



## ICRD Monthly Update June 2013

### Premier Showing in the Big Apple

This Tuesday, June 25th, ICRD will premier its new documentary on countering violent extremism at Union Theological Seminary in New York City at 6:30pm ([see invitation](#)). "Back from the Brink" follows three diverse communities around the world where religious, ethnic, or identity-based conflict has led to indoctrination of youth with violent ideologies, threatening peace and national security. The film shows how utilizing commonly-held religious principles can mitigate and prevent conflict, and that effective methods used to help break the cycles of violence are the same everywhere. Discussion after the screening will include the Center's own work with madrasa (religious school) leaders in Pakistan.

[Watch the trailer](#) | [RSVP](#)

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### Religious Engagement and Foreign Policy

Last week I participated in the annual U.S./Islamic World Forum in Doha, Qatar. One of the four working groups focused on religion and diplomacy. What was remarkable about that was the fact that three of America's top former diplomats participated in the working group: Ambassadors Tom Pickering, Ron Neumann, and Bill Miller. Pickering and Neumann currently serve as Chairman and President respectively of The American Academy of Diplomacy.



*President Hamid Karzai addresses the Forum.*



*Good friends reunite.*

Below is the first paragraph of a thoughtful and encouraging piece by Brookings scholar Peter Mandaville, which he prepared for the conference, concerning the forthcoming establishment of a new office of religious engagement at the State Department. Although entirely too long in coming, this office will represent a major step forward in giving religion its rightful place at the table in American foreign policy. At long last, the voices in the wilderness are finally being heard.

"As the U.S. State Department prepares to stand up a new office of religious engagement, the working group on faith-based leaders in diplomacy at the upcoming 2013 U.S.-Islamic World Forum will provide an opportunity to reflect on how Washington has dealt with this issue to date and what a new approach might offer. The new office, authorized just as Hillary Clinton was leaving office, represents the culmination of years of work by several State Department officials. They often faced an uphill battle, finding it difficult to convince their colleagues and principals that U.S. foreign policy needed to take religious engagement seriously. To be sure, the basic idea is not a new one. Already in 1995, Doug Johnston had identified religion as the missing dimension of statecraft in a book of the same name. By the 2000s, the promotion of international religious freedom had become a focal point of U.S. foreign policy, but direct engagement with religious actors remained elusive." [Read full article.](#)

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### A Good Dinner

Our annual Faith-in-Action Award gala was a great success, with more than 170 in attendance. At the dinner, CNN National Security Analyst Peter Bergen set the stage by describing the current security challenges posed by global terrorist networks. This was followed by a description of what ICRD is doing to address those challenges through various initiatives it has underway or in the works. The Center's 2013 Faith-in-Action Award was then presented to Rabbi Jack Bemporad, who had just returned from leading a delegation

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"First we must ask and answer the question: "How can I be true to my faith without being false to yours?"

~ Rabbi Bemporad at ICRD's 2013 Faith-in-Action Award Dinner

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## A Good Dinner *(continued)*

of global Muslim leaders to Auschwitz and Dachau. As noted by that delegation in its post-event statement on the Holocaust:

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish brothers and sisters in condemning anti-Semitism in any form. No creature of Almighty God should face discrimination based on religious faith or religious conviction."

And as Rabbi Bemporad noted at the dinner:

"We cannot expect the major religions to agree on theological issues. But for the sake of our future and the future of our children, they must agree on moral issues."



*Rabbi Bemporad receives the Faith-in-Action Award.*



*Pre-Dinner Reception*



*ICRD EVP James Patton MCs the evening.*



*ICRD Board Chairman Harold Jacobi poses a question to Peter Bergen.*



*Macedonian Ambassador Zoran Jolevski looks on.*

All in all, a grand time!

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**With Best Wishes,**

Doug Johnston  
*President, ICRD*

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