

Archived Content

Information identified as archived on the Web is for reference, research or record-keeping purposes. It has not been altered or updated after the date of archiving. Web pages that are archived on the Web are not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards.

As per the [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#), you can request alternate formats on the "[Contact Us](#)" page.

Information archivée dans le Web

Information archivée dans le Web à des fins de consultation, de recherche ou de tenue de documents. Cette dernière n'a aucunement été modifiée ni mise à jour depuis sa date de mise en archive. Les pages archivées dans le Web ne sont pas assujetties aux normes qui s'appliquent aux sites Web du gouvernement du Canada.

Conformément à la [Politique de communication du gouvernement du Canada](#), vous pouvez demander de recevoir cette information dans tout autre format de rechange à la page « [Contactez-nous](#) ».

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
CSC 32 / CCEM 32

NEW HORIZONS / NOUVELLES HORIZONS

Secular Humanism, is it the new perceived crusade?

By /par Cdr/capf Carlo F. Giacomello

This paper was written by a student attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions, which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied, except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.

La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale.

Secular Humanism, is it the new perceived crusade?

Abstract

The word crusades, often conjures images of knights on horseback traveling to far reaches of the empire and into foreign lands, to convert the infidels in the name of Christendom. However, throughout history, leaders have used their militaries to colonize other nations not only in the name of a god, but also for purely secular reasons such as wealth, power and security. This paper explores the history and beliefs of the Secular Humanist movement and how their ideologies are being perceived by some in Islamic nations, as a new crusade. Moreover, it will demonstrate how the pro-liberal democratic policies in the United Nations, and more importantly Canada and its military, may be seen to support this perception of a crusade. Ultimately, this paper will show that the Canadian Forces are playing an increasing role in promoting western ideologies, and therefore may be perceived as, crusaders against Islam. Based on this perspective, this paper will suggest some alternatives in approaching conflicts, like those currently in Afghanistan and Iraq, to lessen this perception.

Secular Humanism, is it the new perceived crusade?

“What they call human rights is nothing but a collection of corrupt rules worked out by the Zionists to destroy all true religions.”¹

Ayatollah Khomeini

“Americans are a free people, who know that freedom, is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity.”²

George W. Bush Jr.

In a world divided by such extreme perceptions, it is critical to understand how the actions of a military are perceived in the scheme of the bigger picture. One may argue that the two quotes above are reflective of conservative dogma or a fanatic religious outlook on life. However, one may also conclude that it is about ideologies and wishing to impose them on others. It is based on this second premise that the actions of the military become more significant. Certain historians suggest that crusades, past and present, are at the root of the current day tensions in the Middle East³. By extension, the word crusade is often associated with the Middle Ages; when the ideologies of Christendom were imposed on the Arab and Persian world. However, crusades have been used by religious groups and government leaders to describe any form of organized campaign to convince others of what they believe. At times, the military was called to use force to accomplish these political and religious goals.

¹International Humanist News, “Defending Human Rights in Islamic Countries,” 3 August 2003, <http://www.iheu.org/node/1023>: Internet accessed 5 March 2006.

²Speech to UN General Assembly, September 21, 2004, available from http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/George_W._Bush/: Internet; accessed 14 February 2006

³Thomas F., Madden, “The Real History of Crusades,” available from <http://www.crisismagazine.com/april2002/cover.htm>: Internet; accessed 14 February 2006.

How then, does this implicate the Secular Humanists, a group who largely see themselves as non-religious and out to improve the general state of humanity?⁴ More importantly, how does the military factor into this awkward equation? Although somewhat of an unconventional perspective; this paper will attempt to show how secular humanism and the use of militaries in promoting liberal democracies, a secular ideal, potentially could be perceived as a crusade. In order to do so, this paper will: explore some basic definitions to establish a common understanding; review the history and beliefs of the secular movement; consider the concept of crusades and how the secular movement is being perceived by some in the Islamic world, and how the United Nations (UN), Canada and its military, may be perceived as agents in perceived crusades.

Ultimately, this paper will show that the Canadian Forces (CF) are playing an increasing role in what may be perceived as, the continuing crusade against the Arab/Islamic world by imposing secular governments and ideologies. Based on this perspective, the paper will suggest some alternatives in approaching conflicts like those in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In order to analyse the military's role in this perception one must first establish a common understanding of specific terms used in this paper as they are key to understanding the root of the perspective being offered.

⁴Council for Secular Humanism, <http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=what>: Internet accessed 20 January 2006.

Basic Definitions

Given the significant debate in the public fora, it is important to consider the definitions of words used by both secular humanists and theists as to the true nature of Secular Humanism. Webster's dictionary will be used to avoid any subjectivity as to the possible meaning of key words such as religion, belief, faith and crusade.

Considerable debate continues between Christians and Secular Humanists, as to whether secular humanism is a religion, as was evident in the US Supreme Court Case *Torcaso versus Watkins*.⁵ Webster's defines religion as: "belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe"⁶ and, "any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc... humanism as a religion."⁷ The first definition would be dismissed by secular humanists for a creator goes against their ideology, though the second suggests that secular humanism is a religion. For the purpose of this paper, the later will be assumed.

Opponents in this debate, often stumble on the concept of what is a belief? The generic definition, offered in Webster's applies to secular humanists and theologians alike in that, "the state of believing, conviction or acceptance that certain things are true or real"⁸. Theists believe in a deity(s) whereas secular humanists believe in the universality⁹ of their principles. Similarly, the concept of belief is often used interchangeably with that of faith. Faith is defined as, "implies complete, unquestionable acceptance of something even in the absence of proof and especially of something not

⁵Justia.com, US Supreme Court case, *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 US 488 (1961), available at <http://supreme.justia.com/us/367/488/case.html>: Internet: accessed 20 March 2006.

⁶Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, New York, 1991, 1134.

⁷*Ibid.*, 1134.

⁸*Ibid.*, 127.

⁹Paul Kuntz, *Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call for New Planetary Humanism*, Amherst, New York, Prometheus Books, 2000, 3.

supported by reason”¹⁰. Accordingly, the idea of universality of secular humanist principles shows that secular humanists, such as Professor Paul Kuntz¹¹, base their belief in that idea on faith, as its universality can not yet be supported by fact.

Lastly, given the strong inference made in the title of this paper, what exactly is a crusade? If taken as a verb rather than a specific reference to historical events of the Middle Ages, a crusade is defined as, “vigorous, concerted action for some cause or idea, or against abuse”¹². The significance of this definition will be explored later in this paper.

It is therefore possible, that theists and secular humanists practice a form of religion based on beliefs or faith. Moreover, the vigorous and concerted action to impose their beliefs on others, could conceivably, be perceived as a crusade. In order to consider whether secular humanism, more specifically, promoting its philosophies, can be perceived as a crusade; a brief examination of the history of the secular humanist movement is needed.

A Brief History of Secular Humanism

One must first understand the historical pedigree behind today’s secular humanist movement. It was suggested that the initial notion of secular humanism was first considered in Ancient Greece. Authors of the book, *Handbook of Today’s Religions* suggest that, the Greek philosopher Protagoras said, "Man is the measure of all things"¹³;

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 487.

¹¹Professor Paul Kuntz the author of many secular humanist documents including the *Humanist Manifest 2000*.

¹²*Ibid.*, 333.

¹³Josh McDowell and Don Steward, “Secular Humanism,” Part 5, Chap. 1 in *Handbook of Today’s Religions*. United States of America: Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc., 1983.

hence this was the beginning of the concept of man as the central player in mankind versus a god or gods. With the decline of the Greek empire, these philosophies remained somewhat dormant until the Christian Renaissance, where the concept which is now known to some as Religious Humanism first appeared. The decision to study life from a human perspective, in the context of religious beliefs and practices, gave birth to the area of study now known as the humanities.

It is only in the early twentieth century, that a group of non-religious individuals sought to separate the secular humanists from the entire humanist body. A number of organizations flourished which abdicated the religious justification for society's approach to humanity, in favour of a purely secular view. As western democracies became less connected to their religious roots, many humanists found their calling in organizations such as the UN, where the secular ideals were espoused over any religious commandments or principles.

Formal organizations and societies promoting morality and humanity outside traditional religions began to appear. The Center for Inquiry and the Council for Secular Humanism are some of the better known organizations which promote secularization through an established worldwide network of local chapters, hosting conferences, creating websites, publishing literature, and by gaining recognition at the international level. For instance, in August 2003, The Center for Inquiry – Transnational, was “granted special consultative status as a non-governmental organization, under the United Nations Economic and Social Council.”¹⁴ These organizations have published a number of manifestos and declarations outlining the belief structures of secular humanists.

¹⁴Center for Inquiry, “Organization Promoting Secularism and Science Granted Representation at United Nations.” <http://www.centerforinquiry.net/newsrooms/080305.html>: Internet; accessed 20 December 2005.

Although significantly different in its genesis, they contain many similarities with the ideologies in Judaeo-Christian doctrine and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) produced by the UN.

Why is this important to this issue? Because both religious and secular humanists, many of whom were philosophers, argue that their ideologies, be it, divine direction or secular theories on right and wrong, are universal and yet neither can prove them. Religious people attribute this believing based on the divine as faith, while secular humanists attribute it to scientific probability. Therefore, it is important to establish what secular humanists believe.

What do Secular Humanists Believe?

“So Humanism is not simply another denomination of Protestant Christianity; it is not a creed; nor is it a cult. It is a new type of religion altogether.”¹⁵ This quote from *Humanism: A New Religion*, written by C.F. Potter, an original signatory of the Humanist Manifesto, published by the American Humanist Association, demonstrates the extent in which the secular humanist philosophy has been adopted by some as their new religion. There are currently ten Humanist Manifestos and Declarations¹⁶, published by a number of large secular humanist organizations, including the American Humanist Association and the Council for Secular Humanism. All of which espouse similar concepts and ideologies.

¹⁵Charles Francis Potter, *Humanism: A New Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930), 3.

¹⁶Wikipedia, “Secular Humanism” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secular_humanism: Internet; accessed 20 January 2006.

For purpose of analysis, the Humanist Manifestos I, II, and III¹⁷ have been used as they cover a significant number of philosophical concepts and beliefs and are relevant to this argument. Other manifestos and declarations not covered in this paper would not alter the case being made as they all share a similarity with those in the ones chosen.

The first Manifesto, written in 1933, introduced the notions of humanism and secularism but tried to accommodate the values espoused by Religious Humanists, found throughout humanitarian organizations of that day. In 1973, it was amended to reflect a much more secular perspective and introduced concepts which were even less acceptable to theological minded humanists. More recently, the third Manifesto was produced in 2003 and focused almost entirely on the concept of human rights that places the individual at the centre of everything. For those believing in the centrality of a divine or supernatural deity, this made the movement incompatible with their beliefs.

The concepts of the absence of deity, centrality of the individual, separation of church and state, and human rights are only some of the ideologies put forth in these manifestos. These have been chosen as they generate passionate opposition from those who oppose secular humanism from a theological perspective.

Absence of Deity

One of the most controversial is that they denial of a deity(s). The sixth affirmation in Humanist Manifesto I states: “We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought".”¹⁸ Moreover, in Humanist Manifesto II, in its first principle, religion, it states: “As nontheists, we

¹⁷Humanist Manifestos I, II and III are available from the American Humanist Association, available from, <http://www.jcn.com/manifestos.html>: Internet; accessed 25 March 2006.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.”¹⁹ It then goes on further to say, “Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.”²⁰ As the concept of deity is central to all religions that believe in a divine or supernatural god, the notion of a world with out god(s), is simply unacceptable.

Centrality of the Individual

Another area in which the secular doctrine differs with that of organized religions is in the centrality of man versus god. The Humanist Manifest II proposes that “...we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves”. Thus, this clearly eliminates the necessity for any deity in one’s life, as one is responsible to oneself not to a god(s). This is in stark contrast to religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam, where their god is in control of all and the individual is subordinate. However, where humanists differs the most with other religions is in the notion of separation of church and state²¹.

Separation of Church and State

The concept of separation of church and state is fundamental to the secular ideology and is contained in all their manifestos and declarations. Amusingly, but perhaps not to the devout secular humanist, is that the concept espoused is very similar to

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid*

one put forth in Christian doctrine. It could be argued that its origin can be attributed to a Christian principle written in a document approximately 2000 years ago, that states, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."²² Although taken somewhat out of context and counter to the underlying message in that passage, it has become central to governments in western liberal democracies.

Indications that separation of church and state is not yet universal in western societies can be witnessed in the last US elections. The reintroduction of religion centred debates showed that a significant portion of Americans do not necessarily separate completely the church or their religious faith from the affairs of the state. However, it is in Islamic countries that this becomes even more significant, and the impetus for this paper.

With the growing tensions between the Islamic and Western societies, scholars suggest that one of the fundamental causes is the idea of separation of church and state. In his article, Dr. Ja`far Sheikh Idris²³, summarizes the fundamental impediment to secularizing Muslim countries:

“The basic belief in Islam is that the Qur'an is one hundred percent the word of Allah, and the Sunna was also as a result of the guidance of Allah to the Prophet sallallahu allayhe wasalam. Islam cannot be separated from the state because it guides us through every detail of running the state and our lives. Muslims have no choice but to reject secularism for it excludes the law of Allah.”²⁴

²²The Holy Bible, New King James Version, Matthew 22:21, United States of America: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1994, 1410.

²³Dr. Jafar Sheikh Idris is a professor of Islamic studies at the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in Washington, DC. He has published numerous articles and papers on Islam and the book *Process of Islamization*.

²⁴Dr. Ja`far, Sheikh Idris, “Separation of Church and State - Explaining the practice of this theory - and what it means to Muslims.” *AlJumuah Magazine*, Volume 13 Issue 3, available from <http://islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=559>: Internet; accessed 4 January 2006.

The Qur'an covers all aspects of day-to-day life and prescribes codes of behaviour, responsibility and laws. The Qur'an and the teachings of Mohammed remain central to most Muslims whether considered practicing or not. For instance most Muslim still strive to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life time. The annual pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the largest religious celebrations in the world, thus further demonstrating the centrality of the Islamic faith in the Muslim world.

The separation of church and state would be most apparent in areas of treatment of women and in punishment prescribed for violating the law. A secular nation would, by Western standards, have to insist that all people be treated equally irrespective of gender, race or religion. In doing so, it would negate the rights and practices of an adherent Muslim with regards to the Qur'an. The treatment of women according to some interpretations of Islamic faith has women subordinate to men. Moreover, in the matters of Islamic civil law, the code of punishment requires various punishments which would be considered barbaric and inhumane by Western standards. It is clear that the two are not compatible and one would have to be subordinated in order to meet the other.

Human Rights

Closely linked to separation of church and state, is the right of freedom of religion²⁵. The Western ideal of having the right to practice a religion of their choice is almost only possible in nations who separate religion from the affairs of the state. In secular states, religion is an individual choice, whereas in theocratic nations, religion, government and its laws are the Divine's choice.

²⁵Reference.com "Qualities of Liberal Democracies," available from http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Liberal_democracy: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

The concept freedom of religion is but one of a number of human rights contained not only in individual Western nations' constitutions but also espoused in the UN's UDHR. These human rights are held up as the ideal rights for all nations of the world. However, not all nations are signatories of this declaration, especially Islamic countries. In 1981, in opposition to the UDHR, the Islamic Council published the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights²⁶ which counters the purely secular notion of human rights with one which is driven by the divine. In its forward it states:

“Human rights in Islam are firmly rooted in the belief that God, and God alone, is the Law Giver and the Source of all human rights. Due to their Divine origin, no ruler, government, assembly or authority can curtail or violate in any way the human rights conferred by God, nor can they be surrendered.”²⁷

Based on these differing views on the basis for human rights, one can conceive that any effort by the West or the UN to promote the UDHR could be perceived as wanting to impose the secular form of human rights, hence a crusade.

Crusades

Earlier, a definition of a crusade was provided showing that it can apply to both traditional religious campaigns to spread a set of beliefs in god(s), and an effort to promote, implement, impose, a set of non-theistic set of values or ideals. In the case of the Muslim/Islamic world, crusades are often linked to the historical past. Christendom conducted various crusades in the name of the Catholic Church. Regrettably, the lure of power intermixed with religious zeal had the unfortunate consequence of tremendous loss

²⁶ The Islamic Council: “Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights” 21 *Dhul Qaidah* 1401 19 September 1981 available from <http://www.alhewar.com/ISLAMDECL.html>: Internet; accessed 23 April 2006.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

of life in the name of God. Throughout the Middle Ages, there were nine major crusades against countries in the Middle East. The Muslims were one of the most affected groups.

Crusades however, were not always in the name of the Judeo-Christian God.

Nazi Germany was on a crusade to establish its proper place amongst the great empires of the world, a purely secular ideal. The Romans, the Christians, and also the Germans wished to invade and rule the Muslim countries according to their own ideals and values. In more recent history, Communism became one of the ideologies competing for world supremacy. The USSR imposed secular communist values and government on a number of Muslim countries with varying degrees of success. History has shown repeatedly that western ideals, whether secular or theistic have been imposed on Muslim people. Hence, it is understandable that there may be a perception that secularism as expressed in modern liberal democracies is yet another attempt by the West, to impose its ideology on the Muslim people.

Theoretically, one could dismiss this perception as a remnant part of the past and no longer valid today in mainstream society. However are there examples of actual contemporary perceptions of a continuing crusade against Islam?

Perception a continued Crusades

One has come to expect this perception from Osama bin Laden and his fellow Al-Qaeda fundamentalists who, in a detailed document issued on the internet, which explained the attacks in Saudi Arabia in 2003 stated:

“The ruler of a country is the one that has the authority over it... The real ruler is the Crusader United States. The subserviency of {Muslim} rulers is no different

from the subserviency of the amirs or governors of provinces to the king or the president. The rule of the agent is the rule of the one who made him the agent”.²⁸

As long as these views are only held by groups like Al-Qaeda, they can be dismissed as ranting by extremists and not generally the views of most people in the Middle East. However, numerous Muslim/Islamic websites, articles and books have been written expressing similar thoughts in somewhat less militant terms but nonetheless indicative of more than simple extremist rantings. Jahangir Mohammed, Director, Centre for Muslim Affairs. UK writes:

“As soon as the Iraqi regime caved in, the high priests of secularism and democracy (the media) unleashed their crusader instincts by debating and discussing how democracy would be implemented in Iraq. They had however forgotten to consult the most essential component of Democracy – the people (of Iraq)... At its core there is a fundamentalism within Democracy, which says that ruling according to Man and Ruling according to God are incompatible (Islam says the same thing). Democracy contains within it an unwritten exclusion clause, which reads- “The people have a right to choose any form of government they wish, with the exception of a government based upon Islamic rule”. An addendum to this clause reads, “in case of the majority of the people of a nation choosing to vote for Islam, then the only acceptable choice is secular Islam along the model of Turkey”.”²⁹

In his book, *Dying to Win*, Robert Pape, suggests that the use of the word crusade by Islamic fundamentalists is quite deliberate and used to garner support for their views by drawing reference to The Crusades by Christians throughout the Middle Ages³⁰. The parallelism is uncanny in that whether one believes that the medieval crusades were motivated by colonisation, in the name of Christendom or a defensive response to the growing aggression expansion of an Islamic nation, the result is the same. That is, a foreign ruler(s) or regime who uses military force as one of its tools to establish a

²⁸Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to win: the strategic logic of suicide terrorism*, New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 2005, 118.

²⁹Jahangir, Mohammed, “Behind the Secular Mask of Democracy,” 27 March 2005, available from http://icssa.org/secular_democracy1.html: Internet accessed 6 March 2006.

³⁰Pape, *Dying to win...*,

government for the reason of imposing their views on human behaviour and law.

Therefore one must consider the validity of this perception when considering the method used to democratize a state, especially one with a strong religious heritage. Moreover, when governments and organizations such as the UN participate in the process of promoting liberal democracies, they must understand that they may be perceived as agents in a crusade.

The United Nations participation in the perceived crusade

A number of humanist organizations see the UN as a group of humanists working to spread the word. Is the UN an active participant or is it wrongly grouped into debate due to its humanitarian perspective? It is difficult to say for sure and those who believe in conspiracies, may conclude, the United Nations to be a part of the global move to secularize the world. However, to make sense of this perception, one needs to consider the ratification of the UDHR³¹ which, possibly unintentionally compliments the secular humanist perspective of placing the rights of the individual at the centre of human rights.

The opening proclamation of the UDHR states:

“Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.”³²

³¹United Nations. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” available from <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

³²*Ibid.*

Although not specifically defined as western or liberal democracy in the UDHR, those who oppose liberalist forms of democracy may infer from the wording, that western style liberal democracy is the only evolved and legitimate form of government. More importantly Article 19 of the UDHR states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”³³

This runs contrary to a number of Islamic nations which limit the rights of non-Muslims based on a fundamental belief that Islam is the one true faith and that the nation and its ruler come under the sole authority of their god. How then is Canada, a strong supporter of the UDHR, perceived?

Canadian participation in the perceived crusade

How is Canada’s decision to actively participate in the promotion of western style liberal democracies potentially viewed by those whom we profess to help? Canada professes to be accepting of other cultures and religions and would not impose its ways on other nations.³⁴ However, a review of the latest International Policy Statement (IPS) and related Defence Policy Statement (DPS) may lead to different conclusions about the potential message Canada is sending out to non-democratic and mainly theocratic nations.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *International Policy Statement – A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, (Ottawa: Her Majesty’s the Queen in Right of Canada, 2005).

In his introduction of the new IPS, the Prime Minister, Paul Martin, wrote;

“...That is why, at the United Nations last year, I argued that modern sovereignty increasingly encompasses responsibilities to the international community as well as to one's own citizens, and identified five areas where Canada intends to push forward the international agenda for action: ...third, the "Responsibility to Respect," to build lives of freedom for all people, based on the fundamental human rights of every man, woman and child on earth...”³⁵.

Although, in itself, may not appear to be contradictory to any religion or culture, if taken in the context of other statements made in the IPS such as, “Although specific governance structures will vary by political and cultural context, Canada's ultimate goal is to foster commitment on human rights, democracy and the rule of law that places individual citizens at the heart of society and creates a state committed to protecting their welfare”³⁶, a clear message of the view of human rights which focuses on the individuals, takes shape. It is exactly in this concept that secular democracies differ with theocratic styles of government. Words such as, push for, fundamental human rights, ultimate goal, and clear message; may be seen by opponents of Canada’s views as aggressive language aimed at imposing western style secular governments with secular ideologies.

Canadian Forces participation in the perceived crusade

The recent development of the 3D+C concept of dealing with international issues, introduces the possible use of force to establish Canada’s foreign policy objectives. That is to say, the combination of Diplomacy, Defence, Development and Commerce clearly includes the aspect of defence. Although Canada generally does not have the international reputation of using its mostly defensive military capability for offensive or

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

aggressive purposes, the inclusion of defence in the context of dealing with failed and failing states may indicate a willingness to use force to create a peaceful environment in order to establish a legitimate “democratic government.” For instance, Canada participated in the establishment of a democratic government in Afghanistan.

Although arguably a failed state which sponsored terrorism; Afghanistan was governed by the Taliban, a fundamentalist religious group. The Taliban governed the country using an extremely conservative and some would say medieval form of Islam which was unacceptable to the UN and Western nations. Under the premise of stopping the support to terrorism, the Taliban government was replaced with first, military rule and immediately after, an interim pro-democracy government of our choosing, until democratic elections could be held.

The objectives set forth in the concept of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) helps to clarify Canada’s intent of creating in Afghanistan a democracy:

“Canada's objective is to help Afghanistan become a stable, democratic and self-sustaining state that never again serves as a terrorist haven. The extension of the Afghan central government's authority across the country is key to achieving this. Toward that end, Canada is supporting elections and national development programs, and is deploying a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Kandahar.”³⁷

An integral part of the concept of 3D+C and the use of PRTs comes, an increased cooperation with various Non-Government Agencies (NGOs). Interestingly, most NGOs are either secular such as the Red Cross, the UNHCR, Doctors without Borders or Christian groups such a Christian Children’s Fund, just to name a few. Although not intentional, the reality is that these organizations do not only offer assistance to those in

³⁷Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams,” http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/prov_reconstruction-en.asp: Internet; accessed 3 March 2006.

need but also as a secondary objective promote their various views on culture, society and religion. The military plays a significant role in the success of their mission by providing an umbrella of security under which their projects can succeed.

In recent years, resources have been scarce not only for militaries but also for NGOs. Quite often, the military will offer excess capacity of transportation assets to assist in humanitarian assistance organized by these NGOs. This often includes the military taking on work projects such as rebuilding orphanages, clinics, schools and other community buildings, thus taking a visible active role in assisting the secular and religious NGOs.

Therefore, the military has become players in the efforts to secularize government structures, services and social programs as well as the encouraging the adoption of the UN version of human rights. It is these types of activities which create the perception of crusaders, therefore what should be done to mitigate this perception whilst understanding its reality?

Possible alternatives to counter this perception

Should one agree with the possibility of a perceived new crusade then the following may not be too extreme a proposition. In his article Michael Hirsh discusses the premise, “what if Islam isn't an obstacle to democracy in the Middle East but the secret to achieving it?”³⁸ Rather than imposing a purely secular governing structure with a clear separation of church and state, the west would simply encourage a more moderate form of Islamic government and laws, which would be respectful of the culture and

³⁸Michael Hirsh, “What if Islam isn't an obstacle to democracy in the Middle East but the secret to achieving it?”, *Washington Monthly* (November 2004).

religion of those people. In doing so, the West would be seen to support them in bringing forth a theocratic government interested in the welfare of their people. In choosing who to support, careful attention would be given to select clerics, government officials and public leaders (military and police) which hold strong Islamic views but have modern aspirations for their country. Countries such as United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain have shown how moderate yet fundamentally Islamic leaders can move towards a more open and accepting Islamic society which respects other cultures and traditions. The reality however, is that this type of transformation would require a significant amount of time and a willingness in the west to accept behaviour which may appear to some to be unacceptable.

In practical terms what does this mean to the military and concepts such as the provincial reconstruction teams? Firstly, the military and other government departments need to be aware of partnering with Non-government Agencies (NGO) which are not only the secular and Christian, but also make full use of Islamic NGOs. This will not be easy as other NGOs may resist the use of Muslim NGOs. In his article, Muslim NGOs Can Help Bridge the Culture Gap, Moustafa Osman, suggests that the use of Muslim NGOs are largely distrusted by the mainstream secular based charities.³⁹ Therefore it would take additional effort to attempt to build trust so that all NGOs can be included in such efforts. Having an understanding of the nuances of Islamic culture is critical when attempting to provide assistance, which is respectful of their culture and religion. Actions like these could prevent situations of misunderstanding and clashes like the one

³⁹Moustafa Osman, "Muslim NGOs Can Help Bridge Culture Gap." 24 January 2003, available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm>: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

witnessed in Afghanistan in late 1980's between aid workers and those they were trying to assist:

“an NGO group from the West working in Afghanistan on family planning and mother and child health care distributed condoms amongst women and widows in the refugee camps. This strategy was interpreted as Western NGOs encouraging Afghan women to commit adultery. Violence ensued and the Imam of one mosque urged his followers to burn down the NGO's office. The policy of the NGO may have been the result of ignorance of Muslim/Afghan culture. Muslim NGOs, however, are in the enviable position of understanding cultural nuances, thus allowing them to address problems without offending local populations.”⁴⁰

Secondly is to work more closely with clerics and attempt to convince them that development would be accomplished in a manner respectful of their religion and values. We must refrain from being perceived as implementing the separation of church and state. Every effort must be made to make full use of mosques and other religious gathering places to help spread the message that their religion is not at odds with the new regime. In order to have access to that communication network military personnel need to be training in basic knowledge of the religions of the world and how to incorporate the use of key religious representatives into their Information Operations plan.

Lastly is to be more aware of their culture when conducting humanitarian assistance. For example, the patriarchal social structure should be used to further assistance and not bypassed as it may be seen as chauvinist in western cultures. Similarly, in celebrating western cultural events such as, the International Day for Women, in a struggling newly formed administration, may serve western agendas at home, but may create the appearance of disrespect of their Islamic beliefs. The answer is

⁴⁰Osman, Moustafa, “Muslim NGOs Can Help Bridge Culture Gap.” 24 January 2003, available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm>: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

to let them progress to the stage that they will want to implement such celebrations on their own.

These three areas can only be successful when we place sufficient importance on cultural awareness training for those deployed which is based on understanding and respecting their differences. However, it is easy to see how western governments would have a hard time convincing their ever increasing secularized populations that it was justified to use military force to remove a corrupt government just to replace it with a government which does not respect human rights in the same manner they do.

Conclusion

“But we should be mindful that our medieval ancestors would have been equally disgusted by our infinitely more destructive wars fought in the name of political ideologies. And yet, both the medieval and the modern soldier fight ultimately for their own world and all that makes it up. Both are willing to suffer enormous sacrifice, provided that it is in the service of something they hold dear, something greater than themselves”.⁴¹

This paper has attempted to show that secular humanism, can be and in certain instances is viewed as a religion. Major secular humanist groups, such as the Council for Secular Humanism, espouse a clear set of beliefs and an organizational structure set on promoting the secular humanistic ideology as the only philosophy for all liberal democratic nations. Accordingly, the growing popularity of these idealisms in areas of the world previously governed by religious based laws and cultural traditions is being perceived as a threat to the essence of their societies.

⁴¹Thomas F., Madden, “The Real History of Crusades,” available from <http://www.crisismagazine.com/april2002/cover.htm>: Internet; accessed 14 February 2006.

More importantly and the reason for this paper, Canada's decision to promote Western ideals, largely secular in nature and to foster the growth of democracy around the world, has made it an active participant in this perception. Moreover, Canada's 3D+C policy includes the use of its Armed Forces to further this agenda. As such, Canadian military personnel are directly seen as agents of change in the introduction of western style secular based government structures, military organizations and policing agencies. It is critical that this be understood and considered when embarking on humanitarian and social engineering efforts of nation reconstruction. Otherwise, the military may help feed the perception of a crusade in the use of force to impose external non-theocratic concepts of government and human rights.

Recent events in Afghanistan have underscored the reality that certain groups, devoted to religious ideals to underpin their power structure, viewed both Canadian diplomats and armed forces personnel as a threat and targeted them accordingly.

Hopefully, this paper has highlighted the reality of a perception, which if left to grow, will make it increasingly difficult to establish lasting democratic structures in places like Afghanistan.

These crusades, whether real or imaged, is for each individual to decide, however secular humanist declarations make it hard to ignore some claims of their existence. In closing, consider an extract from the latest manifesto, *Humanist Manifesto 2000*, by Professor Paul Kuntz, a leading activist for secular humanism:

“To fulfill our commitment to Planetary Humanism, we offer a *Planetary Bill of Rights and Responsibilities*, which embodies our planetary commitment to the well-being of humanity as a whole. It incorporates the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, but goes beyond it by offering some new provisions. Many independent countries have sought to implement these provisions within their own

national borders. But there is a growing need for an explicit *Planetary Bill of Rights and Responsibilities* that applies to all members of the human species.”⁴²

⁴²Paul Kuntz, *Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call for New Planetary Humanism*, Amherst, New York, Prometheus Books, 2000, 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

Hirsh, Michael, "What if Islam isn't an obstacle to democracy in the Middle East but the secret to achieving it?" *Washington Monthly* (November 2004).

Books

Kuntz, Paul, *Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call for New Planetary Humanism*, Amherst, New York, Prometheus Books, 2000.

McDowell, Josh and Don Steward, *Handbook of Today's Religions*. Part 5, Secular Humanism: United States of America: Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc., 1983.

Pape, Robert Anthony, *Dying to win: the strategic logic of suicide terrorism*, New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 2005.

Potter, Charles Francis, *Humanism: A New Religion*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version, Matthew 22:21, United States of America: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1994.

Internet Sources

Chowdhury, Mahmud Reza, "Secular Humanism and Justice (Editorial)", NABIC Newsletter, available from http://www.globalfront.com/nabic_archive/humanism.html: Internet; accessed 14 February 2005.

Coon, Carl, "Humanism and the UN: A Shared Future?", *Free Inquiry magazine*, Vol. 25 No. 1, available on-line from http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=library&page=coon_25_1: Internet; accessed 20 January 2006.

Corn, Tony, "World War IV - As Fourth-Generation Warfare," available from <http://www.policyreview.org/000/corn.html>: Internet; accessed 7 March 2006.

Esposito John L. and Voll, John, O., "Islam and Democracy" *Oxford University Press*, 1996, Humanities, Volume 22/Number 6, November/December 2001, available from <http://www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2001-11/islam.html>: Internet; accessed 7 March 2006.

Hillenbrand, Dr. Carole, "The Crusades Then and Now", CAABU Briefings, available from <http://www.caabu.org/press/briefings/crusades.html>: Internet; accessed 25 January 2005.

Idris, Dr. Ja'far, Sheikh, "Separation of Church and State - Explaining the practice of this theory - and what it means to Muslims." AlJumuah Magazine, Volume 13 Issue 3, available from <http://islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=559>: Internet; accessed 4 January 2006.

Madden, Thomas F., "The Real History of Crusades," available from <http://www.crisismagazine.com/april2002/cover.htm>: Internet; accessed 14 February 2006.

Mohammed, Jahangir, "Behind the Secular Mask of Democracy," 27 March 2005, available from http://icssa.org/secular_democracy1.html: Internet: accessed 6 March 2006.

Osman, Moustafa, "Muslim NGOs Can Help Bridge Culture Gap." 24 January 2003, available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm>: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

Palazzi, Abdul Hadi, "Antizionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary Islamic Milieu", available from <http://village.flashnet.it/users/fn034463/racism.html>: Internet; accessed 25 January 2006.

Rast, Ben, "Humanism – The Established State Religion," available from, <http://www.contenderministries.org/humanism/humanismreligion.php>: Internet; accessed 17 March 2006.

Thompson, Helen, "What If Islam Ruled Britain?" available from <http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/126.htm>: Internet; accessed 17.March 2006.

Papers

Hines, Richard K., "Pico della Mirandola," Department of History, Washington State University, Papers, 1996.

Norris, Pippa and Inglehart, Ronald, "Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide," Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Public Documents

Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *International Policy Statement – A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, Ottawa: Her Majesty's the Queen in Right of Canada, 2005.

Websites

- Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams,”
http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/prov_reconstruction-en.asp: Internet accessed 6 March 2006.
- Center for Inquiry, “Organization Promoting Secularism and Science Granted Representation at United Nations.”
<http://www.centerforinquiry.net/newsrooms/080305.html>: Internet accessed 20 December 2005.
- Council for Secular Humanism, “What is Secular Humanism?”
<http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=what>: Internet accessed 20 January 2006.
- International Humanist News, “Defending Human Rights in Islamic Countries,” 3 August 2003, <http://www.iheu.org/node/1023>: Internet accessed 5 March 2006.
- Justia.com, “US Supreme Court case, *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 US 488 (1961),” available from <http://supreme.justia.com/us/367/488/case.html>: Internet accessed 20 March 2006
- Refence.com “Qualities of Liberal Democracies,” available from http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Liberal_democracy: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.
- The Islamic Council: “Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights” *21 Dhul Qaidah 1401* 19 September 1981 available from <http://www.alhewar.com/ISLAMDECL.html>: Internet; accessed 23 April 2006.
- United States Institute of Peace, “Islam and Democracy.” Special Report 93, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr93.html>: Internet accessed 7 March 2006.
- United Nations. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” available from <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>: Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.
- Wikipedia, “Secular Humanism” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secular_humanism: Internet accessed 20 January 2006.