

APPENDIX E: TRAINING AT THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE RELATED TO THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

I. Summary

Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA), the Department of State is tasked with training Foreign Service Officers in human rights broadly and religious freedom specifically. The Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) works closely with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) to do so. Training in human rights and religious freedom begins when an officer enters the Foreign Service and continues through various levels and career stages, including training for principal officers, deputy chiefs of mission, and ambassadors.

FSI and DRL continued to offer Promoting Human Rights and Democracy, presented three times a year. This course features specific modules dealing with aspects of religious freedom. FSI and DRL also continued to offer a Religion and Foreign Policy course twice a year. Throughout the year DRL and FSI co-hosted a series of Religion and Foreign Policy seminars, including sessions on "Women Religious Leaders and Conflict Prevention," "Interfaith Dialogue, Religious Freedom, and Combatting Violent Extremism," and "QDDR (Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review), Civil Society, and International Religious Freedom." In the course of FSI language study, class discussions and reading materials regularly addressed religious freedom.

II. Courses Offered

A. Courses on Human Rights and Religious Freedom

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Offered since October 2010, this course provides a broad overview of human rights-related issues and a deeper examination of key current issues. FSI offers this course three times a year to provide entry- and mid-level officers and locally employed overseas staff tools and best practices for promoting human rights and democracy, including religious freedom, in the field. FSI and DRL jointly developed the curriculum, which includes a session specifically devoted to religious freedom, along with other sessions that address issues relevant to religious freedom including human rights law, working with nongovernmental

organizations, monitoring and reporting human rights abuses, combating anti-Semitism, and outreach to Muslim communities.

RELIGION AND FOREIGN POLICY

First offered in 2011, the course content continues to be a collaborative effort among FSI, DRL, and the newly established Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives. It exposes U.S. officials to common themes in engaging religious and faith-based communities in the field to advance U.S. policy objectives, while giving them the opportunity to practice the tradecraft skills necessary to build productive relationships. The course also trains U.S. officials in embassies and consulates overseas to use the annual International Religious Freedom Report and other tools to enhance their ongoing interactions with members of religious communities and teaches best practices for incorporating religious community outreach into broader mission objectives. Topics include tools for interfaith outreach, the relationship between religion and foreign policy, the promotion of religious freedom, religion and national security, engaging religious actors at post, addressing anti-Semitism and promoting tolerance, and outreach to the Muslim community.

B. Additional Training on Human Rights and Religious Freedom at FSI

DRL works closely with FSI to integrate material on human rights and religious freedom into training at all levels. Officers receive training from when they enter the Foreign Service and when they prepare for their first consular, political, economic, or public diplomacy tours, through when they train to become deputy chiefs of mission, principal officers, or ambassadors. Annual FSI training courses for locally employed staff serving in political and combined political/economic sections overseas also include modules on human rights and religious freedom. DRL and FSI cooperate closely to incorporate information about human rights and religious freedom into the geographical area studies courses. DRL officers participate in presenting topics such as international human rights law, including the right to freedom of religion; theological beliefs of different religious groups; state actions against members of religious groups and violations and abuses of religious freedom; involvement of members of religious groups in politics; diplomatic tools used by the United States to promote respect for religious freedom; means of protection of those who have fled religious persecution; and the relationships among religious freedom, democracy, and national security. FSI also offers specific courses for those who work or will work with Muslim communities.

These courses include Islam: Formation, Institutions, Modernity and Reform and Iraq: Society, Religion and Politics. The Iraq course also discusses the Iraqi Jewish community and the role of various Christian communities. The Islam course addresses interreligious dialogue.

FSI and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation annually sponsor a major symposium focused on religious freedom and the role of U.S. diplomats overseas in promoting religious freedom. Students from throughout the institute participate in this symposium. The symposium brings together leading experts on religious freedom and related issues and foreign affairs practitioners. Together they provide practical advice to diplomats on addressing religious freedom issues. In 2013, the keynote speaker was the deputy national security advisor for strategic communications. Five U.S. ambassadors were on the ambassadorial panel. Members of the Presbyterian, Greek Orthodox, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Buddhist religious groups were on the interfaith panel.

III. Background Material on Religious Freedom Provided to Students at FSI

DRL continually updates information on the [humanrights.gov](http://www.humanrights.gov) web site and material distributed at FSI courses. It also has revamped or created intranet sites containing background materials on religious freedom or highlighting best practices for protecting and promoting religious freedom. The following background materials related to religious freedom are made available to FSI students:

- www.humanrights.gov, also available to the public, includes:
 - Annual Reports on International Religious Freedom from 1999 through the present;
 - Department statements on religious freedom, specific to various countries;
 - Policy statements of the Secretary and other U.S. government officials on religious freedom.

- The DRL SharePoint site and DRL's intranet site, which are available only to State Department and embassy officers, provide background on human rights and religious freedom issues, including country-specific information on religious freedom issues, information on the designation of Countries of Particular Concern, and general information on the Office for International Religious Freedom.

- Diplopedia, an intranet wiki, contains an on-line compendium of posts' engagement with religious entities as a source for best practices in promoting religious freedom.
- Highlights from Key International Documents: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 18); and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (articles 18, 26, & 27).