

in May, we'll see the first iteration of the revised curriculum in that course.

But my real eye is on the required course in the Foreign Service Institute. If you're a new ambassador, there's a required new ambassadorial course. We'd like to design a religion module for that, to make the case as to why ambassadors should have a robust curiosity about the political implications of religion in their country. There's also a required course for new political officers in embassies. We'd like to design another module for that course and to make a case for why they should look to us for help on questions of religion. Then there's the so-called A100 course; if you're a freshly minted foreign service officer, you have to go through this introductory course, and we'd like to design a module there, as well.

The third mission is to be the point of contact for any embassy or consulate that wants to come and inquire about partnerships, or to request information from the State Department. We have met with hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals and NGOs that find the State Department

and then try to find resources to answer those questions on a forward-looking set of relationships with our office.

The third piece is really about training and resourcing. We have an internal website where we put up a lot of publicly available information about religion globally, and we are also working on training at the Foreign Service Institute, which is the internal training institution of the State Department. There are four courses that we've targeted to help bring religion

answer questions or to meet religious actors in their space.

Our second tool is what we call a custom consultation service. An embassy may have a set of research questions that



ment to be opaque. It is a very complex place, but now they can come to us and ask us a question: who works on this issue in our country? When it was just me, my standard answer was “I have no idea, but I’ll get back to you.” But now that we have a staff that knows the building well, we can often introduce people on the spot to the office that works on their issues. Now, faith groups, religious actors, and NGOs know they can come to us, ask us questions, make policy suggestions, or ask to be introduced to somebody else in the building. We have a kind of brokering relationship.

Those are our big missions: advising the secretary, trying to build the capacity for religious engagement in the building, and then being an external-



faith leaders across the three affected traditions, both here in the States and also in Israel and Palestine. Historically, faith leaders have not felt welcome in our policy negotiations. We built a set of relationships that we are maintaining; we're not walking away from that just because there's not an active negotiation. Ambassador Martin Indyk was the one who really felt like we needed to build more engagement with the interested

human rights and trying to mitigate conflict. Those are three good missions to have in this period of poor visibility. To that extent, I think Niebuhr actually helps us.

Q We have an important religious leader visiting our country in September, as Pope Francis prepares to speak to Congress and the UN. What is your role with regard to the pope's visit in September? How is the State Department, and how are you in particular, involved with his visit?

A Our point person in the Vatican is Ambassador Ken Hackett, who is a wonderful human being and a dear friend. One of the things we're doing