

Prompt

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Margarita Pochtovaya Catherine Shelton ENC 1101 January 19, Spirituality in the Midst of Political Governance From the article written by Madeleine Albright entitled “ Faith and Diplomacy” and published in The Review of Faith & International Affairs in 2006, the author proffered pertinent issues concerning the role that religion plays in foreign politics and governance. Albright contended that American diplomats should be able to recognize the contribution of religious beliefs, values, and traditions in igniting increased conflicts or in assisting towards immediate resolution. The author narrated three significant stories that proved how religion and faith influenced significant transformations in ways of life and in validating that this unifying force confirms universality of responsibility with one another. In the United States, a country known to have espoused diversity in culture, one is led to reflect on the arguments presented by Albright in terms of signifying the relevance of religion and faith in resolving political conflicts. More interesting, there seems to be great possibilities that the religious affiliations of members of the United States congress influence the kind of decisions in terms of design of policies and enforcing implementation. In this regard, one strongly believes that religion plays a crucial factor in influencing diplomatic policies and in facilitating resolution of political conflicts within the local and international sphere.

When government leaders have signified and acknowledged affiliations to religious groups, as verified and attested within the chambers of the 111th congress, decisions regarding foreign policies, resolution of conflicts, and guiding principles towards governance are most likely to be defined and influenced by the religious teachings and traditions that are imbibed. For

example, as cited by Albright, during her 1981 visit in Poland, significant changes were observed regarding the form of government until such time that Pope John Paul's visit influenced the people to boldly profess their Catholic faith and openly express their intent to be liberated from the bonds of communism. Despite the government's declaration that Pope John Paul was to be regarded an enemy of the state due to the convictions and threats posed by his teachings, the firm belief and adherence to faith exemplified by the greater majority, remarkably led to the liberate Poland, " brought down the Berlin Wall, reunited Europe, and transformed the face of the world" (Albright 4). This fact proves that religion played an instrumental factor in resolving conflicts, regaining human rights, and attaining universal peace. Another example that proved religion prevailing over political structure was the fact that in a country where religion forms a crucial part of their cultural heritage, the deep adherence to religious teachings, traditions, and practices seem to dominate political forces. The universality of religion prevails as manifested from the teachings of ethics of reciprocity, the Golden Rule and the responsibility towards neighbors. As averred by Albright (6), " we share a kinship with one another, however distant it may sometimes seem; we are all created in the image of God. This in turn places upon us a responsibility to our neighbors. That principle provides both a solid foundation for religion and a respectable basis for organizing the affairs of secular society". Therefore, political leaders who are firm practitioners of religious affiliations embody these ideals and form the basis of their design of policies and regulations that conform and adhere to religious teachings and beliefs. Should any government leader counter majority of the

populations' beliefs, it would be justifiably understandable that there would be potential conflicts in enforcing policies which are contrary to the faith of the nation.

The arguments of Albright have made one realize that religion plays a significant and crucial role in bridging the gap between affairs of the state and of the church. Her noted example from the experience of then president Jimmy Carter emphasized the fact that “ it is not possible to separate what people feel and believe in the spiritual realm from what they will do as a matter of public policy. “ This is an opportunity,” he argued, “ because the basic elements of the major religious faiths are so similar— humility, justice, and peace” (Albright 9). I agree to President Carter’s convictions since the values and ideals being promoted by religion, despite their diversities and similarities, are respect for human rights and the right to live peacefully in the same world all mankind share. If the same ideas are promoted by the church and by the state, then, uniformity in goals and strategies prevail. From Albright’s discourse, one’s understanding and realization that religion plays a crucial factor in influencing diplomatic policies and in facilitating resolution of political conflicts within the local and international sphere is intensified. As noted, “ faith-based diplomacy can be a useful tool of foreign policy” (Albright 9). Therefore, for one government to conveniently propose diplomatic policies over another, the understanding and conformity to religious ideals must be taken into consideration and integrated within the suggested recommendations. By integrating religious teachings, the design of regulations and policies to strengthen diplomatic ties would indeed prove to be serving the same identified values of justice, equality and peace. This

was confirmed in Albright's interview of Bill Clinton who averred that through sharing common religious beliefs, "once they acknowledge their common humanity, it becomes harder to kill each other; then compromise becomes easier because they've admitted that they are dealing with people like themselves" (Albright 9), who fall under the jurisdiction and guidance of a supreme being. It would be inconceivable to impose one nation's religious beliefs over another and expect that an agreement or understanding could be forged.

Overall, Albright's article was enlightening and provoked the readers' ability to realize the importance of religion in the political arena. Religion is a transformational force that could be tapped by policymakers into incorporating theological doctrines within diplomatic regulations and domain. Indeed, as aptly concluded by Albright, "religion at its best can reinforce the core values necessary for people from different cultures to live in some degree of harmony; we should make the most of that possibility" (9). That possibility could in fact become a reality when all governments would recognize the crucial role that religion plays in resolving conflicts foreign affairs.

Works Cited

Albright, Madeleine. "Faith and Diplomacy." Selection from an Anthropology.
Barclay Barrios. "Emerging. Contemporary Reading for Writers". pp. 23-31.