role of NGOs affecting the foreign policy of U.S.

Resurgence of Religion in Global Politics

The resurgence of religion means return of religion to world politics. The definition of this concept is given by Scott Thomas (2005): "The global resurgence of religion is the growing characteristics and persuasiveness of religion, i.e. the increasing importance of religious beliefs, practices, and discourses in personal and public life, and the growing role of religious or religiously-related individuals, non-state groups, political parties, and communities, and organisations in domestic politics, and this is occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics".

The above definition gives a broad view of the resurgence of religion and includes all the countries in the world. When given a closer look, the non-western countries have been impacted greatly by this phenomenon and can be seen as the search for originality in countries, and a move against imposition of Western political concepts like secular ideas, liberal democratic principles. The countries in the developing world wanted to establish their own identity by focusing on harnessing their value systems rooted in their cultures and tradition. The Western culture was widely thought to have triumphed in the world, due to the condition of non-western states which were still weak and economically fragile. The leaders in Asia and Africa with western orientation were challenged by those who represented the indigenous cultures and, in some countries, the non-western traditions have vigorously reasserted themselves (Bull 1979).

The European dominated international society accepted the Latin and Christian culture and drew largely from it to define its laws. But today the cultures of Asia, Africa no longer presuppose the Western cultural base. After 1945 most of the colonial countries got independence in Asia and Africa, and the Western states try to influence those countries. This was further supported by the ruling western-educated

class who were inherently inclined towards either liberalism or Western Marxism. The countries in Asia, Middle East and Africa and other non-western countries now with better political, economic and military strength felt the need to liberate themselves from the western support and the cultural deference that they had to pay to the West. This allowed these countries to adopt more assertive postures and reveal the gap that existed in basic values between them and the western states.

Francis (2018) argues that the leaders in developing countries are more likely to have religious beliefs similar to their constituents and religious legitimacy plays a significant role in political discourse. The tension between secular and religious has shown the worldviews and beliefs can significantly influence the behaviour of political actors. However, when it comes to religious beliefs, the political actors were not the only factor influencing the policy decisions of a country. The policy decisions were driven by the widely held religious beliefs of a country's population too. In that case, there has been a connection between religion and foreign policy which was structural and integral to a country's foreign policy. The policymakers could not ignore the beliefs of their constituents, in case of Israel and Palestine, both considered Jerusalem a holy city and the Temple Mount as an important place to both the religions. In this case, the leaders who did not share these beliefs would be at the wrong side to compromise on the issue. Further, the states were likely to seek allies who shared similar religious beliefs and identity. One such example is Saudi Arabia's policy of promoting its version of Wahabi Islam as an example of religious influence in its foreign policy (Farr 2012).

Some scholars like Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington (2002) have shown that religion influences cultures and it affects the economic and societal life. But several neo-liberal economists have viewed religion in reductionist terms (Stackhouse 2007), the school of thought is represented by the Chicago school of rational choice theory. The view of this school on religion is that it is not seen as a manifestation of class interests neither it is viewed as something that helps in shaping political, social or economic policy but a subjective want that is functioned by the market forces which can be best understood as a consumer commodity. The problem with such kind of view is that it neglects the role of religion in shaping social life. The failure to

recognize religion in shaping the public ethos of civilization has made it bounce back in today's world with much vigor.

The narrative on the resurgence of religion got supported by the works of various scholars and analysts. Huntington clash of civilization thesis offered a view on the future conflicts to be based on civilizational lines, particularly between the West and Islam. Some neoconservative intellectuals like Francis Fukuyama envisioned the end of history where Western liberal model triumphed over every other kind of governance. This popular idea contributed to the thinking of the significance of non-western identities and culture, it gave religion which has been one of the most powerful driving force amongst population living in the developing world. In the words of Fareed Zakaria who views that it is a post -American world characterized by immense transformation around the world, created an international system in which countries in the world are no more objects and observers anymore but the rightful players.

Secularisation of Politics/Westphalian System :

"The key idea of secularisation theory is simple and can be traced to enlightenment: Modernisation necessary leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals" (Berger 1996). With the coming of the modern age, the virtues and morals associated with religion got modified in order to suit the needs of the modern monarchies in Europe. The power that the Catholic Church enjoyed through the ecclesial authority started to get eroded with the coming of the modern state. Due to the secularisation of politics, religious beliefs and conscience were privatized, removing it from the public arena and placing it in the private sphere. Religion was modified and reinvented to facilitate the transition from social to the privatized. It was necessary to change the allegiance from religion to state for the consolidation of power in the new international society. It led to the invention of the modern idea of religion by making it solely private. The Treaty of Westphalia legitimated the end of thirty years of war and created a European society.

Some authors (Bull 1979, Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003; Hurd 2015; Farr 2008; Juergensmeyer 2008), has viewed that the secularisation helped in taming religion by the state to avoid religious interference in other countries needed to maintain

independence and external sovereignty. But this modern concept did not seem to fit well with all the countries in the world like in parts of Asia, central Europe, and in general the non-western world, especially after the Cold war. The shift from traditional religious society to modern has been difficult, and hence we still see the challenging transition taking place in many of the developing countries characterised by strong religion and weak states. More and more religious communities and even states have been trying to redefine their boundaries based on secular and sacred ideas in the modern globalised world.

One of the problem in assuming that religion solely belonged to the private sector was that it undermined the role of religion in providing context in which people found meaning and formed close social connections. As witnessed in many countries such as India, Nepal, Sri Lanka most of the Middle Eastern states, where religion hasn't been confined solely to the private sphere and policies of these governments were strongly influenced by religion. Religious values has been of great importance, and religious communities imparted identity-forming value to its believers by providing a context to an individual personality. Collectively social institutions provided values to people which has been rooted deeply in religious ethics and morals.

The western scholars have been interpreting nationalism in former colonies for political independence between 1950s and the 1960s with a secular character. The new nations in the third world gained loyalties from the sense of secular citizenship. The nationalism that prevailed was majorly secular and the loyalties were largely based on the will of the people rather than any form of religious sanctions. In fact, even the leaders in the newly independent countries and emerging nations were swept by the vision of free world with secular character (Jurgensmeyer 1994). The concept of secular nationalism provided an opportunity for these leaders to influence the electorate because this concept gave an ideological justification and provided power bases to move ahead compared to the traditional religious and ethnic leaders.

Secularism not only influenced the political aspect in a country but it also affected the personal identity of people at a deeper individual level. It molded people into a modern being through secular ideas who had an abiding faith in secularism and tied this view to nationalism. This new spirit was exemplified by the leaders of newly independent countries and leaders like Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Jawaharlal

Nehru from India viewed that "there is no going back to a past full of religious identities, for the modern secular spirit of age will inevitably triumph throughout religious identities" (Jurgensmeyer, 1994). In the newly formed countries, secular form of nationalism was supposed to promote separation of religion from politics to avoid any possible hurdles created by religious loyalties to attain political goals.

Universalizing principles of liberal democracy by the U.S. and other western countries for economic benefits engendered negative response by non-western countries. The aim of maintaining predominance of liberal democratic views in the rest of the world has created counter responses by other civilizations according to Samuel Huntington (1993). At the Interstate level of analysis, the countries have been engaged in religious engagement through faith-based diplomacy. Reasons for resurgence of religion is multifaceted and can be triggered due to alliances, military, arms race, power, the balance of power, role of states in conflict and international cooperation. Religion was not meant to be part of Global politics as assured by the "Westphalian presumption". Despite such intentions various international governmental institutions have been engaging in dialogues and works at the interstate level related to religious aspects such as "faith based diplomacy"- like the "World Faiths Development Dialogue"; then the role of religious leaders at international institutions and forums like the United Nations and the "World economic Forum in Davos"; another example has been the increasing role of religion in conflict resolution and peacemaking. These examples shows that religious issues cannot be caged to the private sphere and has pervaded at different levels of human existence starting from intrastate to the interstate levels.

The secularisation of countries has come under question due to the growing centrality of religion in major political events in the world. For example, the role of religion in the politics of Iran, Pakistan, political struggles in Northern Ireland, religious protest in 1980s in Poland, Romania, East Germany, rise of Islamic fundamentalism and Buddhist radicalism in Myanmar. Religion extended to play a significant role in political change and one of the most obvious explanation (Turner 1991) for this is that the religious mythology acts a vehicle for the expression of political and social protest against a secular regime, which explains how Islamic fundamentalism has been

successful in mobilising opposition against the western countries in which religion was taken to be a substitute or as a companion to nationalism.

At the societal level sociologists maintained that the existence of moral order or value systems that bonded the community of people together for social integration and various ritual and communal practices to be of significance for social relations. The sociology of religion regards religion to be the significant element in integrating the value systems (Parsons 1991). Religion created symbols for social life and the existence of humans which in turn created an experience for social membership. In secular societies, there has been no general system of values to legitimise socio, economic and political functions. Coherence and order were prevailed only through regulations and economic restraints, and eventually force was used by governments if everything else failed.

The diminishing of religious authority due to secularisation and loss of socio, cultural significance of religion was witnessed in the modern societies. The 'conscience collective' in the words of Durkheim (1964) was formed by the common sharing of belief systems and rituals which gets heavily distorted in the modern societies due to the breakdown of belief systems. It is the result of the complex division of labour, speed of social change and lack of civic morals which produces anomie in the society. He views that some form of collective consciousness is important in modern society which could be possible in the form of nationalism.

In the modern world, secular states have not been able to live up to the expectations of the masses and could not deliver the promises of political freedom, social justice and economic prosperity. This has led to the disenchantment with secularism and it is especially felt by the educated middle classes who got their expectations high from the secular nationalist leaders of their countries. Some geared towards religious nationalism after experiencing the failed secular nationalist promises. Many viewed that they have been betrayed by the west due to government scandals, rising inequalities and economic hardships. The problems in democratic forms of government and the collapse of socialism have produced scepticism in the western concepts of governance and ideas.

Moreover, the perception of secularism tied to the Christian ideas of beliefs have brought about lessening of trust in non-western secular political systems. While secularism does not necessarily mean rejection of religion, it has come to be seen as the antithesis of religion. While this understanding of secularism is just one interpretation, it has evolved to shape popular perceptions. The assumption that secularism as the antithesis of religion exists among religious populations of several faiths, and is commonly equated with unbelief, atheism, and Western domination.

The political failures of U.S. and involvement in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and its failed attempts to develop these countries have revealed the failures of modern secular systems modelled after the Western countries. The politicians from various corners of the world recognized the fallacy in accepting Western-styled secular ideologies because of the universality of such ideologies which undermines the uniqueness of different cultures. The involvement of religion in politics after the Cold War led to reinvention of ideas set forth by the secularisation thesis- that science and rationalism could not remove religious beliefs even in rich nations like the U.S. and countries of Europe. Similarly, the economic change did not undermine religion in a way predicted earlier; rather, the drawbacks associated with economic modernisation led to the opposite effect (Hibbard 2015). The ill-effects of global capitalism in traditional societies and the web of relationships that held old communities together spurred a return to religion on a large scale. Far from diminishing religion, the economic change reinforced it.

Globalisation

The reason for religious resurgence can be due to the complex reliance of various social forces and globalisation is one such phenomena that has been creating complex interdependence globally. The religious resurgence at the global level at the global level was seen to be an important trend happening all over the world, and it was creating a unified world but at the same a pluralistic world (Beyer, 1994). There were socio-cultural changes taking place in countries and cultures all over the world and globalisation assisted in the religious resurgence phenomena (Dark 2000). Also, the attempt of “Americanization” through globalisation led to a retaliation in the form of religious fundamentalism and it pitted the West against the rest (Moutusis 2015).

Globalisation is referred to "a set of technological processes affecting the world economy, telecommunications, information technology, travel, and growing economic interdependence between states and peoples that is altering our sense of time and space, and is creating the possibility that the world will become a single social space" (Scholte 2000). In this very definition, globalisation is seen to be the most modern form of phenomena which tends to homogenise the world. This understanding has problems because such a unidimensional viewpoint has undermined the role of religion and culture, due to which many view globalisations to be an alien force imposed by the Western countries. The process of globalisation has affected every aspect of a state ranging from socio-political, to cultural, economic, and technological fields, affecting from the macro foundations to the micro at the local levels.

The transformations of societies from the most primitive to the modern industrialised ones took place with various material, and political factors and some were majorly shaped by the dominant religious and ethical transformations that helped in the shift from one form to another. The direction of globalisation has been towards the formation of global civil society which aimed at lesser State control (Dark 2000). Many of the developing countries incorporated the changes demanded by the process of globalisation in their economies and society. Globalisation surprisingly contributed in the increased religiosity of people, for example ,migration of people which has facilitated this aspect due to quick and easy travel, and along with them their religion and religious ideas have moved along. Migrants tend to be usually more religious (Bouma 2002) than those they leave behind. This has led to a dramatic increase in religiosity in places where migration took place, resulting in increased interreligious contact.

Religion became crucial in the spread of globalisation, especially when it came to cultural globalisation. The Christian sect of evangelical Protestantism for example and its Pentecoastal branch has been acting as a vehicle of cultural globalisation. The spread of Christianity in Latin America, Asia, and Pacific islands have shown that the conversion to this particular faith has transformed the attitudes of people in various aspects of life like family, child rearing, work and economic attitudes. There have been modifications of globalisation with a mix of local cultures in some parts of the world- this acceptance of globalisation can be seen with a slight modification of what

James Watson (2006) has called it as "localisation"- a characteristic where local modifications are integrated with the global culture. For example, the Buddhist movement in Taiwan has borrowed the organisational structure from the American Protestantism to propagate the non-western religion.

Globalisation has contributed to the expansion of ethnic and religious diasporas all around the world in a huge way generally for economic and political reasons. With the facilitation of easy global travel, the missionary work has been now reversed from south to north with a number of religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity and from developing countries making their way in the U.S. and Europe. The radical and militant form of religion appeared in the West which was just a single side to the global phenomenon of religious resurgence, which Felipe Fernandez-Armesto (1995) has called "counter-colonisation." The spread of "New age" spiritual religions like Hinduism and Buddhism has sometimes been seen as a vengeance by the East that has changed the views regarding spirituality and religion in the West (Armesto 1995).

The acceptance of globalisation has varied widely in the countries of the world. The dynamics of globalisation has thus been adopted, rejected or inhibited depending upon the interpretations from their respective moral and ethical stance. For example, some have accepted the material and technological aspects produced in the West while inhibiting the cultural and religious aspects originating from the West. Globalisation has been able to revive not only old religions but it also led to the mushrooming and spread of new religions, for example Taiwan which not only have traditional religions but religious sects of all kinds and has been aptly described as "window of world religions".

Philip Jenkins (2002) views that in Taiwan the rise of various religious sects were imports from countries like India, France, Japan, Vietnam. These new religions were brought in the country by scholars, religious groups, study groups and it led to the traditional Buddhist religion into a new era of "religious renaissance". It allowed a massive rise in the followers and did not led to the decline of worshippers in the new globalised world. The popularisation of both local and imported religions was viewed as the response to fulfill the spiritual needs of the Taiwanese people who were pressurised from over modernisation.

Globalisation has increased the visibility of religious issues due to the enhanced communication and technological advancements. The line between domestic and international issues has been increasingly getting blurred. Religion has increasingly become what is called "intermestic" (Dark 2000) policy issues in I.R.; it means that there has been an amalgamation of various domestic and international politics. For example, the protest of British Muslims against Ayatollah Khomeini's ban on Salman Rushdie highlighted the issue of freedom of speech, blasphemy laws and religious toleration. In the globalised world, any issue of religious significance can translate into a bigger issue focusing on the pre-existing conflicts in traditional and western secularised values.

The issues involving faith has increasingly become intermestic issue in today's global politics. Many other issues of religious significance can come into conflict with secular society's understanding of such traditions, for instance, the Jewish and Muslim regulations of the "kosher and halal" rituals can conflict with the animal rights activism on the humane treatment of animals. Hence globalisation has not only integrated the countries in one single network but has created differences along religious/cultural lines and has led different religious groups to be more aware of their religious traditions and identities.

Religious Repression and Persecution in the World:

Religious groups have been the victim of violence in almost every part of the world. Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Hindus has suffered persecutions and discrimination from the state and non-state actors at the same time each of these religious groups have inflicted harm on the other. The term religious persecution has often been used interchangeably with terms like religious repression and actions related to egregious abuse such as rape, torture, and imprisonment based on religion. All these terms, when taken together, include the right to free exercise of religion and removal of discrimination based on religion. It involved repression and persecution where a group or government put restrictions on religious activities and beliefs regardless of whether the groups belong to religious minority or majority.

According to Jenkins (2007) religious persecution meant governments role in repressing religious ritual and activities by certain group or groups with the motive of

eliminating them in the long run. In another definition “Grim and Finke” (2007) defined religious persecution as "Physical abuse or physical displacement due to one's religious practices, profession, or affiliation". Other violations of religious freedom less severe in nature (Kolbe and Henne 2014) included a different set of actions, such as restrictions on religious beliefs and activities including proselytising and public worship, general forms of discrimination against religious minorities, and banning a particular religion.

Key perpetrators of religious persecution and violators of religious freedom has included states and a host of non-state actors such as terrorists groups, religious leaders, political parties, local communities, militant groups, businesses. Some countries with communist government system were known to heavily suppress religious groups, but even in liberal democracies, religious groups have not been free from discrimination. The former communist regime in Russia, countries in Central Asia and contemporary communist states like China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba was seen to have kept their cold war policies of persecution against religious actors. The nature of religious violations have differed from country to country, and the context in which such violations occurred were way too complex, influenced by different cultures, histories, and politics.

In other instances, there has been violation of religious freedom rights and persecution by theocratic governments such as Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia. For example, in the 1980s and the 90s the Sunni Muslims in Sudan persecuted Christians, Muslim sects and animists. In countries of Europe like Belgium, Germany, France and Austria they have discriminatory and intolerance practices against the members of believers of various sects or 'cults' often leading to harassment and threats of violence against these sects. In case of non-state actors, governments silent support of these actors in carrying out discrimination and repression has led to higher levels of violence and solution has been challenging to attain. The intensity of violence and discrimination against religious groups varied from place to place, and it has been limited to patterns of discrimination, restrictions resulting in grave forms of persecution even genocide.

Governmental Repression of Religion:

Governments that supported religious persecution, discrimination and intolerance mainly did so when they had a state religion or was threatened by perceptions related to national security, national identity or social harmony. Governments that felt threatened usually targeted individuals or groups of other religious faiths that were generally perceived as possible threats (Hafner-Burton 2013; Sikkink 2017). In other instances, governments were hostile to a particular religion when there was an official state religion. The government became the protector and interpreter of religious orthodoxy, and their support was based on their will to defend the state religion. In such a state problem of conflicts were constantly present because the laws for restriction or discrimination against religious group was derived from religious sources; laws like blasphemy, and apostasy were generally justified in the name of the religion.

Religious freedom and its protection has depended on the types of prevailing government systems in a country. It is generally viewed that democracies protected human rights better than other types of regimes such as authoritarian regimes. In authoritarian regimes, it was easier for the government to hide the truth due to the lack of “checks and balances”. On the other hand, democracies were different, and the actions of the government were more transparent than the other forms of government, besides democracies allowed people to engage in associations and civic engagement including religious groups allowing space and freedom to express interests, views and activities. This seemed to affect the human rights situation in general, and a large number of quantitative data suggested that democratic countries have lesser human rights violations (Sikkink 2017).

The relation between state and religion has been an important factor influencing freedom of religion and more than any other factor. The “U.N. Special Rapporteur” (2018) on freedom of religion mentioned that (Shaheed 2018) “[T]he degree to which States are entangled with various religions or beliefs has far-reaching implications for their disposition and ability to guarantee human rights, especially those rights exercised by persons belonging to religious or belief”. Shaheed (2018) makes four different types of state-religion relationship, i.e. “states with official religion; states

that favour particular religion; states that do not favour any religion and states that are hostile or have a negative view of religion". The state with the highest levels of religious repression were states with official religion. Such states made official religion by enacting laws, compared to all the religions in the world Islam has been the official state religion of maximum number of countries that has state religions. This was followed by Christianity and Buddhism.

In non-liberal democratic states like Pakistan- Blasphemy laws have aggravated the problem of persecution of minorities like the Hazaras, Ahmadiyahs and outlawed Christian proselytism. The blasphemy laws, although passed to protect Islam has led to the coercion of other religious groups and silence their views. It has a big impact on the civil society by undermining moderates and giving legitimacy to discriminate and essentially legalise persecution against minorities groups. These laws have emboldened the radicals (Saiya 2015). Terrorists have often invoked such laws to obtain legitimacy to attack those who threaten their ideology. Hence, such laws are detrimental in a country with the potential to worsen religious-related persecutions.

The suppression of minorities and their persecution is, however, not only attached to the theocratic or non-liberal state, neither such characteristics only found in Islamic countries such as Sudan or Iran. The problem of persecution has been widespread in countries with Christian majority too; in 1990s the Russian Orthodox Church considered as the de facto official religion that constantly overlooked the activities of other sects in the country (U.S. Department of State, 2000), it advocated discrimination of religious minorities. It prevented foreign churches and other organisations for conversion activities. Similarly, in Europe and Latin America, the established Christian bodies pursued discrimination against sects vying for potential converts.

Almost every religion in the world has undergone attacks, and its followers faced imprisonment, torture, murder, and mutilation. This form of violent religious persecution has occurred in the past and is still prevalent today. Barrett and Johnson (2001) has viewed that numbers of deaths exceeded more than two hundred million due to religious beliefs in the past two centuries. The most notable of such violent persecution based on religion were three familiar examples in the twentieth century, the first- there were three million Christians in Turkey accounting for more than 20

per cent of the population in the beginning of the past century. This community comprised only about 2-8 per cent of the population in the current century (Johnson and Grim 2008). Most were Armenians who were either killed or driven out during the WWI. The second example was during China's Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, there was a massive suppression of counterrevolutionary groups and individuals. Religion was singled out because of its loyalties attached to the spiritual realm that did not align with the revolutionary ideas and mainly because it had a deeper impact in people's consciousness and out of control of the revolution. The third most vivid example was the Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany with the estimation of 11 million Jews persecuted by the end of WWII.

These examples highlights the physical abuse and displacement of people due to religion or what is known as violent religious persecution. It is a kind of social conflict that is rooted in bigger conflicts within societies and countries. (Grim and Finke 2010). The cause of violent religious persecution occurred mainly due to the measures taken by the involved groups to redefine their national character. In Turkey, Turks identify with Islam and in Germany as an Aryan nation that excluded inferior races due to their ethno-religious identities. China tied its identity with revolutionary state and rejected the religious beliefs associated with foreign imperialism.

The problem of religious persecution and repression have a spiraling effect leading to other issues such as refugee problem. The religious and ethnic persecution in former Yugoslavia in 1992–1995, made millions flee from their homes in Bosnia and Croatia. The conflict in Kosovo in 1998-99 further worsened the refugee problem. More than 200,000 Serbs and Roma migrated to Montenegro and Serbia in 1999. The ethno-religious nature of such conflicts highlighted the importance of religion linked to the parties of the conflict. The Bosnian conflict, in particular, has been described as ethno-religious in nature because the religious identities were intertwined with the ethnic identities. A Croat is naturally identified with Catholicism, a Serb with Orthodoxy, and a Bosnian with Islam.

Non-State Actors and Religious Intolerance:

Non-state actors include terrorist movements and militant groups, religious groups, media, political parties, also local communities organised committing violation of

religious freedom. Violations of religious freedom has led to an increase in the intensity of the conflict, and it has further strengthened a society's culture of violence. The resulting violence due to religious reasons have led to a cycle of aggression in a society, hampering social ties between individuals and groups and allowing a further increase in mob violence (Hafner-Burton 2013). Countries in which religion plays a significant role to the point where it defines its national identity, the non-state actors has become active on religious matters. Vigilante and local groups justify restrictions on minorities and view governmental aspirations to uphold a particular religion (Bielefeldt 2013). Minorities are usually targeted and viewed as foreign entities to national culture and unwanted or harmful to national cohesion.

Local groups and international terrorist groups act as the protector of religious doctrines and has created hostilities against infidels', 'heretics'. Groups like the “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria” (ISIS) is an obvious example while other groups like “Boko Haram and Lord's Resistance Army” are examples of non-state actors who consider themselves to be the protector of religion. Other non-state actors have used religion and nationalism to engage in social hostilities against particular religious groups (Sarkissian 2015). In some instances, religious practices were viewed as a grave threat to identity and national culture, prompting imposition of restrictions on such practices to secure national culture. Restrictions of certain religious practices targeted mainly religious minorities who were perceived as foreign and dangerous to national cohesion.

Terrorism has bred in places where there were already existing hostilities leading to further increase in disenfranchisement, resistance and alienation. Often lack of or inadequate protection of religious freedom has led to an increase in religious-related violence. Places which sufficiently protected religious freedom experienced less religious terrorist attacks compared to places which had no protection (Finke & Harris 2011). As such, the maximum number of terrorist groups emerged from religiously repressive settings and only about three per cent from religious conflict-free places (Saiya 2015). The relationship between conflict and violations of religious freedoms has varied without being one-directional.

Some government falsely labelled a group as terrorist, like the Russian government which had the authority to ban any group that it suspected of extremist activities. By

2011 Russia had already banned around eighteen Muslim groups as terrorist outfits, while many of those groups did belong to extremist groups, but others did not (Sarkissian 2015). Religious repression has occurred when legislation was not specified for religious issues. Most of the time law on countering extremist activities were used to target religious groups or have vague definition of extremism and was used to justify by the governments to persecute religious minorities.

Non-state actor's prevalence in unstable states and presence of governmental corruption and lawlessness has also been linked to religious freedom violations. Due to the failure of public institutions various groups try to fill the vacuum; and criminal groups such as extremist groups and terrorist outfits, increasingly commit violence against religious populations. (Bielefeldt 2013). In such a situation, the government does not have adequate resources to provide protection to minority groups. Non-state actors systematically attack people for changing, criticising, adopting religion and discriminate based on religious lines against individuals or groups. They also worsen the exclusion and discriminatory practices in society based on religious identity and practices.

Some large national or international companies were also capable of supporting religious freedom violations. In the case of Facebook and its involvement in disseminating hate speech leading to violence in Myanmar ;it was seen as an example of a non-state actor's interference in the religious freedom of individuals. Facebook faced criticisms from various NGOs, Inter-governmental organisations and governments in inciting hatred and violence against religious minorities in Myanmar. According to a report by Burma Campaign U.K. mentioned a list of corporations involved in violating human rights "consistently allowed its platform to be used to incite hatred and violence [against] minorities in Burma, in particular, the Rohingya Muslim minority and Muslims in general". (Petersen 2018)

In case of the non-state actors influencing their behaviours was more difficult than those of state actors. For example, it was difficult for governments and NGOs engaged in the promotion of religious freedom to pressure local communities to abstain from exclusionary practices against a religious group. Literature showed that the use of shaming techniques has less effect on the behaviours of the non-state actors (Petersen 2018). Direct pressure has been useful only in the context of terrorist

movements and other illegal non-state actors. The use of economic force may be relevant against terrorist groups and other non-state groups that support systematic violations. Especially for counter-terrorism policies tools to prevent the funding of such groups by freezing bank accounts and tracking organisations that help in funding activities to the terrorist groups is common.

Several NGOs and IGOs engaged in the promotion of religious freedom try to influence non-state actors to disengage from religious-related violence and abuses. They try to put pressure by engaging with government and civil society. Strengthening of law enforcing agencies, especially in weak states, and compliance with human rights has been one method in dealing with non-state actors. Similarly, developing links with religious leaders to develop narratives against extremist ideologies has been another method to put pressure on the terrorist groups by unravelling their erroneous interpretation of religious doctrine. Other methods included implementing plans for altering the behaviours of non-state actors by facilitating discussions and diplomacy (Danan 2012). And they mainly do so through the funding of projects. Various actors like NGOs, Christian groups, human rights organisation, religious leaders and civil society has worked in partnership with local communities to influence the non-state actors and change their behaviours.

American Foreign Policy and the Marginalization of Religious Issues in Global Politics

U.S. presence in global politics has been placed at the heart of international landscape but, the topic of religion remained largely a taboo in the American foreign policy establishment even while dealing with events that had a very close connection with religion. It was not until in the late presidency of Bush-era and after the 9/11 incident (Farr 2008) that the subject of religion was directly dealt with. The American foreign policy officials majorly suffered from 'religion avoidance syndrome'. The U.S. foreign policy had serious religious deficit while addressing religious issues in other countries, and the government frameworks were narrow in dealing with such topics. Sometimes, there was over analysing of terrorism-related aspects of Islam, and other times religious issues were marginalised as a peripheral cultural issue.

The events of 9/11, 2001, in the U.S. and subsequent attacks in other countries turned the focus on international terrorism. The U.S. governments started to take a keen interest in understanding religious regimes and religious movements, especially in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa. In these places, religion has always played a major role and continued to contest politics, where it had not yet won power. Even in places with secular governments and ideologies, the changed nature of state-religion relations questioned the prevailing motivation of religious actors and interests in public debates about the future of societies.

U.S. had recognised the importance of culture way back in the 1980s when the “National Endowment for Democracy” (NED) was established to install liberal democracy around the world. The aim was to establish democratic cultures, but the programs were secularist in nature. It avoided the faith communities and religion was not paid attention. The stability of any country to some extent depended on the involvement of religious communities and religious factors. The role of religion in a democracy is important where religion played a central issue especially in countries like Turkey, Palestine, India, Indonesia, France, Poland, Nigeria, and in the United States itself. The goal of promoting democracy globally depends on understanding religion's influence on democracy. Not just in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, where the U.S. armed forces were heavily deployed but in general the aligning of Islam and democracy in normative and empirical sense (Philpott 2007).

The issues related to religion and culture was not given attention before the Iranian Revolution, and was considered insignificant by state officials including the CIA and Department of State (DoS). The DoS was confused by how religion and cultural factors were possibly responsible for the removal of the Shah. Still, after the Iranian Revolution religion was marginalised in the understanding of international affairs. Almost certainly in reaction against the overweening ambitions and central planning of the modernist secular state, conservative religion was surging not only in the U.S. but worldwide. Beginning in the 1960s, Shiite fundamentalists in Iran struggled against the Shah's grand modernisation projects and aimed at returning to fundamental values and morals dictated by religion.

The national security of America revolved around Islamic terrorism post 9/11 incident, and the policy of promotion of democracy was pursued vociferously more

than ever as an ultimate solution to curb Islamic extremism. Very soon it was realised that in Afghanistan after the removal of Taliban led government, the implanted democratic system was flawed when its citizen was punished for apostasy. The U.S. had brokered Democracy in Afghanistan, and its constitution guaranteed board religious freedom like 'right to rites' which allowed the adherents of other religions to practice and observe their faiths. However, the judicial system in Afghanistan failed to comply with the existing laws.

The topic of religion lacked attention in foreign policy frameworks made some officials in the DoS, the “White House” and in “U.S. Congress” to be worried and viewed that the U.S. foreign policy in advocating political reform without addressing religion would not help in transforming the culture of Middle East. The democratic procedures and economic growth alone would not be enough to do away with the tyrannies that helped in fostering religious extremism. For this cause, officials built initiatives for engaging Islam through the U.S. foreign policy but still could not succeed in focusing on the religious aspect. Instead, Washington provided with federal aid for funding of programs in Muslim countries to inculcate moderate version of Islam through soft power.

Despite the efforts on curbing Islamic extremism it created anti-Americanism in the Middle East and created perceptions about the U.S. as a hostile state against the Arab world or Islam. Unlike the Soviet communism during the Cold War in which cultural centers and libraries were run by the “United States Information Agency” (USIA) in foreign capitals to curb communism and portray it negatively. But after the Cold War such libraries abroad were shuttered, and several exchange foreign broadcasting and exchange programs dropped hugely. By 1999 USIA was thought to be unimportant and seen as a relic of Cold war, which got collapsed in the State Department. The newly functioning psychological operation units try to sway the minds of the people in support for Americanism. Still, they severely lacked the knowledge in combating one of the biggest challenges posed by radical Islam. The U.S. had no strategy in fighting against the radicalism.

There have been instances where the U.S. did not noticed religious dimension in a country, for example, some religious nationalists viewed American involvement in non-western societies as a part of a global conspiracy against religion. During the first

Gulf War, for example, the Islamic groups in Egypt that opposed Iraqi attacks on Kuwait reversed their condemnation when the U.S. sent its troops to help Kuwaitis; instead, they supported Iraq because they feared that such involvement by the U.S. would be an impediment in establishing pan-Islamism needed to unify the Muslim people.

The U.S. intended to sell the 'war of ideas' narrative by addressing intangible values like religion, trust and emotion, but it was still very difficult to execute such plans. The problem with religious question and fundamentalism seemed controversial, as it would drag the U.S. into a battle involving religious scriptures, mosques and hardliners which U.S. was not yet ready to deal with. It wanted to keep the question of faith out of political gamut. Apprehensive of meddling with Islam and the fear of messing with the religious freedom, U.S. foreign policy took an indirect approach by funnelling money to create political space for the moderate Muslims to organise and translate their work. Providing aid and encouraging economic development was perceived as a possible solution to Islamic extremism. "U.S. Agency for International Development" (USAID) mostly channelled the aid and just within three years of 9/11 about more than \$11 billion was utilised to curb extremism.

Role of Islam

The Islamic communities have reaffirmed the importance of Islam due to the several defeats of countries like Syria, Egypt, and Jordan against Israel in the 1967 war. The loss of Jerusalem to Israel came as a big blow to the Muslims and inflamed Islamic sentiment. It also helped in solidifying identification of Muslims with each other that had existed in the pre-modern era. The Islamic societies underwent modernisation like any other developing societies which brought huge socio-economic changes like urbanisation and the formation of new middle class. The Iranian revolution happened because the Shah of Iran fastened the process of modernisation and that created disturbances in the existing social fabric of the country. It led to a revolution that wanted to restore the previous order based on Islamic values because the process of rapid modernisation under Shah allowed liberal values to seep in the Iranian society curbing the power of the mullahs. These aspects seemed outlandish and threatening to the people of Iran. The effects of the modernisation program were undesirable due to

the overt focus on the individualisation and less emphasis given on the loyalties of family and religious institutions (Naipaul 1981).

Daniel Bell (1976) argues that turning to religion was natural because it provided moral links and common worldviews to its followers. While all religions were affected by the changes occurring due to modernisation, Islam seemed to be affected the most. Bell viewed that the early prophet and caliphal commitment has been the model for the ideal society that Islam teachings aimed to attain and inculcated a graphic view of the transcendence of trial and time of afterlife. The internal upheavals in Muslim countries tend to have a destabilising effect in the entire region, the spillover of conflicts in Iraq and Syria was one such example. In addition, the Western countries vital interest in Muslim majority states for strategic interests and their subsequent intervention in the Syrian conflict after 2011 worsened the existing situation in the region.

The idea in the western countries prevailed that Islam was capable of restructuring international order. This seemed even evident when traditionalists spoke about the importance of Islam. To add fuel to the fire Osama bin Laden had a very strong stance to punish America for all its wrongdoings in the Muslim countries. The formation of ISIS and their initial attempt at creating the Islamic caliphate in Iraq and Syria albeit without much success shocked the world with their attempt to shape the world based on Islamic laws. But moderate Muslims hoped for a fideistic community and took references from Koran to suppress dissent and guide on how believers of Islam should interact with others.

The influence of medieval Islamic teachings in the ideology of modern terrorism bifurcated world in two opposing sides of believers and non-believers of Islam. This medieval view of a straightforward division and the fight for expansion, eventually leading to the obliteration of the other prevailed the thinking of Osama bin Laden. The modern attempts to reform Islam started under Jamal al-Din al Afghani (Anderson 2005), his teachings influenced Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 and several other radical groups in the twentieth century. The growth of extremist groups like “ Hamas” in Palestine and “Islamic Jihad” in Egypt paved the way for extremists like Osama Bin Laden and “al-Qaeda”.

The general belief in viewing Islamic community come from the fact that their religion needed attention and rectification to some extent because of the problems its followers were capable of inflicting in the world. But this was way too generalised perspective and there were several underlying problems with such view which could be highly misleading. Muslims all over the world struggle with the problem of identity of what is Islamic. Fundamentally there has been very little in common in the interpretation of Islam by different nationalities like Moroccan, Tunisian, Turkish, Indonesian, etc. There was a big difference in addressing the issues in international politics among Muslims. Disagreement persisted over attitude towards western countries. Most Muslim thinkers have moved towards accepting the reality of the nation-state. While the conservative or traditionalist critic have argued that this acceptance was due to one-sided education or confused values, the fact remains that culture changes occurred even within Islamic civilisation, and when they do it has been difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish old indigenous ideas from new exogenous ones.

For Muslim societies coming to terms with liberal ideas has been difficult and keeping up with the technologically advanced modern societies has caused to wonder the viability of Islam. Some countries became secular under Western influence, but many of them reaffirmed the continuing importance of Islam for sustaining the basic principles and values of Islam. Some Muslim states have difficulty in supporting the emerging law of human rights, and objected to the provisions of the UNDHR and subsequent documents. The objection was due to the failure of human rights regimes in considering the Islamic laws and on the question of role of women, and proselytism. The language of inalienable rights in such treaties like the UNDHR disturbed Muslims belief on such topics linked closely to their religious dictates.

The work of Samuel Huntington needs to be mentioned in this section due to his emphasis on cultures that rejected democracy in the third wave of 1980s. Huntington, in “The Third Wave of Democracy” mentions that some Muslim states could not change into democracies in the 1980s because of the prevailing view that Islam and democracy were not compatible in general. Islamic laws were considered rigid in nature, and it attached absolute sovereignty to God. Hence it was unchangeable by any entity (Kennedy 2012). Although these were not the only causes for conflict and

there were several other reasons for the cleavages between these two civilizations. The main reason for enmity between the U.S. and Islam were strong U.S.-Israeli relations, strained US-Iranian relations, selfish economic interests by the U.S. in the entire Middle Eastern region.

Thus, several factors were responsible for the perception towards Islam. Apart from its own underlying issues in the Islamic countries and problem of incompatibility with the Western secularist ideologies, the role of U.S. has affected the workings in these countries. The involvement of U.S. in the Middle Eastern countries, deposing of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and attempts to install democratic institutions created negative perceptions towards the intentions of the U.S. which helped in strengthening “anti-US political forces” (Huntington 1993). By the end of the twentieth century there was substantial proof for the “failure of secularization” (Berger 1996) leading to reinvention of religious orthodoxy in several regions in the world that effectively opposed the western political values.

Internal Factors:

The above issues helped in bringing change in U.S. foreign policy, and by 1990s the U.S. foreign policy saw increasing engagement with religious actors and issues. Activists and organisations were actively involved in promoting religious freedom norms. Their interest was to stop the rising persecution and repression of religious communities. The human rights policy within the U.S. was enhanced especially after the Cold war resulting in a better formulation of policies related to human rights, including religious-related abuses. The desecularising actors such as NGOs and faith-based activists contributed to developing policies that led to the successful passing of the Act on IRF possible. Before the 1990s the topic on religious freedom abroad in foreign policy circles was limited, and it prevented the policymakers from understanding the dynamics of religious actors that greatly affected the national security mainly due to their secularist orientation.

Rising Importance of Human Rights Policies:

After the drafting of UNDHR in 1945, U.S. human rights policy did not resurface until 1970s, and it mainly focused on third world countries issues. It opted to address

human rights issues through bilateral political engagement with a combination of quiet public diplomacy. The U.S. was largely involved in the making of UNDHR but due to the Cold war human rights issues were replaced by bigger strategic interests in the U.S. foreign policy. It was not until détente, loss in Vietnam that ideas of human rights were included in the U.S. foreign policy. The insertion of human rights policy in the U.S. foreign policy showed a fundamental shift in viewing long-term national interest, and it was due to the change in ideas and principled beliefs such as human rights (Sikkink 1993). The exclusion of human rights in the U.S. foreign policy was raised by various religious activists, NGOs and Christian missionaries.

David Forsythe (1988) views that the human rights issue was replaced by “anti-communist policy”. Anticommunism blocked the human rights policy, and also the conservatives and the isolationists were skeptical about ratifying international treaties fearing it would override the U.S. constitution and its provisions. For example, in 1951 Senator John Bricker of Ohio sponsored a constitutional amendment to protect states’ rights against treaties authorising “any international organisation to supervise, control, or adjudicate rights of citizens of the United States.” (Kaufman and Whiteman 1988).

Human rights re-emerged as an important part of U.S. foreign policy in 1973 and all the legislation in accordance to the UNDHR were in place between 1973-77 (Hem 1991). Before 1973 there was no legislation guiding the foreign policy regards to human rights as a part of bilateral relation. Jimmy Carter emphasized on the issues of human rights compared to other presidents. He made changes in the State Department by appointing the secretary of state for “Human Rights Affairs” and further added more than thirty staff, whilst previously only one official was assigned for this role at the State Department. The U.S. incorporated in its foreign policy as an expansion of humanitarian efforts in countries with poor human rights conditions. Some presidents did not consider human rights to be of prime importance for example, Ronald Reagan. But somehow human rights laws and institutions survived in Regan and Bush administration with a limited scope.

The creation of the “Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs”, congressional subcommittees on human rights provided a strong institutional basis for human rights policies. These institutions contributed to the persistence of human

rights ideas and altered the role of foreign service officials who started to gather information and report on its violations. The international policy of human rights was incorporated in the foreign policy calculus but often balanced by various other considerations. The U.S. had external human rights policy, but without multilateral approach, it was only after the 1990s it began to move towards the multilateral direction. The growing importance of human rights policy towards the end of 1990s showed that the issues concerning abuses and violence relating to individual rights were increasing. The lack of multilateral human rights policy before the 1990s was mainly due to the procedural barriers such as difficulty in adopting a multilateral treaty that required two-thirds vote in the Senate. The mechanisms for integrating human rights policy was necessary to integrate any human rights concerns, which in turn tended to modify the foreign policy decisions.

The power of ideas prevailed and in 1994 for the first time the Senate ratified the U.N “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948. In the early 1990s the pace of ratification speeded up dramatically. In 1991 the Senate ratified the “Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labor and the Covenant against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment”, and in 1992 it ratified the “Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”. The change in worldviews and principled beliefs (human rights fall under principled beliefs which consists of normative ideas that specify right from wrong and just from unjust) led to a change in policy actions. For instance, after World War II American and European leaders believed that human rights should be part of international agreement and supervision. This had a huge impact on the policies of states all over the world and it even conditioned the definition of national interest by allowing international surveillance and scrutiny overriding sovereignty of states to some extent.

Sikkink (1993) views that the main debate around human rights focused on the changing nature of sovereignty’s limits and its shifting understanding. Traditionally sovereignty allowed states to have autonomy in foreign affairs and exclusive claim in internal affairs. The human rights regimes, on the other hand, allowed citizen of a country to challenge the state rights under internal sovereignty while imposing obligations on states regarding the treatment of their citizens. During the Cold War,

U.S. policymakers widely ignored the human rights conditions of a country that opposed communism. By the mid-1970s, people already began to question the assumption that supporting repressive anti-communist regimes would actually lead to stability. An important group of political entrepreneurs argued that efficient way to promote stability was to defend human rights and democracy. Some policymakers advocated human rights policy solely from a principled stance, arguing that it was wrong or immoral to support repressive regimes. An most of them argued that it would prove counter-productive to support regimes involved in such violations in the long-term for the U.S.

Countries that became the main focus for human rights issues for the first time was Argentina, Ethiopia and Uruguay (Flood 1986). The pressure on states to stop further human rights abuses was withdrawal of military aid. For instance, in Argentina, Congress passed a bill to stop military assistance to Argentina in 1978. Denial of military and economic aid to countries with human rights abuses became common during the mid-1970s. The regimes which earlier enjoyed close relation was subjected to military and economical cut-offs due to human rights issues. Mostly Latin American countries like Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay, and, to a lesser extent, Nicaragua and Guatemala became countries for the target.

Among other ideas that changed was the prevailing understanding of the causes of human rights abuses faced by the world and the U.S. responsibility to uphold such rights. A host of issues made political leaders question traditional ideas about American politics and its place in the world. The issues of human rights in the world propelled the U.S. foreign policy to take action. It changed the way national security was interpreted and it influenced the perceptions of members of the Congress, the president and public. As a result of all these changes, the principled belief underlying the new U.S. human rights policy was to stop human rights violations. To put pressure on human rights abusers U.S. opted to cut-off of economic and military help. In the short term, it was hoped that these aid cut-offs would improve human rights, or at least not make them worse; in the long term, such action was meant to enhance the image of U.S. and to restore its moral legitimacy (Fraser 1979).

There were disagreements if human rights were the legitimate aim of foreign policy. The use of unilateralism was a key area that critics pointed out when action was taken

against a country. The enforcement of the IRF has been criticised because of precedence of other U.S. foreign policy interests like the “war on terrorism” and its unilateral approach (Pastor 2005). This argument supported the view that U.S. human rights policy in its true sense has been part of rationalist models that selfish actors try to maximise their utility (Goldstein and Keohane 1993). However, the power of principled beliefs has a long term effect in the national interest of a state. Because advocating human rights tend to leverage the power of states by benefitting countries on humanitarian grounds. Moreover, by enforcing the religious freedom by the U.N. along with the right to freedom of “association, speech, and assembly”, it has brought positive economic changes (Koob et al. 2017). Thus, making religious freedom right not just a humanitarian right but also crucial for economic development of a country.

Role of NGOs:

NGOs have played an effective role in the U.S. in promoting human rights legislation and reporting abuses. They have given testimonies and information on human rights abuses in Congress and encouraged people to focus over human rights violations in other countries. At times when State Department officials were hesitant to raise concerns on human rights issues to avoid tension with any foreign government. NGOs filled that gap by creating annual events in response to State Department reports. Several NGOs like Amnesty International helped in developing human rights policy in the U.S., and by 1970s organisations like the Human Rights Watch, Lawery’s Committee on Human Rights were created and they became a strong lobby in support of the human rights policy.

The rise in religious advocacy groups helped in focusing on violations related to religious issues. The Pew report on religious advocacy groups of 2012 found that such NGOs grew five times in 40 years period. The activism of NGOs was initiated way back during the Vietnam War period where various groups took solidified approach to issues related to socio-eco, political and environmental causes. But from the 1990s the rise in awareness related to religious causes also grew to a great extent and from 2000 to 2010, religious NGOs grew by 36%, from 158 to 215 in the U.S. (Bettiza 2012). NGOs helped in gathering information and they put considerable pressure on governments abroad to change their behaviour on human rights about. These

organisations try to focus on civil rights within their own countries or other countries and urged the international community to take steps to alter their behaviour. NGOs carried out monitoring work and through active lobbying and publicity, they urged their own governments to pressure their countries. NGOs with transnational character cooperating within international and regional organisations were quite effective in enhancing religious liberty.

The NGOs created conditions for bringing a key change in the human rights-related area in general (Kappen 1994). According to several social constructivists, like Goldstein and Keohane, ideas and communicative process were important in influencing understanding of interests, political decisions and preferences (Goldstein and Keohane 1993). International NGOs helped in promoting IRF by putting norm violating states in the foreign policy agenda and raised moral consciousness. They collaborated with domestic groups that opposed the norm violating countries and also protected them from any state repression. Hence, NGOs were crucial in mobilising domestic opposition in other countries. The transnational network of NGOs put considerable pressure on regimes to abdicate repression and persecution of religious minorities. Mechanisms needed to internalise human rights norms such as religious freedom required moral consciousness-raising, dialogue, persuasion.

The growth of NGOs interested in IRF grew in the U.S. during the 1990s because religious restrictions, both societal and governmental continued to grow after the Cold war, several faith groups – Muslims, Christians, Hindu, Bahai's, Jews, Sikhs became aware and worked to protect their fellow believers. NGOs concerned with the policy of IRF try to influence the policies at home and abroad for protection of religious groups and people. They opened offices in major cities worldwide to build relationships with policymakers. The efforts of President Bush and Clinton in the direction of faith-based initiatives started to raise the religious engagement in the world. The role of religion was recognised as a means to promote constructive social and political behaviour and was perceived to fight the social ills in a way that other government programs could not do.

The role of religious lobbies increased over the years in the U.S. Although religious lobbies were prominent on foreign policy issues starting from the 1960s, it became more active in the 1990s. Towards the end of 1990s issues in Haiti, Somalia and

Bosnia sparked a renewed interest and involvement by including an ethical component in the U.S. foreign policy. The religious lobbies favored more significant U.S. intervention to address socio ills faced by the world (Rourke and Clark 1998). The transnational human rights movement was crucial in carrying human rights ideas in the U.S. By 1980s the human rights movement had become very strong and organised in several countries.

In the initial phase, the persecution of Christians raised concerns in the remaining communist countries after the fall of USSR. Countries like China, Vietnam, North Korea and Muslim majority countries like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan was of greater concern to the religious NGOs. The Sudan Civil War in its North and the South regions made North as the main instigator of violence against the Christians in the South; this issue became the immediate reason for passing of the IRFA. In the early 1990s, a coalition emerged among religious activists and leaders highlighting the plight of Christian minorities in the U.S. (McAlister 2008). One flank of the movement were Christian organisations, such as the “older Voice of the Martyrs and Open Doors”, and newer ones such as “International Christian Concern”, “Persecution Project Foundation”, “Christian Freedom International”, and “Compass Direct”. The other flank consisted of conservative political elites in Washington.

By 1995 the issue of Christian persecution spread across widely in the U.S. foreign policy establishment following an article by Michael Horowitz (1995), blaming “Muslims” of attacking “Christians” in several regions of the world. Several other NGOs and religious activists joined anti-persecution campaigns (Marshall and Gilbert 1997). The growing academic, international and congressional focus abroad and several activists and NGOs concern portrayed the problem of religious persecution a major problem in the world. The conservative Christians associated with the religious right specifically pressured the Clinton administration to respond to serious religious suppression of Christians in other countries.

The Christian organisation of “National Association of Evangelicals” issued a document called the “Statement of Conscience of the National Association of Evangelicals Concerning Worldwide Religious Persecution,” it highlighted the plight to Christians and their persecution. This led to raising of awareness on the topic of religious persecution in the US Congress. The congressional interest by the end of

1996 pushed the State Department to notice such developments on religious persecution issues. The topic of religious persecution paved the way for inclusion of this issue in the broader concept of religious freedom. This shift expanded the campaign's appeal to different varieties of NGOs in the US (Hertzke 2004).

Desecularisation of U.S. Foreign Policy:

The foreign policy of U.S. has largely followed secularist approach while addressing the question of faith internationally in the past and quiet often religious matters were left untouched due to various factors pertaining to the premise of secularist tradition of overlooking religion. But since the terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda in the U.S., study of cause and effect of religious actors, ideas, institutions in foreign policy was taken up widely by government bodies and the academia. Desecularisation as a concept got developed first by Peter Berger who viewed “that religions were going through a period of revival across the world and that this process was severely undermined a whole body of literature loosely labelled as secularisation theory” (Berger 1999).

Desecularisation can be defined as: “process of counter-secularization, through which religion reasserts its societal influence in reaction to previous and/or co-occurring secularizing processes” (Bettiza 2012). It is a process in which there was a pushback or reaction against secular ideas, and authority. In the context of U.S. foreign policy Desecularization has been related to inserting of religious based policies and addressing problems or events caused by religion or communities, helping or protecting religious groups and individuals, engaging with FBOs and leaders including NGOs.

The desecularisation of U.S. foreign policy in the late 1990s indicated the resurgence of religion and its growing significance in the world. In the U.S. the desecularisation took place through many facets which included unmatched growth of religious lobbying and advocacy groups. These groups rose in numbers, and it included not just the Christian conservative organisations but also non-Christian groups. Allen Hertzke (2009) pointed out that in the U.S. history, religious interest groups activities were sporadic and not institutionalised. Herzke (2012) has given an overview of the varieties of religious advocacy groups operating in the 1940-50s. The number of such advocacy groups grew from 30 in the 1940s to 67 by the 1970s in the US. The

involvement of religious activism for policy concerns grew over the decades, legislation regarding issues on the regulation of individual morality, social injustice and immigration problems became increasingly part of religious activism.

Bettiza (2012) gives an idea of epistemic desecularisation in the U.S. foreign policy, in which he views that the secular thinking of policymakers affected by the culture of secular practices in institutions catering to international functions was changed. The change occurred due to the renewed perception of treating religion as an important variable in world politics and discarding the previous view that it was something irrelevant without any consequences. The effect of epistemic desecularisation have led to a collection of data and research leading to knowledge production on a wide range of issues on religion. On a deeper level, with epistemic desecularisation religion became the main constitutive element of actors and identities including individuals, organisations or states. It became part of the social-political conduct, and the identities of religious actors got reified as representatives for the entire country. Epistemic desecularisation, for instance, have shifted the views of policymakers on how they perceive the international environment leading to change in the conduct of foreign policy content and initiatives.

The main characteristic of desecularisation in U.S. foreign policy was the increasing recognition of religious actors for chalking out a state's foreign policy. There was a growing relation with religious actors abroad and their influence on foreign policy decisions, building institutions and departments outside the traditional bureaucracies to address the religious foreign policies. The rigid secular worldviews of policymakers have lessened to some degree and have considered religious issues in the foreign policy decisions. Due to which it minimised the popular mindset that used to prevail in the foreign policy establishment of viewing religion as a volatile threat to peace and security and was considered as a problem-solving factor.

The U.S. foreign policy in the past had undergone shifts like in 1945 one such shift occurred with the inclusion of human rights, and it created a big impact in the U.S. foreign policy. Similarly, the loosening of the ideological grip of secularism in policymakers worldview and the culture of the foreign policy institutions have affected the global politics by negating the idea that religion was mainly antithetical to peace, development, security, etc. In return, such a take on religion has helped in

shaping knowledge and policies affecting the wider religious and traditional societies.

Further, the desecularising actors were divided into two groups- principled and strategic actors. The principled policy elites acted to support certain religious cause out of their religious convictions and beliefs. In doing so, the principled desecularising elites helped in formulating policy to address a problem or issue. They espoused similar religious norms supported by desecularising activists. For instance, the activists and organisation supporting Religious freedom advocated U.S. actions internationally based on those norms. On the other hand, the strategic desecularising policy elites viewed religious aspects in global politics with a wider view and free of any religious convictions. They believed that especially after 9/11 the religious actor's identities, discourse and practices in the world got prominent in I.R. and was of great importance to the U.S. national interests.

The strategic policy elites differed from the principled desecularised policy elites because they did not believe in following a specific policy aligned with religion's laws and dictates. They were not involved in the social process of religious resurgence but on the emerging structures of politicised religion such as the rise of religious ideologies pursued by state actors including political Islam, radical form of Buddhism in Myanmar, etc. and identity conflicts based on religion. They viewed that the overly secularised foreign policy overlooked the new religious and cultural dimensions in world affairs which may not have been too fruitful for the U.S. interests. The third category in the desecularisation process has been the role of political elites which includes presidents, members of the Congress and religious lobbies, varieties of scholars, policymakers taking an active role to promote desecularising or counter secularising changes. The political elites were very important in this sphere because any policy required the consent from above. They acted out of principled or strategic expediency or national interest, and played a vital role in bringing change in the foreign policy desecularisation process.

There was an exponential growth of religious activism over the decades. In the U.S. domestically the religious activists have always existed and are known to articulate policy concerns in the past with regards to legislations related to morality, social injustice, immigration problems. But in recent time, their activities have widened

domestically and have attempted to influence policy frameworks pertaining to the role of government and economics (Green et al. 2009). In the past, the religious activists were present but did not operate with such vigor on international issues (Abrams 2001). The activism was however limited and sporadic and by 1980s a watershed moment occurred with increasing engagement of church and religious-based organisations in the U.S. public life relating to international issues.

As observed by Robert Bellah (2006) the 1980s was the starting point, followed by 1990s and after that the growth in religious lobbying of international issues was seen noticeably. By 2004 the “National Association of Evangelicals” (NAE) released a thorough document giving religious rationale for activism on several political issues. It expanded the groups’ vision which was previously confined to domestic issues of abortion and family values. The religious advocacy was found to work on various issues covering about 300 different policy in Washington and large portion out of 216 groups gave focus on both domestic and global issues (Hertzke 2012). There were also rising evidence of religious referencing in Presidential speeches which exponentially grew from the Reagan era till the Obama’s period. (Domke and Coe 2007, Balmer 2008). Even Democrats have seemed to follow the conservatives in discussing about the topic of religion leading to rise in engagement with religiously inclined voting population (ABC 2007).

The desecularisation of foreign policy in the U.S. public discourse was witnessed with a change in the older conceptions of religion known to be “private” and largely insignificant to global governance. This view got partially displaced in favor of viewing religion as a public good (Hurd 2015). Although religious freedom was generally viewed as secular idea but it has dealt with issues inherently religious in nature. Several departments in the U.S. government like the DoS, the White House and agencies like USAID have been transforming and they gave higher attention to religious actors in dealing with programs and policies on religion abroad. Enhancing faith-based policies abroad has allowed for desecularisation process in the U.S. foreign policy. President Bush’s initiative in 2001 established “Faith-Based and Community Initiatives”. Similarly, President Obama enhanced this policy and he further enhanced faith-based institutional architecture by extending, and deepening its activities.

Conclusion

The resurgence of religion in the global context has been vital in understanding the inclusion of religious freedom policy. The religious actors have always been playing a role in the functioning of any country, but their significance was not realised in the international politics until it erupted into a bigger problem in the form of Islamic terrorism, religious conflicts and regimes with a state religion that did egregious human rights violation of minorities. The acceptance of western standards and concepts of secularism in non-western countries was seen with scepticism and hence making the countries in Asia, Africa to go back to their cultural roots. These countries had more believers in religious faiths, and it provided political legitimacy in the political discourse. The policymakers could not ignore the beliefs of their constituents, in case of Israel and Palestine, both considered Jerusalem a holy city and the Temple Mount as an essential place to both the religions. Further, the states were likely to seek allies who shared similar religious beliefs and identity.

Phenomenon like globalisation facilitated technological advancement and economic development has created interdependence among states which blurred the understanding of travel and geographic distance. That led to growing homogeneity as globalisation was increasingly embraced in the world. But the irony of globalisation was instead of making religion irrelevant, it led to an increase in the religiosity of people. It helped in the spread of religions in different corners of the world. This became possible through easy reach of information and the movement of people. Increase in the interreligious contact has been vital for religion's rising significance in the world.

Secular ideas and western concept of democracy and liberalism, although thought to be the best possible ways towards the road to progress and development it came to negate the cultural foundation of traditional societies. Instead of avoiding hurdles to attain political gains by separating religion from politics, religion itself became an important force, especially in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The secular character of some countries got increasingly overpowered by the central role religion played in the politics of Pakistan, Iran, Ireland, Myanmar, etc. The resurgence of religion, especially in the non-western states, have shown disenchantment against the modern

secular states that increasingly failed to deliver promises of economic prosperity and development. Instead, it witnessed a rise in poverty and economic inequalities. Also, there was a perception that democratic and secular states and western political concepts, in general, were tied to Christian ideals and principles. The non-western societies growingly interpreted this view as something that were hostile to other religions, especially in Muslim countries secularism was often equated with Western domination and atheism.

The tension between secular and religious showed the worldviews and beliefs can greatly influence the behaviour of political actors. When it comes to religious beliefs, the political actors were however not the only factor influencing the policy decisions of a country. The policy decisions were driven by widely held religious beliefs of a country's population too. In that case, there was a connection between religion and foreign policy which was structural and integral to a country's foreign policy. In the U.S. domestically the religious activists have always existed and was known to articulate policy concerns in the past with regards to legislations related to morality, social injustice, immigration problems. By the 1990s, the NGOs and religious activists increased domestically and attempted to influence policy frameworks related to the role of government and economics.

The marginalisation of religion in the U.S. foreign policy prevented in fully grasping the power of religion in international politics. It avoided the understanding on how it affected the national security. The lack of resources to anticipate 9/11 and Iraq's religious tensions after the 2003 invasion was because of secularist orientation that failed to notice the religious underpinnings associated with these events. The desecularisation of U.S. foreign policy was evident from the increasing change in the policymaking. The "White House" and the "State Department" started to develop religious policy frameworks from the beginning of 1990s. The office of IRF was created by 1998, and faith-based diplomacy brought changes in the foreign policy orientation.

The separate commission on USCIRF was created with the new office of Ambassador-at-large for IRF. The desecularisation of U.S. foreign policy saw religion's role as a plausible explanation for the political behaviours of state and non-state actors. It became imperative for interventions to shape and engage with religious

actors abroad. The U.S. government identified harmful behaviours of religious actors while helping nurture benevolent actors and powers; this included efforts to reform religion, create religiously tolerant subjects, and guarantee religiously free societies and minorities in law. The new global politics of religion created new categories of actors in world politics. It spawned new mandates and commissions, disseminated and naturalised new modes of social, legal, and religious organisation.

Chapter 5

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT (IRFA): ADVANCING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND POLICY ISSUES

Introduction

The IRFA of 1998 was the main legislative act that made religious freedom priority in the U.S. foreign policy. The Act underwent through modification and deliberations between 1997-1998 that ultimately led to the passing of the Act. Since then, the topic of religious freedom in foreign policy establishment got traction to engage with religious actors internationally. This led to the expansion of functions overseas by various U.S. agencies and creation of new ones to fulfill the aims stipulated in the IRFA. Although not free from hurdles and criticisms, the Office of IRF (OIRF) developed various channels to deal with the problem of intolerance, discrimination, and violence. The resistance of foreign policy makers on the subject of religion as a policy matter loosened to some degree by encouraging programs for foreign officers, diplomats and educating them on the issues of religion and link between secular ideas and theology. Overall, the IRFA gave focus on the Department of State on humanitarian issues and plight of the minorities while promoting religious freedom.

The issue of “violent religious extremism” got a wide attention in recent times. While extremist groups were known for worsening religious intolerance, promotion of religious freedom acted as an antidote to this problem. Similarly, the policy of democracy promotion which aimed at rooting out extremism needed inclusion of religious freedom for success. The connection between religious freedom and societal goods such as economic growth, political stability and improved health remained a fact for prevailing stability and security. Hence, the U.S. role for resolving violence in conflict prone areas as one of the major American security priorities was dependent upon inclusion of religious freedom. Eliminating violent extremism effectively has

been interlinked with ideational factors and promoting religious freedom is considered as an effective measure to achieve those aims.

IRF policy has inter-linked several issues pertaining to national security and led to the increased role of FBOs, the work of USAID in its objective of promotion of democracy included promotion of religious freedom. As such, faith-based actors were helpful in acknowledging the significance of religion in world politics but also it became an effective means to promote religious freedom in U.S foreign policy. During President Bush and President Obama a significant shift was noticed towards FBOs from secular NGOs and funds were allocated for engaging with religious actors abroad. A close relationship prevailed between USAID and faith-based groups. This chapter deals with the formation of IRFA and major policy issues involved in it. It gives an overview of legislative debates and executive powers on IRF, and analyses major policy issues surrounding the topic of religious freedom.

The Department of State and Religious Freedom Prior to IRFA

The religious freedom gained significance in the US foreign policy in 1996 when the “Secretary of State”-Warren Christopher formed an “Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad” (US Department of State 1998). It consisted of several religious leaders and scholars that produced a report demanding insertion of advocating religious freedom worldwide in the foreign policy agenda. The Committee was significant for creating policy towards IRF and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, while addressing at the inaugural meeting of the Committee in February 1997 emphasized its importance.

The Advisory Committee facilitated partnerships between US government and various religious, advocacy groups, academic institutions. It was also an important meeting point for NGOs interested in religious freedom issue. The main focus of the Committee was regarding government efforts to integrate effective religious freedom policy and its implementation. It measured the adequacy of existing procedures concerning issues and topics covering religion such as asylum procedures; use of resources allocated to culture and social exchange, rule of law, the training of officials in the State Department; the promotion of religious tolerance, human rights and civil society; efforts for reconciliation and peace. Simultaneously, the U.S. Congress, the

DoS and faith-based organizations discussed on ways to enhance religious freedom in the foreign policy. This ultimately led to the passing of IRFA of 1998.

The State Department responded to growing public interest on religious freedom issues by the mid 1990's and prepared a report- "U.S. Policies in Support of Religious Freedom: Focus on Christians" (July 1997) (US Department of State 2009a). The report highlighted the efforts of State Department in inhibiting religious persecution prior to the IRFA of 1998. The State Department along with White House issued statements highlighting religious persecution and provided a summary of such incidents regularly in its annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices".

Promotion of Religious Freedom Abroad:

For securing human rights objectives various programs including cultural and educational exchanges, civil society, good governance, rule of law and justice became part of U.S. assistance programs. The State Department used a variety of policy tools for advancing IRF and human rights. The approaches for promotion of religious freedom differed from country to country through bilateral efforts and raised issues of religious persecution with the foreign governments. In case of countries with no formal ties the US government efforts were limited to multilateral engagement of coordinated efforts with other governments. The international broadcasting programs, dissemination of information on human rights issues became part of the State Department efforts.

Prior to USCIRF reports, the Department monitored and gathered information on the condition of all human rights and religious freedom. Reports were produced such as the "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices". These reports provided systematic description of violations and instructed the embassies abroad to regularly comment on religious persecution issues. In addition, public diplomacy was boosted in direction of religious freedom through programs like the "U.S. Information Agency and Broadcasting" by the "Voice of America".

The State Department encouraged inclusion of IRF by instructing the foreign officials in the embassies to deal host governments concerning topics related to religious freedom issues. The officials in the embassies entered into dialogue for systemic

problems such as discrimination against minorities, involvement of government in religious affairs, and laws that suppressed religious communities and individuals. Apart from such intervention with foreign governments on religious freedom issues in the U.S. foreign policy, it aimed at strengthening the democratic institutions in societies all around the world and created a framework for greater tolerance. The State Department have contributed in the direction of promoting religious freedom policy but after the IRFA these efforts were strengthened further.

The Secretary of State, Madeline Albright became an ardent supporter (US Department of State 1997c) of IRF in the US foreign policy. This freedom was made as a priority at the State Department. The first step taken by Secretary Albright was issuing instructions to all the Consulates and US Embassies to increase monitoring, advocating, and reporting on religious freedom in 1997. Even in multilateral venues like the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, religious freedom was given a high priority by the U.S. delegation. In a response to suggestions by the Advisory Committee in 1998, Secretary Albright proclaimed the appointment of a coordinator for religious freedom. After U.S. Congress engaged in the legislative debates surrounding the 1997 Frank Wolf and Senator Arlen Specter bills on religious persecution the Assistant Secretary for “Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor” John Shattuck debated the components of the new bill on religious persecution.

The testimony of John Shattuck before the “House International Relations Committee” (US Department of State 1997) covered controversial issues surrounding the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act 1997. John Shattuck also addressed the process and methods through which U.S. government could influence governments indulging in persecution and religious discrimination without negatively affecting the interests of the U.S. Further the testimony was significant in speculating about the technicalities of instituting a new office in the “Department of State” and dealing with the victims of religious persecution.

Legislative Background to IRFA

The “International Religious Freedom Act” or IRFA of 1998 became the bedrock under which religious freedom (IRF) policy was pursued by the US. It acknowledged religious freedom as a “universal human right,” and created programs for integrating

IRFA as a foreign policy priority in the U.S. The campaign for IRF got a strong Congressional support, in 1996 Congressman Chris Smith called to highlight the problem of persecution of Christians in Congressional hearing (Congressional Hearing 1996). The increasing focus on the subject of religious persecution in Congress led to the placing of two important bills in the House of Representatives, those bills aimed at allowing U.S. government to take action against perpetrators of religious persecution. The bill was placed by Congressman Frank Wolf and Senator Arlen Specter, and it was first of its kind for taking action against countries indulged in persecution of religious communities through compulsory Presidential sanctions against such countries. It was titled as the “Freedom from Religious Persecution Act of 1997”(H.R.1685). This Act included provisions for creating the “Office of Religious Persecution” in the White House and imposing compulsory export sanctions against violators. It also included provisions for refugees for asylum on the grounds of persecution. The bill was supported by various religious groups such as conservative Christian organizations, international campaign for Tibet and several Jewish groups.

The Bill was however criticised by the Department of State on several fronts with views like -compulsory sanctions would increase persecutions and not lessen it. The Assistant secretary of the “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor” John Shattuck (Robinson 2000) viewed that the bill would worsen the religious persecution problems in places like Egypt, Sudan, China, Tibet, Middle East, if the governments in these countries were forced to stop persecution by U.S. sanctions. Also, it was noticed in some countries such as Egypt, religious persecution was not committed by the government but by religious groups. There was a fear that the bill would significantly hamper the peace process in the Middle East if sanctions were imposed. And in places like China strong response from the U.S. government due to the Act was thought to jeopardize the few freedoms enjoyed by the population. Apart from these objections the Department of State viewed that placing importance on one freedom would unnecessarily create ‘hierarchy’ of human rights and would place religious persecution at the top most level while leaving out other types of discrimination based on race, gender, etc. The government sanction was perceived to weaken the ability to counter oppression. Such differences would instead establish "bureaucratic struggle" between the Department of State and the new proposed Office of “Religious Persecution Monitoring”.

The Wolf-Spectre Bill before getting ratified got some modification and approval by the “International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee” of the “House’s International Relations Committee” (H.R. 2431 1998) before getting ratified. The bill retained its main features of creating a new office but not within the White House but in the Department of State and proposed to remove compulsory sanctions on violating countries, it retained the provisions for improved proceedings for refugees seeking asylum. It allowed the President to remove sanctions by providing a written request to Congress. The revised version included religion of all faiths and not just Christianity. The bill ensured to give precedence to victims fleeing from other forms of oppression. Before this bill moved to Senate for ratification there was some opposition from the White House. Under such a situation Sen. Don Nickles (R.-Okla.) introduced an alternative bill which was eventually adopted unanimously. Senators Don Nickles (R OK) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) introduced the “International Religious Freedom Act” (IRFA) in the Senate. It was similar to Wolf-Specter bill but was a toned down version of it. Number of changes was introduced to the legislation for bipartisan approval and support of Clinton’s administration. In 1998, the bill was approved with 98-0 votes by the U.S. Senate. The House gave approval and President Clinton signed the bill on Oct, 1998.

The IRFA defined religious freedom violations more broadly than the “Freedom from Religious Persecution Act” (FRPA). The IRFA gave wide attention for religious freedom promotion, whereas FRPA had a narrow focus regarding the violators and it tend to effect only a handful of countries. The mandatory sanctions under FRPA were problematic as it could have hampered the peace process in several Middle Eastern countries. IRFA allowed the US President to select from a list of sanctions applicable to violating countries. These included "from private diplomatic protest to certain economic sanctions." The President had the power to remove sanctions only if was against the interest of U.S.

IRFA used the internationally recognized definitions of human rights violations while taking acting actions against countries engaging in religious persecutions. It was more nuanced than FRPA as it required consulting religious communities prior taking any actions to avoid any harm to the religious minorities abroad. The IRFA created the post of “Ambassador-at-large” in the State Department rather than giving

responsibility to the already existing mid-level officials at White House with the task of religious freedom. A new post in “National Security Council” was also created consisting of an advisor along with 7 person commission for training of officials abroad (H.R. 1685).

The IRFA differed from the FRPA on the annual reporting system on religious freedom, the former established report on annual basis on IRF that allowed the U.S. overseas missions to interact with the NGOs, and document the efforts undertaken for religious freedom promotion. The reviewing of countries based on the country reports by the President became an important task for measuring the levels of violations according to human rights law. The designation of states as "Country of Particular Concern" or CPC, was given to countries committing or tolerating mainly egregious violations. The CPC status of countries opened up discussions and dialogues resulting in set of actions and even sanctions in the event of lack of addressing of the issue by the violating country. The negotiation process was important to cease violations and facilitate treaty to stop imposing sanctions. In a landmark case on religious freedom Vietnam after getting the designation of CPC it reversed the previous violation of religious freedom by issuing a decree ordering abrogating of the practice of forced conversions, opening banned churches, and releasing religious prisoners. Ambassador John Hanford during the Bush administration signed a Binding agreement with Vietnam under the IRFA. This agreement demonstrated that IRFA’s goal was to bring real changes and not just impose sanctions.

The State Department was made the main U.S. federal government body overlooking the efforts to promote IRF. The Ambassador-at-Large overlooked the “Office of International Religious Freedom” (IRF Office or OIRF) situated in the State Department. The “Ambassador at Large” links the IRF policies to the U.S. foreign policy as per IRFA and facilitated the processes in which national security interests could be advanced. Both the Ambassador and the IRF office worked simultaneously to draft the annual international religious freedom report. The Ambassador also advises the Secretary of State on taking actions regarding religious freedom violations. Other senior State Department officials under religious freedom includes positions of “Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating anti-Semitism” and “Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia”.

The Act created the “US Commission on International Religious Freedom” (USCIRF) comprising of nine commissioners appointed by the members of the Congress and the President to ensure bipartisanship. The office of the IRF ambassador was made the non-voting member of USCIRF. The USCIRF’s primary duties included (1) reviewing “the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom,” and (2) “making policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress” regarding appropriate responses regarding violations of religious freedom, also progress by nations that are actively working to improve religious freedom (H.R. 2431). The remaining key directives of IRFA included developing training initiatives on religion and religious issues for officers in foreign missions and creating an IRF website.

Passing IRFA was an important first step in advancing religious freedom and responding to the global crisis in religious freedom. The Act created two bodies charged with the directive of Congress to promote IRF abroad as a priority for the U.S. The first was the “Office of International Religious Freedom” under the Department of State’s “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor”. Second was the USCIRF. The officer in charge looking after the Office of IRF created the post of “Ambassador at Large” for IRF (IRF Ambassador) in the State Department. The IRF Ambassador carried four main responsibilities- of promoting religious freedom; he/she had the advisory function to the “Secretary of State” and the President regarding matters concerning religious freedom abroad; the ambassador represented the government in several forums abroad; and did reporting on the condition of international religious freedom annually (Weber 2020).

The President had the power to review the recommendations of USCIRF and designate any country as CPCs, and take actions against them. Countries or governments that engaged in serious violations was included as CPCs. The possible actions included negotiating bilateral agreement, or sanctions. The Act defined “particularly severe” religious freedom violations as “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom, including violations such as (A) torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; (B) prolonged detention without charges; (C) causing the disappearance of persons by the abduction or clandestine

detention of those persons; or (D) other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, or the security of persons” (USCIRF 2018).

Apart from the CPCs another less severe category was the “Special Watch List”. This list has been for countries with less severe forms of violations compared to the CPCs category of “systematic, ongoing and egregious” standards. The special watch list included two of the three criteria mentioned (Pompeo 2019). For the Special Watch List countries, no specific actions were taken but required a close monitoring of countries under the list because of the nature and extent of the violation. The actions against countries for violation of religious freedom falling under the CPCs included public condemnation, private demarches, denying state visits, limiting or stopping assistance aid, imposing financial sanctions (USCIRF 2018). The President could stop taking action if the country in question ceased the violation of religious freedom, or Congress intended to allow waiver for national security interest.

The Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2015

The cause of IRF was strengthened by amending the IRFA of 1998, it aimed to improve the U.S. role and efforts to intensify religious freedom policy in the world by enhancing efforts on training, foreign assistance, diplomacy, counterterrorism, and improve action against violent extremism, intolerance and religious conflicts. In order to further strengthen IRFA, President Obama signed the “Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act” of 2015, on Dec. 2016 and integrated several changes (Strode 2016). The main components of this legislation included creation of a new category for “Entities of Particular Concern” (EPC) meant specifically for non-state actors against violation of religious freedom. The Act also provided direct reporting to the “Secretary of State” by the ‘Ambassador at Large’. Another important addition was the ‘compulsory’ training of Foreign officers, ambassadors, and Deputy chief of missions, the curriculum for training was to be prepared by the State government and shared with overseas agencies, Armed personnel and other federal agencies. The Special Adviser to the President on IRF counsels the “Ambassador at Large” for IRF and liaises with the executive on freedom of religion topic.

Among the most crucial amendment process in IRFA since its formation in 1998 the “Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act” proposed instituting a new

framework by addressing the actions of non-state actors in disregarding the right to religious freedom. The importance for adding this category was due to the problem caused by non-state actors like the “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” (ISIS or ISIL) who continuously committed religious persecution, intolerance and other forms of egregious abuse of religious freedom. The amendment included groups like al-Qa’ida, the Taliban, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, ISIS, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, Jamat Nasr al-Sham, the Houthis, ISIS-Greater Sahara and West Africa, as “EPC” under the “Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act” of 2016 (Rogers 2016).

Violent non-state actors were responsible for increasing percentage of the global population facing severe abuses from religious violence, the Wolf Act faced a grueling battle in the Congress that demanded certain bargaining for its passage (Blitt 2019). The final bill was changed or omitted from the originally proposed to address the non-state actors. As a result, the Act placed ambiguous definition of non-state actors that would come under the scrutiny of IRFA. Also, the new “EPC” designation was not very different from IRFA’s existing compulsory sanctions regime for “CPC” it fell far short by allowing only a suggestion that the President can “take specific actions, when practicable, to address violations of religious freedom.” Apart from this, as the main addition to the IRFA the amendment added provision for establishing a “designated persons list” for individuals who severely violated freedom of religion, and allowed the President to put sanctions against such individuals. The Act also included point for creating a list of religious prisoners overseas and establishing a minimum full-time staff limit for State’s IRF Office (Strode 2016).

Presidential Powers and Religious Freedom

The role of President in implementing the IRFA has been indispensable. Although some of the responsibilities to execute the programs belonged to the State Department, but the U.S. President has the ultimate hold in executing almost every aspect of religious freedom and foreign policy in general. The President is the chief diplomat, chief executive and commander-in chief who mostly deals with foreign policy issues. The White House has been equally important in making policy decisions, diplomatic activities, prompting budget for programs and articulating strategic priorities. Some of the important powers in relation to the IRFA included the

power of the President to act against governments for flouting of religious freedom rights. The rhetoric of the WolfSpecter Bill emphasized the mandatory imposition of sanctions by the President on persecuting regimes and against every country for religious persecution. But the IRFA on the other hand with its two categories of violators, mandated the President to take actions against the violators of religious rights. With regard to the second category of violations, the main responsive actions of the President refer to publicly or privately address the issue and reprimand in multilateral fora.

President Bill Clinton:

Under President Clinton the IRFA bill was signed into law. Although the Clinton administration opposed the bill initially when it was introduced in the Congress, it pivoted towards debates and negotiations leading to the successful passage of the bill. The provision of automatic sanctions was problematic for Clinton and he viewed that such a formula would create potential problems with strategic countries. When the supporters of IRFA bill coalesced around Nickles-Lieberman and their alternative bill with modifications gave the President greater flexibility, Clinton agreed to sign the bill into law (Hertzke 2016).

President Clinton talked about religious freedom before the signing of IRFA directly with foreign governments, in 1997 at the Denver Summit of the Eight (US Department of State 1997d) for instance, President Clinton discussed with the Russian President about the legislation in Russia that intend to heavily curtail the religious liberty of its citizens. Regarding China the issue of religious persecution and discrimination was given focus during his visit to China in 1997.

President Clinton took an important step by integrating religious freedom in the national security agenda for the first time. The “National Security Strategy” (NSS) was one of the major documents outlining the foreign policy priorities by the White House, the issues of religious persecution got a reference on its section on democracy and human rights. Further in the 1999 NSS, religious freedom was given higher priority by declaring “promotion of religious freedom” as a major concern in the U.S. foreign policy.

President Clinton appointed Seiple as the first Ambassador at-Large. Seiple, was known to have strong experience in handling issues relating to religion at the State Department, by providing capability and credibility to the position. During his two-year tenure Seiple gave a boost to religious freedom in the foreign policy by endorsing the profile of religious freedom abroad and within the State Department. He spent time in articulating the functions of his post in the U.S. government and enhancing the knowledge on the subject. He attempted to clarify the problems of religious concern in different countries and offered assistance if requested.

In 1999, finally the Clinton administration reinforced IRFA's credibility in approving Secretary Albright's decision to designate China as a CPC—thus, this signaled that the policy of religious freedom at times trumped over strategic interests that could possibly even harm bilateral relations. Clinton was involved with religious communities and attended meetings with the representatives of various religions, such as leaders from Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, and other Christian communities, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Islam and other faiths. He met with several top religious leaders of all faiths such as the Dalai Lama, and Pope John Paul II, Bishop Belo, to talk about crucial issue affecting their communities of believers.

Bill Clinton took several diplomatic initiatives in countries with religious conflicts. Especially in facilitating peace process in the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland. Under Clinton the State Department aimed at improving the human rights advocacy in the foreign policy and it led to the establishing of a new undersecretary for global affairs to manage all the bureaus necessary for managing issues related to human rights (Farr 2008).

Clinton supported religious cooperation and reconciliation in the conflict prone areas. His administration issued series of worldwide cables concerning religious freedom issues and gave directives to the DoS and governments abroad declaring that religious freedom and its promotion was a major component of human rights policy (Haynes 2008). Hence, under Clinton U.S. embassies and diplomats were already intervening on behalf of IRF in foreign nations around the world. The IRFA provided with legal mechanism formalizing the implementation of religious freedom in all foreign policy decisions and missions. It reinforced President Clinton's efforts to bring religious actors and U.S. government closer and helped in developing links with religious

nongovernmental organizations more thoroughly. He met with imprisoned religious leaders and try to resolve issues between them and the host governments.

President Geroge W. Bush

The George W. Bush administration promoted religious freedom at a slower pace but the incident of 9/11 terrorist attacks was challenging enough and it led to building a strong religious freedom policy internationally. President Bush created the White House “Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives” (OFBCI) in January, 2001. He issued the Executive Order and created six centers of OFBCI in government departments. Further the scheme was extended to USAID which performed its role in foreign countries helping to strengthen the IRF in US foreign policy. The FBCI at the USAID expanded faith based programs in the foreign policy. Since its formation the USAID worked with several FBOs, the expansion of function under USAID was seminal in expanding the objectives under the IRFA. It allowed to work with small partners and indigenous to native countries (Marsden 2018). The executive orders for USAID enabled it to review and revise the regulations to remove barriers for full participation by FBOs. The report by USAID viewed the agency's attempt in applying the President’s formula to stop discrimination against an FBO applicant on the basis of religious affiliation. (Lloyd 2007)

Under Bush however, there were some changes in the IRF office. He increased the number of staffs due to the increasing volume of work needed to be taken care by the Department’s only “religion office.” The IRF office faced significant practical, bureaucratic impediments. The terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda further increased the functions of the office in dealing with religious issues pertaining to religious extremism. The Administration developed a plan called- "forward strategy of freedom”, it was meant to support democratic institutions in the Middle East and help install democratic values necessary to remove threat posed by terrorism.

Under Bush the NSS of 2002 (NSS 2002) made IRF as an area of focus for the President’s “freedom agenda”. The personal faith and beliefs of Bush was also helpful in assisting the cause for religious freedom in national security agenda. The 2002 NSS gave a wide focus in making religious freedom as a priority -“We will ... take special efforts to promote freedom of religion and conscience and defend it from

encroachment by repressive governments”. However, the NSS did not articulate much on means to include religious freedom in the national security but Bush was persistent in the belief that liberty in U.S. depended on the success of liberty in other countries. He made U.S. vital interests and religious belief abroad interconnected. This allowed for establishing a strong conceptual foundation and developing a wider framework. The NSS of Bush’s second term further elaborated on those principles. During the second term Bush developed framework for promotion of IRF into the promotion of democracy scheme, as well as other aspects of counter-terrorism and development.

The 2006 NSS declared that freedom was indivisible in democracies and several political, economic and religious freedoms complimented each other (US Department of State 2006). It identified the rising problems arising due to the lack of religious freedom in the world. It emphasized on defending religious freedom from intolerance against religious extremism and right of an individual to follow faith in accordance to his or her by conscience, free from coercion by any state or non-state entities. Bush announced the appointment of an “Organization for Islamic Countries” envoy in 2008, which had been planned in the past but stalled at the “State Department”. Bush quickly implemented the initiative by appointing Sada Cumber as the new envoy. He also decided to appoint the “Ambassador at Large” position with an experienced hand. Hence, he appointed John Hanford who had an immense prior experience in the IRF policy.

Under President Bush personal diplomacy and gestures were used, he tried to improve religious freedom policies by conducting meetings with religious leaders and religious dissidents. In regards to religious minorities in China Bush met with the religious representatives of minority communities facing high levels of persecution like the Uighur Muslims, Protestants, Tibetan Buddhists, and Catholics. He held several meetings with the Dalai lama. In 2006, despite Chinese threats Bush met with the leaders of Christian movement and reformers. He became the first President to meet religious dissidents in China. Similarly, in Hong Kong too he met with the leaders of Catholic activist in the White House.

President Barack Obama:

By the time President Obama got into office, understanding of religious freedom gained much broader understanding and its link to the foreign policy goals. The 2009 IRF Report issued under Obama administration viewed that religious communities faced challenges around the globe and the aim of safeguarding their religious freedom was as important as other policies, it recognized religious freedom as a basic right necessary for peace and stability (US State Department 2009). President Obama delineated religious freedom with strategic relevance and the IRF Office expanded its commitment to religious communities broadly with diversified staff.

The office added the first-ever “Special Advisor” for “Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia” due to the increasing atrocities by ISIL against minorities. Obama appointed officials with a very strong background and experience in relation to religious freedom. For example, David Saperstein was made as the “Ambassador-at-large” and in 2015, an ardent supporter of IRF. President Obama aimed at expanding the role of FBO initiatives abroad and in 2008 and he renamed the Bush faith-based office as the “Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships”. Joshua DuBois was appointed as the executive director. In addition, a new “Advisory Council” on “Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships” was created with twelve centers in the federal agencies.

Under Obama, Faith based organization got grants and created the Strengthening Communities Fund, a group of twenty-five leaders from humanitarian background for his Advisory council to collaborate with faith-based community. It aimed at resolving issues affecting global warming, interfaith collaboration, reduction of poverty at home and abroad. The President wanted the Advisory Council to involve religious and humanitarian perspectives in his administration’s policies. The funds were allocated for foreign aid of \$16 million for programs to increase the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives under the Obama administration (The White House 2016).

The 1998 IRFA required training of officials on the issues of IRF. Within the “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor”, the OIRF reported to Congress on the condition of religious freedom from every country and within in the office of Secretary of State, a separate working group pertaining to just foreign policy and

religion was instituted called “Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society” in 2011. This group functioned the White House “Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships”. The working group aimed at bringing together military leaders, religious groups, foreign officials, diplomats, Foreign Service to cooperate and work on policy objectives (US Department of State 2011).

President Obama pursued collaborative and pragmatic diplomacy, and held the belief that U.S. could progress when it exercised its power moderately and in conjunction with other nations. In 2010 summit President told-“we seek an equal partnership ... engagement based on mutual respect and common interests and shared values.” (Obama 2009). For enhancing relationship between Islamic countries and the U.S. Obama gave speech in Cairo in 2009 calling upon shared partnerships and a relationship based on respect and mutual interest (Obama 2012) in Cairo Obama stated by saying “Our problems must be dealt with through partnership; progress must be shared.” Based on the speech delivered in Cairo President Obama emphasized the enhanced role of NSC’s “Global Engagement Directorate” and renewed public-private partnership indicating start of new relationship. The Presidents engagement with other countries gave a renewed image to the U.S. and improved the area of religious freedom in the international setting

One of the major challenges for the Obama administrations was to renew links with the Islamic population globally. The relations worsened precipitously especially during the Bush’s administration, and the relationship rebuilding efforts with the Muslim majority countries needed a strong strategic plan by focusing on the development issue and mutual trust. As such, Obama indicated a clear break from the past of unpopular U.S. image in several countries. He aimed at building a relationship with the population of countries to facilitate stability and security crucial for U.S. and the entire world. This led to building confidence for addressing shared challenges such as economic progress, human rights protection, and the Arab-Israeli conflict (Lord and Lynch 2010)

According to a report (DuBois 2010) on religious engagement, the Obama period significantly improved diplomatic outreach to Islamic communities that helped in cultivating religious tolerance in the host countries. The Obama Administration brought renewed vision and engagement that added in the positive direction towards

IRF agenda. Increased association with Muslim majority states around the world was significantly different from the Bush's period. The rise in inter-faith dialogue was a significant development for enhancing religious freedom agenda. The U.S. and European countries aimed at curtailing blasphemy laws internationally, the Obama Administration continued to put efforts in that direction and collaborated with the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to address the blasphemy laws (Birdsall 2012). Ultimately the U.S. and OIC forged an agreement and received its acceptance in the UN "Human Rights Council" in 2011. Apart from speeches the document was crucial to make necessary positive changes to overcome intolerance and discrimination by enabling social harmony and peace.

IRFA and Foreign Policy

After the passing of IRFA in 1998 the religious freedom was systematically integrated in the foreign policy. The OIRF under the "Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor" (DRL) aimed at "promoting religious freedom as a core objective of U.S. foreign policy". The "Ambassador-at-Large" heading the OIRF has the responsibility to link religious freedom in the U.S. foreign policy. For carrying out the functions, the Ambassador was assisted by a director from the Foreign Service for managing the day-to-day activities. OIRF overlooked the religious persecution taking place in countries and provided information crucial for the conduct of foreign relations with those countries.

The OIRF has multifaceted roles, due to its mandate to recommend policies for individual countries and it works with various agencies of the foreign governments to fulfill the implementation part. It recommended policies not just on religious freedom but on political empowerment, economic wellbeing, and security of minorities. For instance, in Iraq OIRF coordinated with the "Department of Defense," the "National Security Council" and "intelligence agencies" to curtail violence and persecution. The OIRF provided with direct grants to the religious communities for the development of the region and promoted cooperation on religious issues. In some cases, the Office was involved in the minority caucus for putting up legislation to secure the rights in the host countries (OIRF Official 2011). The "Ambassador-at-Large" encouraged discussions and held meetings with religious leaders in countries affected by sectarian

violence like Turkey, Nigeria, Indonesia. The office assisted in building dialogue with religious communities for legislation in some countries. For instance, in Turkey Jewish and Alevi leaders were brought together for lobbying in the Turkish government for better treatment of minorities (OIRF Official 2011).

The task for recommending and implementing policies to promote religious freedom in different countries included noting the status of religious freedom from 198 countries. The information was collected not only from the national government but also from the local governments and their policies towards religious beliefs and practices of individuals and groups. With this data the Office released “Annual Report on International Religious Freedom”. The Secretary of the State was asked to designate countries where “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom” as “Countries of Particular Concern” (CPCs). This designation has been furthered by economic sanctions in those countries. The 2001 report of IRF countries like Burma, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Iran, Serbia was put in CPCs list. Out of several countries under this designation however very few got economic sanctions, such as Eritrea in 2012.

Over the years the OIRF was involved with the “Foreign Service Institute” (FSI), for providing training of officers and personnel of the American foreign policy making bureaucracy. It covered issues such as: “the international basis and standards for the right to freedom of religion”, the “theological beliefs of different religious groups”, “involvement of religious groups in politics”, “diplomatic tools used by the United States to promote respect for religious freedom”, and the “relationships between religious freedom, democracy, and national security”.

The OIRF developed programs to deliver projects for promotion of religious freedom all round the world and reduce intolerance, and sectarian violence. The regional and international NGOs were also actively involved with the Office to implement its policies. The NGOs spread across regions were part of the “global programs” category. The project was funded in accordance with the requirement of each country or region and funds allocated to organizations to: “promote and advocate freedom of religion” and channelized through online and print media across the regions of South Asia, the Near East, South Asian, East Asia; to “strengthen the capacity” of leaders of

different religions to “promote mutual respect and prevent violence” in Nigeria; and to promote “capacity building for religious freedom” in East Asian countries.

The IRF policy has helped to reform of education policies in places like Indonesia- “away from extremism and towards religious freedom and appreciation for religious pluralism”; improve “tolerance towards Islam” in Azeri media; “reform how Israeli and Palestinians are respectively portrayed in each other’s school books”; increase the “appreciation for the diverse religious heritage” of Iraq; “carry out community development projects to encourage religious tolerance” in Lebanon; “bring together interfaith leaders” in India; “work to encourage peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding of religious minorities” in Pakistan (USCIRF 2011).

In contrast to OIRF, USCIRF is an independent commission which has been carrying out the aims of IRFA in a similar manner as that of OIRF. The USCIRF headed by officials who had strong experience and knowledge in fields pertinent to IRF policies. These officials have strong background in human rights, foreign policy, and international law, while the Commissioners included varieties of religious leaders and activists. Due to the independent status of USCIRF its functions were free from diplomatic hassles. This gave more space and freedom for designating a country as CPCs. Hence, it consisted of more countries under CPC designation than under OIRF. Even countries key to U.S. was included as CPCs in 2011 such as Egypt, Vietnam and Pakistan.

National Security and IRF

It is critical to U.S. national security to have an effective strategy for promoting religious freedom (IRF). The elevation of this right in U.S. national security started with the Clinton administration, this policy was the immediate result of the Second Sudanese Civil War that killed millions of people. The Government in Sudan restricted freedom of assembly, association, religion, privacy, and movement. IRF apart from advocating humanitarian issues it has been playing a key role in the national security of the U.S. There was a connection between religious freedom and societal goods such as economic growth, political stability and improved health (Testimony of Thomas Farr, December 2017). And lack of religious freedom and tolerance has led to greater violence in a society. In such a case, the security of a

region has been partly dependent on the condition of religious freedom, in conflict prone areas the U.S. role for resolving violence remained one of the major American security priorities.

A number of empirical researches has portrayed that religious restrictions and intolerance were highly co-related with conflict, terrorism and violence. William Inboden, former Senior Director for “Strategic Planning on the National Security Council”, wrote that government violations of religious freedom “can serve as a diagnostic tool or type of early warning system revealing nations which are irresponsible actors and even potential security threats” (Inboden 2008). While anecdotal evidence supporting the relationship between religious freedom and security has been available for decades, empirical research has bolstered this hypothesis during the past 10-15 years. In a study by Brian Grim and Roger Finke a strong link was identified between regulation of religion and religious persecution. In addition, in another study by the “Hudson Institute Center for Religious Freedom”, religious freedom was correlated with the low levels of armed conflict in a country (Grim 2008)

The relation between religious freedom and terrorism also suggested that religiously motivated terrorism needs to be remedied with various measure to resolve issues of minorities. A country’s system of restricting religion and discrimination based on religion can predict the onset of religious terrorism more than any variables (Saiya 2014). Sometimes it is thought that terrorism thrives in poor countries, but contrary to this in some cases, country’s economic status had no link with religious terrorism. Hence, it contradicted the assumption that poverty breeds terrorism. Given the complexity of issues concerning religion, promotion of religious freedom internationally is arguably the most viable solution to ensure peace, security and stability in the world.

The role of both state and non-state actors role in infringing religious freedom have led to national security concerns. There were ways in which religious freedom has been integrated with security policy because it served as a prognosis or a sign of potential security threat. The promotion of this right helped in mitigating existing security threats, and increasing programs for this right has been helpful in preventing the surfacing of new security threats. The U.S. government devoted substantial

resources in identifying potential security threats. The policymakers added religious freedom conditions as an indicator to identify and tracked possible security threats. Poor religious freedom conditions and violent religious persecution has been seen as a benchmark of a falling state.

Repression of religious communities and violation of religious freedom has indicated presence of authoritarianism, the rise of religious repression in China for instance created a wide problem of ethnic minorities. As Peter Berger (2010) has observed that “modern authoritarian rulers have understood instinctively that uncontrolled religion can be a threat. By the same token, violations of religious freedom frequently foreshadow other measures of tyranny. Thus Chinese Christians today may resemble canaries in a coalmine, their fate sending out an alarm”. At the same time non-state actors has debilitated religious persecution and posed huge security problems. The national security strategy of U.S. recognized several issues that were not considered relevant previously. For instance, before September 11 the persecution of minorities by Taliban and violence against women and intolerance were not paid much heed. Under Taliban’s regime those who suffered were Afghan Muslims who did not even shared predilections of Taliban. As such repression of minorities and intolerance was highly appealing to al Qaeda.

There has been considerable link between religious-freedom protections and security threats. For instance, in Pakistan’s case the blasphemy law became a favored instrument for suppressing religious minorities including Muslims with moderate views. It also acted as a mechanism to displace democratic principles in government institutions. This affected the security of Pakistan and the surrounding areas in general. The removal of blasphemy laws has been crucial in lessening of violence related to minorities, which could be achieved through religious freedom and improve the overall security of the region. It may not act as a complete blanket palliative given Pakistan’s maladies. But it can act as preventive measures to subvert extremism. The U.S. support for religious freedom protection of minorities in affecting terrorist groups in fragile societies can be helpful in counterterrorism policy by developing confidence among the population and availing intelligence. Protection of religious freedom won’t guarantee stable and self-governing states but it can create a huge impact in lessening instability and violence.

When states suppressed freedom of religion, it has hit at the core of people's identity and violence has been seen as the only viable option through which the system could possibly change (Saiya 2014). Lastly, historical evidence reinforced the conclusions of recent empirical studies. William Inboden (2012) stresses that the connection between security and religion is not a novel development, but was present in every major war the United States has engaged in since World War II. He recounts that North Korea, Nazi Germany, North Vietnam, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and the Cold War battle with the Soviet Union all dealt with nations and regimes that severely violated religious freedom. Given the clear connection between violations of religious freedom and violent conflict, it is essential that the U.S. has a clear and effective policy for incorporating religious liberty promotion into its foreign policy strategy. This does not imply however that rise in persecution immediately translated into security issue but ignoring religious freedom can trigger instability and long-term threats.

Implementation of IRFA:

After the IRFA was passed in 1998, Robert A. Seiple became the "Special IRF Adviser" to the Secretary of State and the U.S. President. In May 1999, he was appointed as the first Ambassador at Large. As the first Ambassador Seiple aimed at advancing religious freedom all around the world rather than punishing its violators. He and his staff visited countries with worst abusers of religious freedom and emphasized the significance of IRFA at par with the international standards for US actions. Since then, the preceding Ambassador-at-large met with leaders of different faiths and government officials, human rights groups and NGOs abroad. These groups disseminated information to both supporter and critics of this policy.

The OIRF has championed religious freedom in different avenues such as the academia, conferences, media events in the country and abroad. The office held conferences on religious freedom and foreign policy along with the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. It has been instrumental in implementing outreach programs to leaders of various faiths and has allocated resources through "Human Rights and Democracy Fund" to NGO's working in religious conflicts for reconciliation programs. Ambassador Seiple testified before the Senate "Foreign

Relations Committee”, the Helsinki Commission, the “House International Relations Committee” and its Subcommittee on “International Operations and Human Rights”, and the “Congressional Human Rights” Caucus.(IRF 2000). Such testimonies by the Ambassador-at Large have assisted in disseminating the conditions of IRF policy with much determination.

The State Department liaised with other foreign affairs departments to develop new methods in engaging with religious issues abroad. Under the Obama administration the Religious Engagement Report was created in 2010 to assess the level of engagements with religious communities in foreign countries. In 2011, the “Foreign Service Institute” introduced a course on “Religion and Foreign Policy” to give training to diplomats. Bureaucratically, too number of religion-related institution proliferated in the State Department. The State Department has undergone massive changes by incorporating religion-focused office and the previous perception of lack of policies and offices concerning religious related issues has been undermined to some extent (Albright 2006).

There have been several changes in the IRF Office with every new administration, and the issues regarding religious causes got greater importance with every new President. In order to combat anti-Semitism more effectively, the Secretary of State Pompeo in 2019 announced the institution of “Office of the Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating anti-Semitism”, And it came under the supervision of the Under Secretary of State for “Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights”. Previously this office was under the “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor”. In addition, the IRFA of 2015 amended the “National Security Act” of 1947 and added the provision of an adviser on religious freedom in the “National Security Council” (NSC), (Weber 2020). The State Department also took steps, to improve the training of “Foreign Service Officers” on religious issues with more enthusiasm.

The last decade saw the heightened engagement with Muslim communities and the creation of a representatives such as- the “Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism”, the “Special Representative for Religion and Global Affairs”, the “Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation”, and the aforementioned “Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia” have made engagement with Muslim and other religious communities meaningful.

Implementation and Promotion of IRF through Foreign Policy:

The IRFA mandated that the U.S. government must advance religious freedom by: providing development and security and assistance to countries who does not violate religious freedom; coordinating with countries to develop multilateral approaches for promotion of religious freedom; using mechanisms of foreign policy and its tools such as diplomacy, educational, cultural channels, aid, and to foster this important right. The three main bodies of Ambassador-at-large, Office of IRF and USCIRF handled issues concerning religious freedom abroad. As such the promotion of religious freedom was based more on promoting this right by developing new programs instead of creating conflicts through sanctions. Instead, the State Department 's IRF office, led by the ambassador-at-large, typically worked through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy to encourage reforms in CPCs.

The IRF office drafted strategic plans to guide countries of concern and created funds for programs to improve religious freedom conditions. Those activities included official statements or meetings, interfaith workshops, grants for local projects that benefitted religious minorities or exchange programs. The Annual reports on IRF thoroughly described status of religious freedom and recommended ways and policies to the U.S. government (President, US Congress and Secretary of State) (US Department of State 2010). For USCIRF, the nine commissioners along with "Ambassador-at-large" has monitored the condition of religious violations internationally and focused on those it specifically recommended as CPCs. In addition to analyzing conditions in particular countries, USCIRF reviewed the U.S. response and has made suggestions to the executive and legislative branches.

Some of the Commission's recent focus has been on religiously motivated extremist violence, asylum seekers and refugees , and defamation of religions (Farr and Saunders 2009). Since the establishment of the IRF office and USCIRF, both have led to overwhelming focus on areas affecting religious freedom. It has allowed to build better foreign policy and has helped in unveiling causes for several socio-political-economic issues worldwide. The reporting requirement has led Foreign Service Officers to make more local religious contacts and to examine countries 'religious dynamics more closely. The U.S. pressure on certain countries persuaded it to free

individual religious prisoners and to protect victims of religious persecution (Rivera 2011). On a broader scale, several country cases have been noted as particular success stories for U.S. religious freedom policy. For instance, the in Vietnam and in 2010, USCIRF helped in facilitating a referendum in South Sudan for its independence.

Public diplomacy:

Public diplomacy has been very critical in promoting religious freedom, it has helped in furthering social conditions essential for religious freedom. Public diplomacy has gone beyond interacting with government officials by informing about the issues of religious suppression and facilitates in prevailing social conditions important for religious freedom. Through public diplomacy, dialogue with religious groups on various programs was created and it raised discussions on vexed issues.

Public diplomacy has been crucial for the bottom –up engagement to help citizens to exercise their right to religious freedom in a responsible manner. It has been an important mechanism when bilateral efforts failed, and has helped in actively promoting a culture of religious freedom among people, it equipped civil society to fight social hostilities, and publicized about religious freedom at local governments. The U.S. diplomacy has emphasized the importance of religious freedom in recent years. Especially after 9/11, public diplomacy has been significant in dealing with religious actors, especially in Muslim majority countries, due to the concerns driven by Islamic extremism (Farr and Hoover 2011).

The previous negligence of religion in diplomacy has been replaced by the understanding of religion as a key variable in every key issues. Religious groups have significantly highlighted issues of importance to the U.S. government due to their unique credibility and capabilities. These groups were helpful in lessening radicalization, and promoting religious freedom and faith-based charity. Thus, John Kerry attempted to give greater focus on religious associations as main priority during his tenure as Secretary of State in 2013 “engage religious leaders and faith-based communities in our day to-day work. Build strong relationships with them and listen to their insights and understand the important contributions that they can make individually and that we can make together”. (Kerry 2013)

José Casanova views that a long-term policy for advancing religious freedom can be done through cultural exchange programs (Casanova 2008). Some exchange programs has helped in promotion of religious freedom, the “Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs” sponsored the “Youth Exchange and Study” (YES) Program. It funded students exchange in several countries by letting foreign students stay at U.S. for some period. Such program was helpful and gave large number of students an opportunity to learn about culture and religious practices in the U.S. It made them view that equal opportunities are very importance regardless of religion (US Department of State 2009k).

The success of public diplomacy has been country specific and developing a program has been carefully deliberated. For instance, in Bangladesh, citizens viewed U.S. affiliation in a positive light and the diplomats could raise religious freedom issue successfully without much hassle in general. But on the specific question of the country’s minority like the Ahmadiyya population and their orientation towards Islam which is a controversial topic it had a mixed response on the U.S. involvement (USCIRF 2009). Hence, the best public diplomacy initiatives has pursued context-specific objectives, which required political and social institutions to support that right.

Incorporation of religious freedom in English language classes aboard has become an important part of public diplomacy, materials for instruction included topics for discussion related to religion and religious issues (Kanona 2010). Embodying religious freedom into English-language training abroad helped in instituting international dialogue and discussion on religious topics among religious leaders and scholars. In Cairo, for instance, the Embassy of U.S. enrolled a program for English language learning in Al Azhar University (Nosair 2010), and took part in networking and workshops, with the international academic community. Such programs have been instrumental in altering misunderstood perceptions regarding Western view on Islam and equipped them with skills of English language and helped them read Islamic-studies while helping them articulate their views on religious freedom.

IRF has been critical to fight against violent extremism and restriction on religious freedom has been corelated with instability and violence. In places where religious freedom was advocated the community leaders have undermined extremist ideologies,

encouraged pluralism through theological arguments and empowered religious leaders to lead towards the path to development. Several youth programs at the local level aimed at bringing youths of different faiths for leadership and training programs. Various U.S. sponsored programs made efforts in this direction, the “Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center”, of 2008 was one such example. Another was the leadership program- “Building Bridges Through Leadership”, which organized community service projects. The “Interfaith Youth Core Fellows”, provided training to build interfaith discussions on college campuses (Danan 2012).

Implementing small public diplomacy programs in collaboration with NGOs has helped in long term impact. U.S. based “International Center for Religion and Diplomacy” (ICRD) has worked with thousands of Pakistani madrassas and faculty from hundreds of schools by providing teachers with training emphasizing on religious tolerance and humanitarian issues from their faith perspective. The program was unique which created a forum for the madrasa leaders to have healthy discussion with leaders of other sects on Islamic principles. The topics included such as human rights, democracy, and interfaith dialogue (ICRD 2015).

Enduring solutions to the problems of U.S. foreign policy required gaining trust from religious actors abroad and made them acknowledge about the benefits of religious liberty. In order to influence such actors, it was crucial for U.S. public diplomacy to show that U.S. aimed at securing stable and healthy state-state relations. The war of ideas allowed Public diplomacy to make the message of religious freedom resonate with the culture of countries for its success. In the past, lack of effective communication on part of U.S. diplomacy on events and incidents of religion in nature abroad have avoided in the better understanding of religious freedom by the people. A lack of appreciation on IRF in expanding the security and development hampers practical remedies coming from individuals, religious ideas and institutions. Public diplomacy thus has been critical in overcoming the assumption that U.S. promotion of religious freedom leads to cultural imperialism.

Faith Based Organisations:

The “Office of Faith Based Community Initiative” (FBCI) in USAID extended its faith based programs in foreign policy since 2003. Although, USAID was linked to

FBOs since 1961 it was instrumental in covering the new groups in native countries and included even smaller partners. Most of the USAID partners have been faith-based and through them U.S. has employed the ability to reach out to indigenous religious groups for assistance. In several developing countries the local religious groups has acted as a source for development through distribution of aid.

The White House “Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives” under Bush’s administration and then afterwards during the Obama era renamed as the “Office of Faith-Based and Neighbourhood Partnerships” were important steps to attain IRF aims. This office has helped in developing projects for humanitarian and developmental projects abroad. It has been tasked with the responsibility to develop foreign policy by working in close collaboration with religious actors and communities abroad in resolving several issues of poverty, climate change and helped in improving interreligious cooperation. Further in 2013 the DoS developed an initiative to engage with religious communities internationally called the Office of “Faith-Based Community Initiatives”, now called as “Religion and Global Affairs”.

Faith based actors has not only been instrumental in acknowledging the importance of religion in world politics but also an effective means to promote religious freedom in the U.S. foreign policy. Especially faith-based NGOs have the capability to propagate governmental policies compared to secular ones, due to the fact that they enhance a sense of moral authority in debates rather than just guided by political considerations (Johnston 2011). In addition, faith-based NGOs integrated religious beliefs in conflict resolutions fostering reconciliation unlike the secular ones.

Discourse on faith-based initiative was seen as a solution to various problems pertaining to religions all over the world, in this discourse, direct interventions from faith based approaches by religious NGOs for welfare and humanitarian problems has been regarded with positive perceptions compared to its counterparts. During President Bush and President Obama a significant shift was noticed towards FBOs from secular NGOs, signifying the effectiveness of FBOs in religious freedom issues.

The FBOs and USAID worked in close collaboration especially under the Obama administration. The “President Advisory Council” (PAC) gave recommendations on the “Global Poverty and Development” remit, advising for a “new era of collaborative

partnership between the US Government and community-based US NGOs”, (Marsden 2012). One of the key development was placing officials dealing with “faith and civil society engagement” in all USAID mission abroad. These officers collaborated with different agencies and embassies of various governments to build a close link with “religious leaders and faith based and secular non-profits, as well as engaging members of the Diaspora from each country living in the United States in development work impacting their country of origin” (Birdsall 2014).

For engaging faith communities abroad Melissa Rogers, director of the “White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships”, observed that “strategic engagement with religious leaders can help us to break cycles of violent conflict.” (Birdsall 2012). The Obama administration paid attention on the effects of engagement between U.S. government and religious actors. The interagency group on “Religion and Global Affairs”, cochaired by the “Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships” and the “White House National Security Staff”, analyzed the effectiveness of religious engagement through various departments like Embassies, USAID, Defense, Human Services, and Department of Health.

USAID

The “United States Agency for International Development” (USAID) is the main U.S. federal agency for foreign assistance. One of the major objective of USAID included promotion of Democracy through which it focuses on promotion and protection of religious freedom. Under this objective it provided assistance to religious minorities from persecution. Some of the important recent efforts to protect minorities included legal recognition of indigenous faith in Indonesia excluded in their Blasphemy law. In Georgia it gave support to clinics that helped minority community to overturn discrimination through litigation.

Prior to 2000’s only handful of “non-sectarian and non-proselytizing” FBOs were given federal funds to carry-out programs. Secular NGOs were major implementing partners. But from 2000s the U.S. government started to rely more on FBOs including religious and proselytizing ones for development aid globally. After 9/11 the U.S. Presidents have given special focus on religious communities abroad, and repeatedly singled out particular religion in need of attention. The U.S. came into confrontation

with religiously defined groups in the Middle East vital to its security interests. American decision-makers and foreign policy officials thoroughly emphasized to engage with religious actors both at home and abroad. This led to establishing new offices, positions. Commissions within the U.S. foreign policy establishments and aimed at developing and directing aid, diplomacy, and national security policies with “inherently religious” character.

Programs launched by USAID aimed at inherently promoting religious pluralism and avoid religious conflicts. In early 2000s USAID launched Fostering Religious Harmony in Albania (RelHarmony) to lessen religious violence and extremism in Southeastern Europe. The project focused on four Albanian religious communities, Catholic Christians, Orthodox Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shi’a Bektashi. According to the project’s Final Report (USAID 2009) RelHarmony reached “over 250 religious leaders and over 1,200 believers” as well as “thousands more Albanians through national broadcast of roundtables and documentary films that addressed religious issues.” Like other U.S. foreign religious engagement efforts, RelHarmony sought to strengthen local religious authorities and institutions that shared American concerns about the rise of “foreign extremism” in Southeastern Europe, to transform Albanian religions and religious subjects into what the Americans considered to be freer versions of themselves, and to establish modes of state religious governance that would support these objectives through legal reform, interreligious dialogue, and educational programming.

In 2003 USAID funded KEDEM- Voices for Religious Reconciliation, it integrated various religious communities leaders to learn to work together. In Kyrgyzstan USAID introduced The Legal Education (or “Street Law”) Program offering classes in madrasas on topics of democratic practices and religious freedom. It aimed at teaching the legal rights and fostered integration of religious communities in the society to prevent marginalization. In Indonesia the Asia Foundation’s Islam and Civil Society program encouraged Indonesian Muslim leaders and organizations to learn about secular values based on values of freedom, religious tolerance, and pluralism.

USAID’s Inter-Religious Action for Tolerance and Co-Existence in the Balkans, launched in 2004, also aimed to “make religion part of the solution.” Among other

activities, it supported the Inter-religious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina to “lead the way to peaceful change and religious tolerance” by establishing a web of interreligious leaders to enable reconciliation, peace, avoid conflict and strengthen women's rights, and youth. Recently USAID’s Office of “Faith Based and Community Initiatives” supported the “International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development” (PaRD), established in 2016 at the “Berlin conference Partners for Change – Religions and the 2030 Agenda.” This partnership was crucial in bringing members from all across the world to work and employ the positive aspects of religion in humanitarian and development work. Any institution could be part of PaRD including both government and IGOs. The partners of this initiative included religious organizations, secular groups, academic institution, etc.

However, despite such encouraging initiatives undertaken by the U.S. government it fell short to include some religious groups for aid. Especially Islamic organizations were left out during the Bush administration even though U.S. was heavily involved in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. This shortfall continued in the Obama era, with few Muslim organizations received fund from USAID programs. Only small groups got funds while the bigger groups such as Islamic Relief USA, Islamic Relief Worldwide got no attention (Marsden 2012).

Promotion of Democracy and Religious Freedom

In order to have a stable democracy, inclusion of religious freedom is critical. As suggested by various research on the subject by Brian Finke at the “Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life” and Roger Finke who argues that democracy cannot be successful with this right. This held true for several countries especially in religious societies. For a democracy to function at its best the citizens should enjoy bunch of basic fundamental rights and such freedoms need religious freedom to work. Lack of religious freedom right has led to highly vulnerable societies with intense religious conflict, extremism and persecution. Embracing democracy has led to elimination of radicalization of youths, for which religious freedom has come in very handy in attaining such goals.

In the past the U.S. has made mistakes of not including religious freedom for promotion of liberal democracy, which was necessary for ensuring the survival of

democracy. Hence, several aspects related to U.S. diplomacy, democracy funding and aid have overlooked the evidence of religious freedom for the sustainability of a democracy. This had led to inadequate development of socio, religion, legal and political institutions needed for religious freedom. Such problems have defeated democracy programs in Afghanistan, Iraq, China, Iran, Pakistan, etc.

For democratic consolidation embracing religious freedom has been difficult in many cultures. Some majority religious communities view religious freedom pursued by the U.S. in a negative light and harmful on religions barring Christianity. For such issues public diplomacy has played an important role by initiating educating programs. The problem in some communities has pertained to national monopoly on religion and ensured this by passing laws to keep the opposing groups at disadvantage and helping their own adherents. Such policies didn't match with stable democracy and has often lead to destructive situation. Laws like anti-apostasy, blasphemy, conversion, and defamation laws are proved to be harmful for strong democracies.

Democratic program is crucial in helping religious groups to make themselves as part of a broader civil society, involvement of not just religious groups but civil society, both secular and religious has been significant to advance religious freedom. Several agencies through which grants were channelized like the "U.S. Agency for International Development" (USAID), the "DoS", the "NED", the "National Democratic Institute", the "International Republican Institute"—allocated importance of IRF for democracy programs. Religious freedom helped democracy to flourish by focusing on the most contentious issues of religion and groups who are marginalized. The activities through religious freedom were usually associated with other liberties like freedom of speech, association, elections. It helped religious organizations to engage in democratic debate and in political debates for lobbying, and took part in elections. It has promoted civil society through universities, hospitals, orphanages and other sectors that puts a check upon state power. It also promoted ideational cultural influences that helped in limiting the authoritarian impulses of government and resisted totalitarian inclinations.

Allowing religious communities to exist freely can oppose authoritarian regimes by allowing such communities to enjoy basic rights. Democracies are better at securing human rights of people in a country than authoritarian regimes. Because in

democracy, due to the system of checks and balance abuse of authority and power is less than totalitarian and authoritarian systems (Sikkink 2017). “In functioning democracies, people can oppose undesirable government behaviors by voting them out of office” (Hafner-Burton 2013). Moreover, it helps in organizing space for civic engagement for religious groups. There has been a low level of human rights suppression in a democracy as shown by quantitative data (Keith 1999). Several studies showed lack of religious freedom protections was linked to authoritarian rule.

Countries with harsh authoritarian system has been linked to greater religious freedom violations (Bielefeldt 2016). Insofar as authoritarian and non-democratic regimes lacked popular support, they made use of control and suppression to create order and ensure power. As such, authoritarian regimes were most of the time characterized by “hostility toward dissent, pluralism, independent media, and active civil society” (USCIRF 2018). Under authoritarian regimes religious groups have opposed those regimes which can be important in democratization process (Philphot 2014). Examples include “Catholic Church in Poland, Chile, the Philippines, Malawi, and South Africa” to the dissident pastors in the “German Protestant Church to the Nadhlatul Ulama and Mohammediya parties in Indonesia”. The transition was enabled through protests and negotiations with leaders that helped end civil war that yielded move towards democracy.

Counter-terrorism

For U.S. since 9/11 most important security threat involving religion emanated from global terrorist group led by al-Qaeda. The first hand response by the U.S. government included hard-power approaches leading to military and intelligence measures. Its broader response dealt with counterinsurgency, democracy and nation-building. But the U.S. over-emphasized the hard power approaches and military measures to eliminate terrorists. These U.S. efforts met with initial success. The elimination of al-Qaeda from Iraq was a success for the U.S. government and several countries like Saudi Arabia cooperated with the U.S. on intelligence to root out al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, extremism remained a major problem in the world and the threat has not completely eliminated and other similar groups like Taliban Lashkar-e-Taiba, or Hezbollah have created constant security problems.

The U.S. government believed in installing democracy as the best means of “draining the swamps” of extremist groups. As such spread of democracy was important for having a better economic, social, religious conditions to avoid mushrooming of extremist movements. However, the promotion of democracy has not been successful so far, which was revealed by cases in Iraq and Afghanistan. These countries showed their desire for freedom, including freedom from religious violence. But it could not develop democratic institutions needed to eliminate extremism. In states like Pakistan with its checkered history of “procedural democracy”, threat from terrorist groups continued due to their successful appeal to distorted forms of religious beliefs.

The U.S. democracy promotion could not succeed for a number of reasons, like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that tore the social fabric of these countries. Other reasons included Israeli-Palestinian crisis, power of external countries like Khomeini’s Iran and theocratic governments such as Saudi Arabia, role of non-state actors like Hamas and Hezbollah, inability of the leaders in key countries to accept Islamic version of democracy. However, the U.S. has not lived up to the expectations of helping democratic movements in the world, especially after 2006, U.S. started to retreat from the commitment of democracy promotion. Also, the integration of religious freedom in counter-terrorism and democracy programs was inadequate. American security and diplomatic agencies could not engage religious leaders and communities in a systematic manner. Although the U.S. had acknowledged the importance of such policies it could not fully deliver mainly due to the lack of education or awareness crucial for the success of establishing democratic governments.

There was lack of initiative in installing knowledge on the idea of Islamic democracy and the ensuing relation between the religion and state. The U.S. also allowed such countries to perceive the IRF policy in a misunderstood way of undermining their religious traditions, and helped missionaries to further their interest of proselytism and preaching. The U.S. foreign policy left out the religious freedom dynamics in the counter-terrorism strategies.

New terrorists emerged due to varieties of reasons such as sense of victimhood, anger, lack of employment, and several authoritarian regimes are known to have marginalized religious communities leading to radicalization of religious groups in

such countries. Similarly, in most several theocratic regimes, extremist ideas gained momentum such as Shiism of Khomeni in Iran, Taliban, and Saudi Wahabism. Those countries avoided incorporation of religious freedom to secure rights of the religious communities. Not surprisingly, each of these countries were linked with the export of terrorism. While some struggling democracies of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan aimed at propagating religious freedom under the supervision of U.S., but political and religious groups held a strong control for advancing religious freedom. Religious Freedom is crucial for the success of U.S. counter-terrorism policies because terrorist groups and movements thrive on the appeal of ideas. As even effective military and law enforcement strategies has failed to defeat the ideas that attract recruits after the death of leaders or removal of terrorist cadres.

Conclusion

In some of the instances U.S. could not fully implement religious freedom policy mandated by the IRFA due to the perception from its critics who labelled it as a form of imperialism. The concept of religious freedom was seen as a western concept meant to undermine non-western world religions, and due to its secular character, it faced problem in applicability. Due to the abrupt revamp of programs related to religious freedom promotion especially after the 9/11 incident, lack of previous knowledge on the topic defeated conceptualizing and coherent approach for outreach to governments, civil society and religious communities. The promotion of religious freedom under three presidents depended on the situations abroad and personal involvement of each of them. During President Clinton large number of religiously related conflicts and violence in Bosnia, former Yugoslavia, Sudan, China led to passing of the IRFA. In the Bush's era his term saw enhanced engagement with religious groups in the Middle East due to the 9/11 attacks. During Obama presidency he wanted to create new beginnings with the religious communities abroad by focusing on developmental and welfare projects. Both Bush and Obama encouraged faith-based initiatives to lessen security threats concerning religion in the Middle East.

To develop knowledge on religions and religious knowledge of the officials, the OIRF developed programs focusing on topics such as theology of different religious groups.

Such training has provided necessary knowledge for effectively implementing religious freedom agendas in the U.S. foreign policy. Lack of interest and knowledge of foreign officials and at State Department on topics related to religion was seen as a major impediment for success of religious engagement with the religious communities. The efforts of OIRF has been to overcome such hurdles. The OIRF has multifaceted roles, due to its mandate to recommend policies for individual countries and work with various agencies of foreign governments in fulfilling the implementation part. It recommended policies not just on religious freedom but on economic wellbeing, political empowerment and security of religious minorities. This has led to building of dialogue with religious communities which was not possible before the policy of international religious freedom.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Introduction

The policy of religious freedom studied in the preceding chapters is very significant in learning about the efforts of the US government in dealing with the topic of religious freedom in the world. It provided insights about various issues inter-linked with the policy of religious freedom and highlighted complexities surrounding it. This study has focused on historical and ideational elements of the topic and elaborated on it with several examples. It has analyzed the concept of religious freedom when it was first instituted in the U.S. Bill of Rights and traced its evolution in the foreign policy narrative. Since 1990s the renewed emphasis on the policy of religious freedom has enabled the U.S. to effectively engage with religious communities abroad and address problems such as persecution, discrimination and intolerance based on religious lines. The U.S. diplomats and officials in the U.S. became increasingly concerned about the issues of religious minorities which made them actively promote international religious freedom. The U.S. government began including religious variables in the U.S. foreign policy agenda as a key to resolve bigger issues that were inherently attached to national security. The overt secular ideas were toned down in the foreign policy narrative by inclusion of policies on religious issues in the foreign policy of the country; which has been termed as ‘desecularisation’.

The increasing focus on religious freedom abroad was due to several factors, as mentioned in chapter 4 that several external events globally were responsible for bringing about such a change in the attitude of the U.S. government. Those events were sometimes directly related to religion, such as religious persecution of minorities and sometimes it was indirect through phenomena like globalization that helped strengthen close interactions among religious communities across borders. The U.S. government increasingly took note of activities of NGOs working under the nomenclature of humanitarian works and also got involved in a number of faith-

based initiatives by providing foreign assistance. During the past two decades various organizations like think-tanks, research institutes and universities to an extent influenced policy-making process in Washington and conducted studies and research on international religious bodies and their activities. These were reflected even in studies related to terrorism, poverty, democracy and conflict resolutions.

The policy of religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy was guided not just by external factors but domestic factors were significant too in pushing for international religious freedom policy. The combination of ideational factors, such as Christian worldviews of Presidents coupled with lobbying of humanitarian agencies, was necessary for addressing religious issues with greater interest abroad. The following section discusses the outcome of the study. It analyses the several policies concerned with religious freedom and has tried to answer the questions posed in the research questions.

Analysis of IRF Policy

The U.S. government's policy of promotion of religious freedom has been a part of democratic liberal conception of freedoms and it aimed to establish this fundamental right in the rest of the world. The success of this policy has been mixed so far in the past two decades. But overall, the promotion of religious freedom has been to strengthen religious rights of people and free from any discrimination and violence related to religion. Religious terrorism and terrorist attacks from groups like al-Qaeda in the U.S. and elsewhere was one significant reason for the pursuit of this policy. U.S. support for religious freedom protection of minorities against terrorist groups in fragile societies has been helpful in counter-terrorism efforts too by building trust among the population and increasing their confidence in sharing intelligence. Below are the research questions that this study has tried to highlight:

- How is U.S. different than other civilizations and does religious and cultural factors condition the worldview of the U.S. foreign policy makers?
- Why does the U.S. government perceive Islam as a threat to the western interests?

- How have U.S. foreign policy practitioners interpreted Theocratic governments?
- What is the approach of U.S. to religious groups in other countries and internationally?
- What are the reasons for not considering the significance of religion by the U.S. government in the past?
- What institutions and initiatives have been developed to engage with various religious state and non- state actors?
- Is there any consensus between the foreign policy makers on the idea of promoting religious freedom?
- What are the obstacles in pursuing promotion of religious pluralism abroad?

These research questions were important in pointing some important aspects of U.S. foreign policy pertaining to religious freedom policy. The civilizational difference is mainly based on cultural differences between the U.S. and other civilizations. The U.S. is part of the Western civilization and has inherent Judeo-Christian culture. This has influenced the thinking and worldviews of the U.S. Presidents and policymakers to a great extent. Several Presidents and prominent leaders were guided by Christian worldviews to arrive at a foreign policy decision. Such worldviews were rooted in the symbolism of culture and it deeply affected modes of thought and discourse. Conservative Protestant ethics of the U.S. Presidents in particular influenced the foreign policy especially while dealing with communism during the Cold War era. The humanitarian policies were backed by moral lens due to the Christian worldviews of public intellectuals and leaders. President like Jimmy Carter subscribed to religious principles and values in conducting foreign policy and followed religious morals and duty. There were other intellectuals like Niebuhr and John Foster Dulles who shaped the U.S. foreign policy, and were at the same time big supporters of Christian ethics.

The U.S. government has perceived Islam in different ways, sometimes there was a lack of focus on the religious dynamics such as in the Iranian revolution and sometimes there was overt focus such as religious terrorism. Especially in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks the U.S. government became aware of the impact of religious extremist groups in the U.S. and in the wider world. Since then, the issue of religious extremism has been deeply interlinked with the issue of national security. The role of

Islam in the politics of the Middle East and places like Afghanistan and Pakistan has been considered crucial for the American interests. Any form of instability in these places often tends to have spillover effect in the entire region. Through this perspective, Islam has been considered as a threat to the western interest. President Bush and his strategy to curb terrorism made way for further promotion of democracy in Iraq, and Afghanistan. His strategy of ‘war on terror’ however proved unsuccessful to curb terrorism and instead decimated the Iraqi society. This led to a negative perception about the U.S. foreign policy in Iraq. During President Obama’s era, one major challenge was to rebuild relations with the world’s Muslim populations. He aimed at building relationship with the population of Islamic countries to facilitate stability and security. This led to building a foundation for addressing shared challenges such as the protection of human rights, economic development, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hence, during his administration there was an increase in engagement with Islamic communities. Links were developed with religious leaders to build narratives against extremist ideologies and to put pressure on the terrorist groups by unravelling their erroneous interpretation of their religious doctrine. Strategies were used for altering the behaviors of non-state actors by facilitating high-level dialogues and public diplomacy. Various actors like NGOs, Christian groups, human rights organization, religious leaders and civil society worked in partnership with local communities to influence the non-state actors and change their behaviors.

The U.S. government dealt with religious groups directly through diplomacy and indirectly through agency like the USAID. The religious groups were given attention in several countries where situation of conflicts, violence, discrimination and persecution existed. Several minority religious groups were given attention by facilitating dialogue with their host governments concerning religious freedom issues. The foreign diplomats and officials in the embassies took up systemic problems of discrimination against members of certain religious groups, laws that hampered religious liberties, or direct government interference with church affairs. U.S. Ambassadors and other officials have encouraged governments to state publicly their opposition to acts of violence or discrimination against religious groups. It raised with specific cases of persecution of individuals for the peaceful practice of their religion with the host governments. The OIRF has helped in recommending policies not just on religious freedom but on economic wellbeing, political empowerment and security

of religious minorities. For instance, in Iraq OIRF has coordinated with the Department of Defense, the National Security Council and intelligence agencies to curtail violence and persecution of minority groups. It has provided with direct grants to the religious communities for development of the region. In some cases, the Office of IRF also helped the minority caucus for putting up legislation to secure the rights in the host countries. For instance, in Turkey Jewish and Alevi leaders were brought together to jointly lobby the Turkish government to change discriminatory regulation, policies and behavior towards the religious minorities.

The Theocratic governments generally do not guarantee religious freedom and are very high on the levels of human rights abuses. The U.S. has mixed relation with theocratic states as such and not necessarily that of hostile ones. In case of Iran the ties between the U.S. and Iran have been at low and U.S. frequently complain about the persecution and discrimination of minorities. While in countries like Saudi Arabia, U.S. has a good relation with the country but the religious freedom conditions remain poor. In such a case U.S. at the most has raised concerns about the condition of minorities, but despite mass persecution U.S. has not taken any action against the Saudi government.

The global engagement with religious groups has increased over the years, and simultaneously institutions has been created focusing on the needs of religious groups abroad. The OIRF under the Department of State and USCIRF has been important in dealing with religious groups abroad. The scheme of White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative was extended to USAID. It worked with different FBOs since its inception and the expansion of the programme internationally enabled to reach out to new religious groups in indigenous to native countries. Key perpetrators of religious persecution and violators of religious freedom included states and a host of non-state actors such as terrorists groups, religious leaders, political parties, local communities, militant groups, businesses. In order to give equal focus to other religions in 2009, President Obama announced faith-based and neighborhood partnership programme, and extended to USAID by assisting developing work to religious communities and not using it for any preaching or proselytism work. Obama wanted inclusion of all religious communities and not just Christian groups. Apart

from this through various programs initiated by the public diplomacy the religious actors have been actively engaged.

The consensus on the promotion of religious freedom policy has been widely accepted by the policymakers as a possible solution to curb religious extremism in the world. The NSS document has mentioned religious freedom promotion in both Bush and Obama Presidency which indicated the importance given to this policy. The roots of this policy permeated in the foreign policy establishment since the Clinton era and strengthened afterwards. The Secretary of state like Madeline Albright and John Kerry were strong supporters of IRF policy. The training program by the FSI for foreign diplomats and ambassadors on the topic of religion and religious freedom has made this policy quite known amongst the foreign policy apparatus. Further, this policy was extended to the military arm also, such as the engagement of military chaplains with the religious leaders in the stationed countries which has added to the success of the IRF policy.

Despite some success of religious freedom policy there are obstacles that hinder the implementation of this policy. Even with all this conceptual, practical, and bureaucratic progress, promoting religious freedom is of course still an uphill battle. The policy of religious freedom is often marginalized and sidelined as cultural or human rights issue. In 2011, the office had a \$10 million budget to fund about fifteen NGOs working with local partners to run programs promoting religious freedom. This budget was minimal compared to budget allocated to other department such as the National defense strategy. Both the Clinton and Bush administration did not place IRF sufficiently as a high priority. The misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan identified Bush policies as intervening militarily in Muslim majority countries. While the USCIRF continued to highlight religious freedom abuses around the world, and officials within the OIRF worked diligently to try and raise the profile of IRF, it was not until the Obama administration that IRF began to gain momentum as a U.S. foreign policy instrument. Obama engaged in more interfaith dialogue, in comparison to Bush military interventions.

Internationally, some countries have been difficult to deal with regards to religious freedom policy. Such as the former communist regimes of Russia, countries in Central Asia and contemporary communist states like China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba.

The constitutions of Iraq and Afghanistan failed to ensure religious freedom despite the help from the U.S. The efforts of the U.S. to build a democracy in these countries lacked inclusion of religious rights necessary to protect religious freedom in these places. The constitutions in Iraq and Afghanistan although claimed to be democracies included repugnancy law that prohibited opposition of Islam in any form (Article 2 in Iraqi constitution and Article 3 in Afghani constitution). In countries like Pakistan, the plight of religious minorities was not often raised with the Pakistani government. The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act, of 2009 provided basis for the protection of religious minorities, but this issue hardly got focus even during official visits. This differed from the diplomatic visits to Egypt, where the plight of religious minorities was raised in the country (Gheit 2009). This difference in addressing the same issue in different manner reveals that the IRF policy is not applied equally to all the countries.

The study had two hypotheses that summed up the outcome of pursuing IRF in the U.S. foreign policy:

- Promoting religious freedom is a tool of U.S. interventionism.
- Promotion of religious freedom has not helped reduce extremism in various parts of the world.

The above-mentioned hypotheses have been proved false after a careful analysis by the study. On the question of intervention and use of IRFA as a foreign policy instrument of the U.S. may seem obvious especially after the ‘war on terror’ strategy. It may also be plausible on part of the U.S. government to make use of U.S. power to advance its national interest by imposing sanctions under IRFA to control countries to deal with religion. But this view cannot be fully proved because sanctions were rarely used against any country solely on the basis of violation of religious freedom. Further, in both the Obama and Trump administrations there has been a reluctance to use sanctions to punish IRF violators, unless there were other strategic interests at stake. President Clinton objected the Wolf-Spectre bill mainly on its provision of compulsory imposing of sanctions against the violators, because such provision would have created hurdles in the strategic bi-lateral relations.

The projects of IRF have included interfaith efforts, as well as training for lawyers, media and government officials. Engagement on religious freedom has also become

increasingly mainstreamed through the Office of Policy Planning, by working together with the National Security Council. In recent years, the State Department, supported by other government agencies, has moved toward proactive strategies to prevent violations of religious freedom, funding programs that engage institutions and societies in its protection. In February 2010, the Interagency Working Group on Religion & Global Affairs brought together federal agencies to enhance religious engagement and establish a Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group. Training and knowledge on religious issues and theology was developed for diplomats and officials. Advancing religious freedom has been challenging for the U.S. foreign policy establishment, especially due to instances where it got labelled for imperialism or supporting proselytism for Christian missionaries. Within foreign policy bureaucracies and circles, the dynamics of religious issues and awareness on the topic has incrementally increased over the years.

The OIRF has worked with other State Department offices, the White House and U.S. Embassies, in organizing inter-faith conferences, in the belief that dialogue and diplomacy could advance the cause of religious freedom more than the blunt instrument of sanctions. IRF is a long-term project, which, over the past two decades, has brought a few tangible gains. Numerous prisoners of conscience have been released through a combination of U.S. pressure and diplomacy. The U.S. led the way in ensuring that the world can no longer ignore the realities of religious intolerance. Promoting IRF has not only been concerned with eliminating persecution and other forms of violence but it has wider significance for political, social and economic freedoms. Some of the high scoring countries on economic freedom has high scores on religious freedoms too. Similarly, states with notorious restrictions on religious freedom showed poor economic performance. This correlation reflected more than a general link between freedoms, because religious freedom scores can measure dimensions beyond civil liberties. Beyond such intervention with foreign governments for religious freedom issues, the U.S. foreign policy aimed at strengthening the democratic institutions in societies all around the world and create a framework for greater tolerance. Hence, it can be concluded that religious freedom policy is a form of non-military intervention, that aims at eliminating violations of rights against minorities and reduce persecution. But not a pure form of intervention in its true sense.

The second hypothesis is not supported by the study due to reasons such as the lessening of terrorism related violence in the recent years. The Global terrorism Index (GTI) in 2019 reported drop in terrorism globally since 2014. Overall, there has been lessening of religious extremism related attacks and deaths and the impact of terrorism has reduced significantly. Compared to 2014 religious' extremism in several countries has gone down due to the increased awareness on the issue of religious extremism in general. The U.S. government has focused widely on this issue in particular after the 9/11 terror attacks. But it was realised that the overt use of military aspects to curb religious extremism was not a proper tool, instead promotion of religious freedom was seen to be more resilient to win the war of ideas such as the terrorist ideologies. More than 100 countries recorded improvements on their GTI score and there has been fall in the impact of terrorism in countries like Afghanistan and Nigeria in the past few years. Taliban and Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) has continued to attack the minority Shia's community. However, the Afghan government made efforts to reduce inequalities faced by religious minority groups by giving them key positions in government and industry. In part due to these efforts, there has been a decline in terrorist attacks against Shi'a during religious festivals. This is due to the fact that U.S. was heavily invested in Afghanistan since 2001 through several counter-terrorism, economic, and humanitarian assistance programs. The involvement of the U.S. in Afghanistan and promotion of religious freedom policy through public diplomacy and USAID programs has helped in reducing extremism to some extent. Hence, the policy of religious freedom has helped in reducing extremism in some countries.

The IRF policy has direct impact on religious extremism by cutting out the factors that emboldened extremist groups. This policy aimed at removing blasphemy laws that perpetuates the coercion of non-official religious groups. Such laws have a negative impact on the civil society by undermining moderates and gives legitimacy to discriminate and essentially legalise persecution against minorities groups. Terrorist groups often invoke such laws to obtain legitimacy to attack those who threaten their ideology. Hence, such laws have been detrimental in a country with the potential to worsen religious-related persecutions. In Sudan due to the IRF policy for instance several laws relating to death penalty for apostasy were abolished. Sudan was also removed from the terrorist watch list and it hosted its first international religious

freedom roundtable- a global movement to promote dialogue between religious groups to remove persecution and intolerance. IRF has also led to change in Sudan's constitution by including freedom of belief and worship. Very often extremist groups are intolerant of minorities and carry out persecution against religious groups. This scenario was stark in Iraq when ISIS was active in Iraq where religious minorities were systematically persecuted by the group members. One of the main objectives of IRF has been to curtail persecution of the religious groups either by state or non-state actors, hence, it is helpful in truncating religious extremism by protecting the religious minorities.

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