



MERSHON CENTER for International Security Studies



- ABOUT US
- RESEARCH
- NEWS
- EVENTS
- GRANTS
- PEOPLE
- PUBLICATIONS
- CONTACT

You are here: [Home](#) ▶ [Research](#) ▶ [2012-2013](#) ▶ [Research](#) ▶ [Research 2012-2013](#) ▶ Religious Nationalism and American Militarism

- 2016-2017
- 2015-2016
- 2014-2015
- 2013-2014
- 2012-2013
- 2011-2012
- 2010-2011
- 2009-2010
- 2008-2009
- 2007-2008
- 2006-2007

RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM AND AMERICAN MILITARISM



Principal Investigators: Irfan Nooruddin, Department of Political Science

The story of what it means to be an American is typically told in two ways: America as a “civic” nation founded on democratic political value and self-evident truths, and America as a “cultural” nation based in the Judeo-Christian tradition and white Anglo-Saxon Protestant leadership.

In this project, Irfan Nooruddin examines the cultural view of American identity, specifically a worldview he calls “religious nationalism,” whose adherents he finds to have distinct attitudes about immigrants coming into the country and U.S. military intervention abroad.

Nooruddin finds the role of religion in American national identity to have two dimensions: the idea that America is founded by Christians for Christians, and that America has a divine origin and purpose. According to this worldview, American foreign policy has two interrelated functions: the responsibility to lead internationally and to protect its citizens from evil abroad.

Nooruddin tested these ideas by adding a series of questions to the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, then validating the results in a 2010 Knowledge Networks survey conducted with support from a 2010-11 Mershon Center grant.

Results supported both elements of the religious nationalist worldview. First, through an original measure using six questions, Nooruddin found that religious nationalists are increasingly anti-immigrant and nativist, adopting an “aggressive isolationism” toward foreign policy.

At the same time, Nooruddin found religious nationalism to be a significant predictor of certain attitudes toward U.S. military intervention abroad. Using a battery of 10 foreign policy statements, he found that religious nationalists were more likely to think military service should be required of all males and to think the Iraq War was not a mistake.

They also supported using the American military to defend the U.S. oil supply, destroy terror camps abroad, attack Iran if it had nuclear weapons, and spread democracy, but not for using American power to intervene in genocide, protect U.S. allies, or uphold international law.

These attitudes are consistent with an understanding of America as a chosen nation whose resources must be protected from its enemies and which has an obligation to spread American values – but drawing the line at using the military to defend non-Americans.

Last year’s grant from the Mershon Center allowed Nooruddin to carry out the final stages of this research project, leading to a book manuscript to be submitted to Cambridge University Press.



MERSHON CENTER

ARTS AND SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

RESOURCES

[About Us](#)

[College of Arts and Sciences](#)

[Office of International Affairs](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

Research	Academics	Center for African Studies	E-Newsletters
News	About the College	Center for Latin American Studies	Annual Reports
Events	News and Events	Center for Slavic & East European Studies	Fact Sheet
Grants	Research	East Asian Studies Center	Experts List
People	Arts and Culture	Institute for Chinese Studies	Faculty Books
Publications	Alumni	Institute for Japanese Studies	Furniss Award
Contact		Institute for Korean Studies	Knowledge Bank
		Middle East Studies Center	



© 2013 Mershon Center for International Security Studies – College of Arts and Sciences

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614-292-1681 | Fax: 614-292-2407

[Request an alternate format of this page.](#)

