

Prompt. bridging the gap

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Margarita Pochtovaya Catherine Shelton ENC 1101 January 18, Bridging the Gap: Faith and Diplomacy 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, a quick research on the predominant religion in the country revealed that Christianity still prevails with 78. 4% of the respondents acknowledging their religious affiliations (The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life). More interesting, the religious affiliations of members of the United States congress have been disclosed that more than half are Protestants with the rest being diversely affiliated to other religions and only 5 out of 435 members not specifying any religious membership (The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life). 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 experience of people power in the Philippines where the then incumbent president, Ferdinand Marcos was ousted from the position and led to be exiled in Hawaii by a throng of Catholic supporters for peace, democracy and movement for justice for human rights (Rosenblat). Equipped with faith and the strong commitment to restore democracy, the Filipinos " armed to the teeth with rosaries and flowers, / massing in front of tanks, and the tanks stopping, and some of the soldiers who were the enemy embracing the people and their flowers" (Rosenblat par. 1) have again proven that 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).

Works Cited

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