



ICRD Monthly Update

August 2, 2013

A Milestone Development

Following up on last month's Update, this past Saturday's edition of the *Washington Post* carried a thoughtful [article](#) on the **establishment of the new Office of Religious Engagement at the State Department**, in which ICRD's work is prominently mentioned. This development should help ensure that religious factors begin to weigh more seriously in the calculations of U.S. policymakers.



Photo: Courtyard statue,
U.S. Department of State.

Two of the major challenges that lie ahead are the need to (1) avoid marginalization of the office within the State Department bureaucracy, and (2) avoid the spectre of the United States using religion to serve its political ends. **The greatest service this office can provide is to inform the U.S. policy process with a nuanced understanding of the religious dynamics that are taking place in any given situation.** In some respects, this initiative represents a band-aid where major surgery is required. Nevertheless, it is an important first step that should be applauded by all.

With Best Wishes,

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