

Institution: University of Cambridge		
Unit of Assessment: Faculty of History		
Title of case study: Informing and convening foreign policy makers and practitioners: Cambridge Institute on Religion & International Studies		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: ongoing since 2015		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Andrew Preston	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of American History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: Since 2006
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-present		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) In the five years since its founding in 2015, the Cambridge Institute on Religion & International Studies (CIRIS) has had a significant impact on knowledge and practice in the field of religion and world affairs. In the area of diplomacy, CIRIS has contributed substantially to the increased government attention to religion by serving as the secretariat for the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy (a forum that brings together senior officials from the foreign ministries of 16 Western countries as well as the EU and UN) and as creators and managers of the <i>Religion & Diplomacy</i> website. CIRIS has also engaged a wide scholarly and popular audience through its numerous events and publications.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) In 1994, the American governmental official and scholar Douglas Johnston authored the widely read book <i>Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft</i> (foreword by Jimmy Carter). Over the last quarter century, there has been an explosion of academic and policy interest in religion in world affairs, and Cambridge Institute on Religion & International Studies (CIRIS) has been very much a part of driving the field forward.</p> <p>CIRIS was established in 2015 by Prof. Andrew Preston and one of his Cambridge doctoral students, Judd Birdsall (PhD 2015, "A New Beginning: Barack Obama and the Reshaping of American Religious Diplomacy"). CIRIS emerged from their shared research interests in the role religion has played, and continues to play, in international affairs.</p> <p>Preston published a prize-winning single-authored book, <i>Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy</i> [R1], which was submitted for the last REF and then became the germinating idea behind the founding of CIRIS. As explained in more detail in the book, <i>Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith</i> attempted to fill a gap in the scholarship, which had seen the neglect of religion's role in the study of US foreign policy. Since 2014, he has published a peer-reviewed edited collection [R2] and five peer-reviewed articles/chapters on the subject [R3, R4, R5]; and articles in the periodicals <i>Christianity Today</i>, the <i>Globe & Mail</i> (Toronto), and <i>USA Today</i>. [R6] argues that for over a century religion has provided the ideological glue that holds much of US foreign policy together. President Obama's use of religion, however, is characterised by a deep and uneasy ambivalence, which points to the increasing complexity that faith plays in international relations. [R7] asks fundamental methodological questions, such as what is religion? And secularism? And how do they relate to people's world view? Exploring these questions will allow Diplomatic Historians and policy makers to gain a more complete picture of the history of American foreign relations.</p> <p>Through all these outputs, Preston's main concern has been the inattention to the role of religion in the conduct of both US foreign policy and international relations more broadly. Scholars have</p>		

been guilty of such neglect, but so too have policy-makers, politicians, and military strategists. CIRIS was established to tackle this problem, by disseminating knowledge about religion and international affairs as widely as possible; by engaging with policy-makers and other non-academic stakeholders in the conduct of international relations; and by training academics, through a visiting-speaker series and our research associates, in how to engage with the wider public, with strategists, and with policy-makers.

This body of research and the publications that stem from it was the impetus for launching CIRIS, and it continues to drive CIRIS's mission.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2012.

[R2] Preston, Andrew, Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer. eds. *Faithful Republic: Religion and Politics in the 20th Century United States*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2015.

[R3] Preston, Andrew. "Defender of the Faith: The United States and World Christianity," in *Relocating World Christianity: Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith*, ed. Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell, and Emma Wild-Wood. Leiden: Brill, 2017: 261-280.

[R4] Preston, Andrew. "To Make the World Saved: American Religion and the Great War," *Diplomatic History*. 38:4. 2014. 813-825.

[R5] Preston, Andrew. "Globalized Faith, Radicalized Religion, and the Domestic Sources of U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Beyond the Cold War: Lyndon Johnson and the New Global Challenges of the 1960s*, ed. Francis J. Gavin and Mark Atwood Lawrence. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014: 261-284.

[R6] Preston, Andrew. "America's World Mission in the Age of Obama," in Matthew Avery Sutton and Darren Dochuk, eds., *Faith in the New Millennium: The Future of Religion and American Politics*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 2015. 180-198.

[R7] Preston, Andrew. "The Religious Turn in Diplomatic History" in Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds. *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*. 3rd Edition. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. 2016. 284-303.

[R1] was submitted to REF 2014. [R2, R3, R4, R5, R6] were peer reviewed and published in journals of international standing. [R7] drew upon the author's research expertise in this field. Therefore, this body of work meets the 2* minimum requirement.

Funding Received:

Three-year grant of USD330,000 from the Henry Luce Foundation for CIRIS's role as the Secretariat of the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy, 2017-2020.

Two-year grant of USD7,500 from the Harold Smith Foundation for CIRIS's project on Protestant political thought.

USD8,000 in 2015 from the British Council

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

TPNRD: In 2015 CIRIS became the Secretariat for the newly formed Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy (TPNRD). [E1] When the scholars and officials developing the TPNRD heard about the vision of CIRIS, they decided CIRIS would be an ideal non-governmental home for the network's Secretariat. CIRIS provided the network with significant scholarly credibility, administrative capacity, and awareness of the needs and pressures of policymakers, a non-sectarian and non-partisan ethos, and a broad approach to religion rather than a narrow focus on national security or religious freedom. This partnership commenced with a USD40,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation in New York and then expanded with a three-year USD330,000 grant in 2017 from the same foundation. [E2] An additional USD8,000 was received in 2015 from the British Council.

The TPNRD fosters collaboration on religion-related foreign policy issues among senior diplomats from the US, Canada, EU, UN, and a dozen European states. Members have commented on the direct impact the TPNRD has had on their efforts to enhance their respective foreign ministry's capacity to analyse and engage religious communities around the world. Many TPNRD participants are of ambassadorial rank and serve as their government's special envoy or ambassador at large on issues pertaining to religion, intercultural dialogue, and tolerance. Through the TPNRD, CIRIS has contributed significant momentum to diplomatic interest in religion, resulting in a growing number of foreign ministries creating specialized offices and envoys dedicated to engaging with religious communities. Through the TPNRD, CIRIS does not endeavour to make diplomacy more 'religious' or to privilege religion as an analytical factor or tool of engagement. Rather, it seeks to equip diplomats to think more carefully and critically about the complex, contested, and dynamic role religious ideas and actors play in international affairs. It is essential that foreign ministries avoid both ignoring and over-emphasising religion in their analysis and outreach. Participants in the TPNRD currently represent sixteen countries and two multilateral bodies: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, the European External Action Service, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, United Nations, and the United States.

TPNRD Conferences: Since 2015 CIRIS has arranged and facilitated biannual three-day TPNRD conferences hosted by participating ministries. These conferences provide an opportunity for diplomats to discuss shared challenges and opportunities and to engage with leading scholars, religious leaders, and NGO practitioners. The events are vital for enhancing capacity and for building a community of diplomats who are able to collaborate throughout the year. Alternating between each side of the Atlantic, TPNRD meetings have been held in the US in Washington and New York, and in Europe in Vienna, Helsinki, Paris, Florence, Brussels, The Hague, and Rome. [E3] notes that the discussions have 'enriched the FCO's thinking on these issues, allowing us to benefit from what other governments are doing'. A Senior Analyst at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs adds that 'The frank exchanges with colleagues from Europe and North-America, the relevant contributions from scholars and practitioners and the sharing of experiences, networks, sources and trainings have been a great support and inspiration'. [E4] The Senior Advisor to the UN Population Fund points to the strength of the network created: 'Furthermore, one of the outcomes - namely, creating an esprit de corps - in times of divisive and fakenews impacted politics, around the most complex set of challenges confronting all of us in the foreign affairs and international development sectors, is priceless'. [E5]

TPNRD Publications: A key feature of the TPNRD is facilitating engagement between scholars and practitioners in the field of religion and international affairs. [E6] At each of our conferences we ask our participating diplomats to identify ongoing or emerging issues they are wrestling with and would benefit from further research and reflection. The TPNRD Steering Committee then selects two topics and commissions leading experts to write policy reports on them. The commissioned authors then present their papers at the next TPNRD workshop. Finally, after incorporating any feedback from our diplomats, we publish the papers online and circulate widely within participating foreign ministries. Papers have been written on such policy-relevant topics as religion and fake news, securitizing Islam, Pentecostalism and governance, and faith-based responses to modern slavery. Most of these papers are available at *Religion & Diplomacy* and many have also been subsequently published in *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, a peer-reviewed journal with which the TPNRD has a close working relationship.

To quote from [E7] the Senior Fellow, Institute for Global Engagement, USA offered this assessment: "while our journal regularly collaborates with diverse institutions around the world, no partnership has been as fruitful as our ongoing relationship with CIRIS. Highlights include the recent publication of a special issue on the theme of "Reconsidering Religious Radicalism," numerous timely, policy-relevant essays commissioned by CIRIS's Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion & Diplomacy, and several other research articles and essays by CIRIS-affiliated scholars and scholar-practitioners. Taken together these articles have already generated well over 5,000 full-text downloads from the Routledge platform alone, plus additional exposure via other platforms such as Ebsco."

TPNRD Website: CIRIS also developed and now manages *Religion & Diplomacy*, a portal to online resources dealing with the practical interface between religion and international affairs. The site publishes original policy reports, articles, and interviews in addition to highlighting key third-party publications relevant to diplomats and other practitioners working on religion-related issues. CIRIS sends a monthly *Religion & Diplomacy Bulletin*, a digest of the latest content on the website, to a growing international list of subscribers.

Additional areas of CIRIS impact include:

Religion in Anglo-American Diplomacy: In 2015, CIRIS's Birdsall, under the directorship of Preston, co-led a project with the University of Leeds and the Institute for Global Engagement (based in Washington) on religion in American and British foreign policy. The project brought together policymakers and scholars from both sides of the Atlantic. Birdsall and his collaborators published a report of policy recommendations and met officials at the Foreign Office to discuss those recommendations. In May 2018, the Foreign Office initiated a review of British diplomatic engagement with religion and contacted CIRIS to arrange a series of meetings with CIRIS team members (Andrew Preston, Judd Birdsall, Tobias Cremer) for a member of the FCO's Policy Planning unit leading the review. In July 2018, the Government announced the creation of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The report was also cited in a recently released British Council report on US-UK religious freedom collaboration. [E8, p. 35-6]

Reconsidering Religious Radicalism: In 2015, CIRIS hosted a conference on 'Reconsidering Religious Radicalism' in partnership with the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, the Woolf Institute, and the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics. The conference brought together historians, theologians, social scientists, and practitioners who challenged the widespread but erroneous assumption that fervent, conservative religiosity is inherently exclusionary and violent. Papers from the conference were published in a special issue (summer 2017) of *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*, a leading journal read by both scholars and policymakers.

Transatlantic Collaboration on Freedom of Religion: In 2016, CIRIS's Birdsall co-authored a report on transatlantic partnership on the promotion of freedom of religion and belief. In September 2016, the report was launched at the House of Lords at a day-long symposium chaired by Lord Oates. This report provided some of the foundational analysis and argumentation for the aforementioned British Council report, which refers five times to the report. [E8 p. 7, 14, 32, 37, and 38]

Research for European Parliament: In 2018, CIRIS won the bid, together with a consortium of other research centres, to devise new methodology and conduct the research for the European Parliament's annual report on religious freedom outside the EU. The novel methodology quantified on a simple 0 to 10 scale a given country's adherence, or lack thereof, to international law and standards of freedom of religion or belief. It also quantified a country's political and economic relevance to the EU. The co-chair of the Parliament's Intergroup on religious freedom described the methodology as a significant improvement over previous iterations. The reports are used by the Parliament and other EU entities to inform policy and programming related to religious freedom. [E9]

At the rollout of the report in Brussels in September 2018, MEP Denis de Jong noted that he had discussed the report's findings and policy recommendations with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and other EU colleagues. MEP Peter van Dalen said at the launch that the European Parliament was "very pleased" with the cooperation with our research consortium, as it led to a "more thought out and unique analysis." He urged the government officials and civil society leaders present at the event to read the methodology of the report. The European Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief Jan Figel hailed the report as a "great asset" that "offers thought-provoking results." [E10]

Marc Giacomini, EEAS Deputy Managing Director for Human Rights, Global and Multilateral Issues, said “the new methodology used in the report is a very welcomed step” and he noted how the European Parliament intergroup met with many officials at the EEAS to discuss the report findings and how the EEAS can enhance its ability to promote freedom of religion of belief around the world. Giacomini continued: “The process was a great exercise for us, as it fostered reflections on FoRB and opportunities to raise awareness among our diplomats.” He also said, “This report is a very practical tool that we will share with our delegations in the countries of concern, encouraging our missions to take action.” Finally, underscoring the possible impact of the report, he said, “Your work is a key guidance that will enable us to potentially embrace innovative approaches and bypass barriers.” [E10]

Events at Cambridge University: CIRIS has hosted over 30 seminars, lectures, and book launch talks in Cambridge. These events regularly attract practitioners as well as scholars and have featured speakers from beyond the academy, including serving U.S. Ambassadors, former White House officials, and analysts from think tanks such as the Brookings Institution.

Protestant Political Thought: In 2019 CIRIS received a two-year GBP75,000 grant from the Harold Smith Foundation to build an international consortium of scholars researching the Protestant tradition of political reflection in light of contemporary populist and nativist movements. The project will produce several new resources, including a first-of-its-kind reader in Protestant political theology that will cover the entire span from Martin Luther to the present. The project has received additional support from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In December 2019, CIRIS hosted a DAAD-funded international workshop looking at questions of religion and belonging in America, Britain, Germany, and The Netherlands. The conference papers will be published in the journal *Religion, State, and Society*. Another larger conference was held in April 2020 online. [E11]

We conclude with a quote from the impact testimonial from [E7], the editor of *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*: “The Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies (CIRIS) has become a best-in-class institution in the now-burgeoning interdisciplinary field of religion and geopolitics. Many universities have recently set up centers in this general topic area, but CIRIS was and remains ahead of the curve, with a global network and a record of influential outputs that is truly second to none.”

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[E1] TPNRD Website

[E2] Henry Luce Funding Record

[E3] Testimonial from Head of Human Rights Policy Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[E4] Testimonial from Strategy Advisory Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

[E5] Testimonial from Senior Advisor, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

[E6] Testimonial from Senior adviser on Religion, Politics, Conflict, DFA Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

[E7] Testimonial from Senior Fellow, Institute for Global Engagement, USA

[E8] British Council Report, US and UK Perspectives on Religion and Belief

[E9] The European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance Annual Report

[E10] Video of Annual Report Launch Event <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aS8zSUi6vM>

[E11] Harold Smith Foundation and DAAD Press Releases