

Review by Alan Lloyd, Research Associate, U K Defence Forum  
This was the title of a "discussion" led by Dr Herbert London, President of the Hudson Institute, and organised by The Henry Jackson Society, at the House of Commons recently.  
For the increasing number of Europeans who believe that the USA is increasingly populated by right wing, Christian, zealots hell bent (if you will excuse the pun), on convincing the rest of the world how lucky we are to have America imposing their dangerous, and peculiar, mantra upon the rest of us, this was manna from heaven (if you will excuse another pun).  
Dr London first takes issue with so-called Radical Secularists, in a bizarre opening which he claims that they have created a new religion which embraces a form of multi-culturalism which is actually "a form of self loathing" which pronounces America as an undesirable place. As an example of this he offers up feminists who, not unreasonably I would have thought, claim that "the disparity in income between men and women is a sign of oppression". However, their actions are scorned because "scarcely a word is said about the issue of genital mutilation in the Muslim world". Apart from being a truly absurd link it is also blatantly untrue. Had he bothered to check on the internet he could (and still can) sign the "Open Letter From American Feminists" concerning genital mutilation, and all the other issues which oppress women in America and around the world including child marriage, forced marriage, and rape. Still if Iraq can be invaded on the basis of lies, half truths and disinformation, why allow facts be to obstruct this right wing rant?  
Atheists are next in the firing line and accused of "wishing to drive religious discussion out of the public sphere". If true my sympathies are with the atheists, but London goes on to claim that this is "driving out the very foundation stone of the American republic". This is another rewriting of history where he is (deliberately?) mixing the wishes of the Puritans, who originally landed in America, with the later Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution. Indeed in a 1994 judgment the Supreme Court decreed that: "Government should not prefer one religion to another, or religion to irreligion". The only reason religion was mentioned in the Constitution, by way of the First Amendment, was to ensure that no one group could make claim to speaking for America, and that there would be total freedom for each individual. In an argument which got ever more surreal London said that "one of the problems I have with the European system is that the European constitution (sic) makes no reference to the creator".  
He then went on to claim that "the most significant accomplishment of the last millennium,...the most memorable event,...has to be the foundation of the United States.....the United States is still the great hope for mankind". As proof of this, and his anti-Muslim view, he offers up the fact that Tiananmen Square students "built not Mohammed but the Statue of Liberty".  
By now it had become a case of staying with it, just to see how much more ridiculous the presentation would become, and I was not disappointed, as Darwin was next for a pillorying. On the basis that Darwin could not explain self sacrifice and compassion such as a "young soldier...who sees a grenade, and saves his mate by leaping on that grenade", we should therefore talk about faith not science.  
Next came a long pitch for the Republican ticket in the Presidential campaign, not least because "Sarah Palin represents a real American...she is Mrs. Jimmy Stewart". She was compared to Teddy Roosevelt - a claim which should, at least, have him spinning in his grave. We also received the assurance that Palin, "is not a book-burner, she merely questioned some of the books that were available in libraries". Well that's okay then! He, naturally, conveniently omitted mentioning all the other shenanigans she has got up to, both as Mayor and as Governor, and her total ignorance of world affairs ♦ apart from the fact that she knows Russia lies next door to Alaska, of course.  
Moving on to America's

role in Europe he claimed that "Europeans have come to love freedom, but do not know how to defend it. ... We want the EU to play a more active role in defence of its liberties. ...The United States must continue to lead for the next 20-25 years". He then goes on to include the conflicts in Iraq and Palestine as "conflicts which have been said to be forms of the same fight against radical Islam". I can only hope that any remaining credibility he had with even the most ardent right winger in the audience evaporated at this point.

Thankfully now moving on to his main pitch, we were darkly warned that "overly accommodating" radical Islam is "leading to a virtual collapse of the west, fuelled by a lack of confidence in what we stand for." At this particular time I think there are many of us who would certainly agree that life as we know it could collapse - but it as a result of the overwhelming greed of the capitalist system, with which the USA is synonymous.

Maybe it is also the case that other reasons Europeans are currently a little lost and bemused is that we once stood for peace and justice and fairness and tolerance. The lies of an ardent Christian President and Prime Minister have changed all that, and it is a further reason for believing that ALL religion should be confined to one's own home and place of worship - it has no place in schools, constitutions or politics.

Another thing that really irks me with Americans of the self-righteous Christian variety is their sheer stunning hypocrisy. There is all this constant talk of fairness and justice but, in practice, their regime is little better than most others in the world. Ask those confined for years, without charge or trial, in Guantanamo Bay about justice, or the Miami Five, who proved that America has different definitions of terrorists depending on whether a country is "one of us" or not. Study the barbaric penal reform system, including the use of the death penalty, the way that justice is usually found only if you can afford a decent defence attorney Ask the Vietnamese who are still suffering from the effects of America's chemical warfare on their country, or the hundreds of others across the world that lose limbs every month as a result of unexploded American cluster bombs which were dropped during their various imperialistic adventures.

If this discussion in the House of Commons had been given by a Muslim extremist, as opposed to a Christian one, ring-wing papers such as "The Mail" would, quite rightly, have had a field day. It is little wonder that extremists of other religions, especially Islamists, have little trouble recruiting converts for their murderous activities when they can always point to the double standards, and hypocrisy, of those of us in the West.