Central Asia's Struggle with Religion

with

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Central Asian governments use state-controlled Islam to build national identity, but also fear Islam's influence and understand that Islam has greater mobilization potential than any other institution in their societies. In the early 1990's, there was fairly free access to various religious influences and the popularity of Islam and other religions increased rapidly. Today, however, Central Asian religion laws include: severe restrictions on religious education; strict limits or bans on children attending religious services; censorship and limits on religious literature; severe limits and controls on places of worship; bans on unregistered religious activity; restrictions on foreign influence, and difficult registration regulations. Central Asian governments also attempt to control religion via government-controlled structures, including religious affairs committees and state-controlled religious bodies. Central Asian states have also have adopted wide-ranging policies to combat extremism, particularly the prosecution of alleged members of officially banned groups rather than proven involvement in violent acts.

Catherine Cosman is senior policy analyst at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Her areas of responsibility include the countries of the former Soviet Union, East and Central Europe, and Western Europe.

Thursday, December 6, 2012
4:00-5:30 pm
Voesar Conference Room
1957 E Street NW, Suite 412
Please RSVP at http://tinyurl.com/Dec-6-Cosman

This event is on the record