12:30-1:30, April 5, Franciscan A, Hilton, San Francisco. First business session of Religion and International Relations Section of the ISA. Approximately 60 people in attendance.

Ron Hassner welcomed the audience and added, “We’re here for celebration and announcements”.

He told the audience that the Religion and IR (REL) section was approved—unanimously—three days ago. He said that REL gathered the needed 100 signatures very quickly. He also added that he was not surprised with this interest because in the last 4-5 years, about 4-5 percent of papers presented at IAS have been on religion.

Since REL is now a section, ISA will allocate a number of panels to REL for the next ISA meeting in Toronto.

Ron urged people to sign up for membership. Membership is required to vote and run for offices. REL’s first election will be next year. The section’s members will also need to approve the charter and amend it as they fit.

Ron then introduced himself and others. He (Ron Hassner) is the Section Chair. Steve Fish is the Vice Chair. Nukhet Sandal is the Secretary. Isak Stevensson is the Program Chair. Isak encouraged the audience to submit papers and panels when the call for papers comes for ISA’s 2014 Convention. Turan Kayaoglu is the Communications Chair. Turan solicited suggestions about the section’s webpage. Sara Silvestri is the Treasurer. Jocelyne Cesari is the Awards Chair. Ron also said that a year from now, we will be in Toronto, and will decide our awards.

Yosef Lapid and Patrick James are also members of the Executive Committee. The section will have an advisory committee of distinguished scholars (15 maximum).

Ron then opened the floor for the Q&A.

Someone from the audience suggested that it would be useful if the webpage includes syllabi on classes related to religion in international relations. Another person suggested finding a way where useful links to the website which scholars on religion and international relations regularly use for their teaching and research. A third person suggested that a “Diggle website” can help to collect such links. It was also suggested that the website should have a section on jobs related to religion and IR and information about scholarships for graduate students.

Someone asked if there are standard ISA templates for the section webpages. Ron affirmed that the ISA will provide some space and some support for the REL Section’s webpage.

Ron inquired about suggestions for how to facilitate panel proposals. Someone suggested that putting the call for papers on the section’s website may help. There may be also a
message board, which the members of the section can post information about their publications.

Ron cautioned against projects that may depend on too much emailing.

Someone else suggested that a membership database can help members learn about and teach others’ scholarly interest and facilitate putting panels together. Ron said that the sections cannot put such information in public as it may violate ISA’s privacy issues. Someone in the audience that self-submission and self-posting of such information can be encouraged as this method may not violate privacy rules.

Someone asked about the name of the section. Ron answered and said it is “Religion and IR” and the stated purpose of it is to encourage panel and papers on religion and IR broadly understood.

Another person inquired if there may be a journal on religion and IR. Ron said it would be wonderful to have a journal that focuses on religion and IR.

Someone suggested that section can have a book award. But another person mentioned that the money required for and review process may constitute a challenge.

Ron concurred suggesting that the section’s primary goal is networking, helping section members to get to know each others’ work. He told that section will initially have an operational budget of $300 dollars per year.

Ron inquired about ideas for special panels, such as a distinguished scholar panel. He mentioned that given the enthusiasm about section and number of papers on religion in ISA, he is hopeful that REL would be given a good number of panels for ISA 2014 Convention. Since the number of panels allocated to each section depends on the size of the audience attending the panels, we need to keep up audience.

Someone mentioned the need and importance for cross-fertilization—reaching out to other organizations such as American Academy of Religion. Ron concurred that it is a nice idea but rather than Executive Committee taking such initiatives he would like to see members working to establish such connections. He also mentioned that people from other organizations reached out to him to established connections with REL Section.

Ron ended the meeting by reminding the audience to attend the REL Sections’ first reception at 6:30 PM in room Yosemite B. He told U.C. Berkeley’s “Religion, Politics and Globalization Program” provided the funds for drinks and hors d’oeuvres.

End the session at 1:30.