

Religious Freedom is a Key Argument for Promoting Prosperity and Security

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I want to thank Dr. Moon for the chance to speak on a topic that is very personal for me, and I pray that it is personal for all of us. In the Trump Administration, we made religious liberty around the world a central thesis of keeping America more secure and making more prosperity and security for people all around the world.

We knew in our hearts that people that had the capacity to practice their faith the way that they wanted to, or chose not to for that matter -- we knew that they were in a stronger place; that their institutions of family, and their institutions of church and faith would be stronger, and therefore that nation would be more secure and present a little bit less risk to us in the United States. So, we tied what we knew to be true -- the expansion of religious freedom around the world, the protection of persecuted minorities around the world -- to our understanding of how to keep Americans safe and keep people safe all across this globe.

I get asked all the time, "These are high-minded ideas, Mike. How do I live them out?"

The attacks [on religious freedom] will be serious. They will be personal. They will come after you. It does not matter where you are. I gave some remarks once at a group of Christian counselors. You should know that the first attacks that I suffered as a result of that speech were from my lawyers at the State Department, who didn't think that people of faith -- Christians, Muslims, Jews, Bahais -- didn't think people of faith should live their life even in service to their country. I would suggest to you that as you're serving your nation, as you're serving your community, as you're serving your family and all those around you that your faith is a central part of who you are. You should live it. Each and every day and you should do so with the knowledge that there will be those who will think that's not just the quite right way to do it.

Be strong!

The other side -- the pagans, as Speaker Gingrich describes them -- they know it puts them at risk as well.

It's why they attacked so hard. We could see this in everything that we did. And Speaker Gingrich talked about the American tradition, our Judeo-Christian heritage -- the fact that we were founded on the central idea of religious liberty and the fact that our nation wouldn't establish a religion, but rather, we would permit people to practice their faiths at their churches and their synagogues at their mosques. We know this idea holds true in many nations. I worked with a woman named Mary Ann Glendon. She's a professor at Harvard Law School. And Mary Ann Glendon put together an understanding for America about regrounding our diplomacy in the fundamental understandings of America.

We called it the Commission on Unalienable Rights, tied back to the very documents that Speaker Gingrich spoke of. But it wasn't the commission that was important.

It was the work that we delivered, and we worked with nations and religious leaders all across the world to take their faith tradition as it was melded with their national tradition so that we could help secure these very freedoms. I would ask each and every one of you to do that -- to look to your nation's traditions. To ground your heritage in the central understandings of knowing that faith matters in every place. When you do that, you'll get it right. You will make your nation more secure, you'll make it more prosperous as well.

When I was Secretary of State, I kept a Bible open on my desk every day. I did it mostly for myself to remind myself to stay in the Word, to stay focused on the things that I knew mattered; to remind me that I was America's 70th Secretary of State but I was not very powerful compared to Him, compared to our Maker, and that I could not possibly succeed on behalf of my nation and on behalf of all the folks I was trying to help all around the world without His help. I also could see the people would come into my office and they see that I had a Bible on my desk -- by the way, often times, these were people of no faith or from different faiths. I can't tell you how often they would remark to me or to someone on my team after they left me, that while I was a Christian, they appreciated the discipline that I had, the openness that I had in my faith, and I often remembered being with leaders of every faith and those who were serious, those who weren't secular, those who cared about their faith were often people who were most committed to helping us all deliver on behalf of peace and prosperity all around the world.

Religious liberty is at the center of what this very organization [and Mother Moon] is doing today. Bless you all for holding this particular gathering on this particular topic. In the end, it will be faith in the Lord that will cause peace to be as universal as we all pray that it can be.

Thank you and God bless you.