

ICRD Monthly Update

March 2, 2015

Broadening our Reach

At the end of January, I had the opportunity to address World Affairs Councils in Seattle, Anchorage, and Juneau and was impressed with the degree to which the concerns in the hinterlands closely mirror those in the nation's capital with respect to religion's role in conflict. The same held true in St. Louis where Michael Braeuninger, ICRD's Development Coordinator, made a presentation on the Center's work to that city's Committee on Foreign Relations a few weeks later.

Finally, in New Orleans last week, I had the opportunity to address the annual meeting of the International Studies Association where I accepted, on ICRD's behalf, the Association's **inaugural Distinguished Scholar Award for Religion and International Affairs**.



Addressing the Threat

White House CVE Summit

Last week, the White House conducted a summit to examine different strategies for countering violent extremism (CVE). The three-day event brought together international, federal, and local leaders for the purpose of discussing community-oriented CVE methods. **ICRD participated in the**



Former ICRD Pakistan Project Director Azhar Hussain discusses madrasa reform with U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry and others

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meeting at which its Pakistan madrasa reform initiative was discussed.

The Salafist Dimension

For the past few decades, the Salafi movement—a sect of Sunni Islam devoted to the puritanical reform of Islamic practice—has spread across the Muslim world. Its violent manifestation, Jihadi-Salafism, has been consistently linked to religious persecution, political instability, and violent extremism and represents the ideological core of terrorist organizations such as the so-called Islamic State.



As threatening as this phenomenon is to much of the civilized world, **insufficient thought has been given to the different approaches being attempted by various governments and civil society to**

counter Jihadi-Salafism and how these approaches might be enhanced through enlisting non-violent Salafis in their development and implementation. Toward this end, ICRD is conducting a pilot project in Pakistan to test its approach and the methodology for acquiring the above information. Once the necessary funding has been secured, the effort will be expanded to include other key countries as well.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas Johnston".

Douglas Johnston
President, ICRD

*Pictures taken respectively from www.destination360.com;
www.carolhighsmithamerica.com; ICRD's James Patton; www.corbettreport.com

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