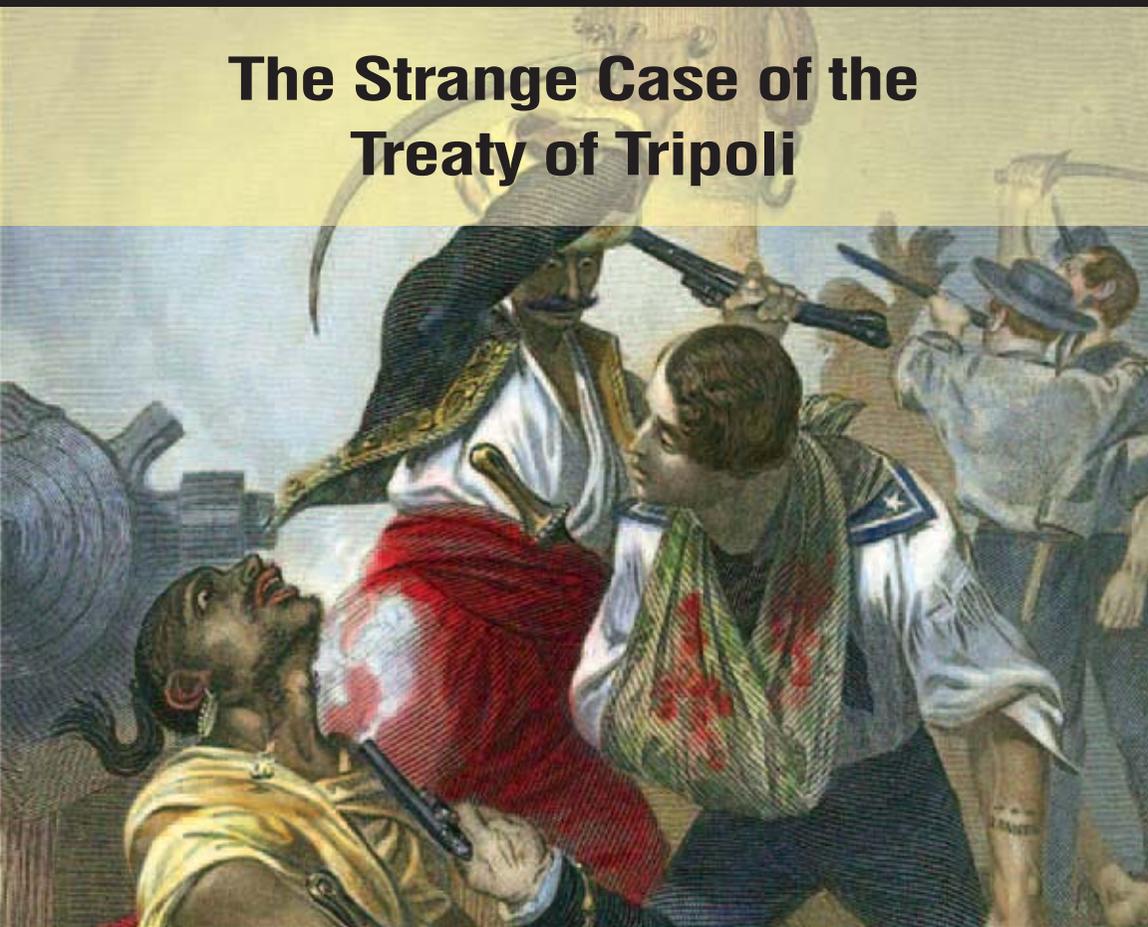


America's 200-Year War with Islamic Terrorism

**The Strange Case of the
Treaty of Tripoli**



GARY DEMAR

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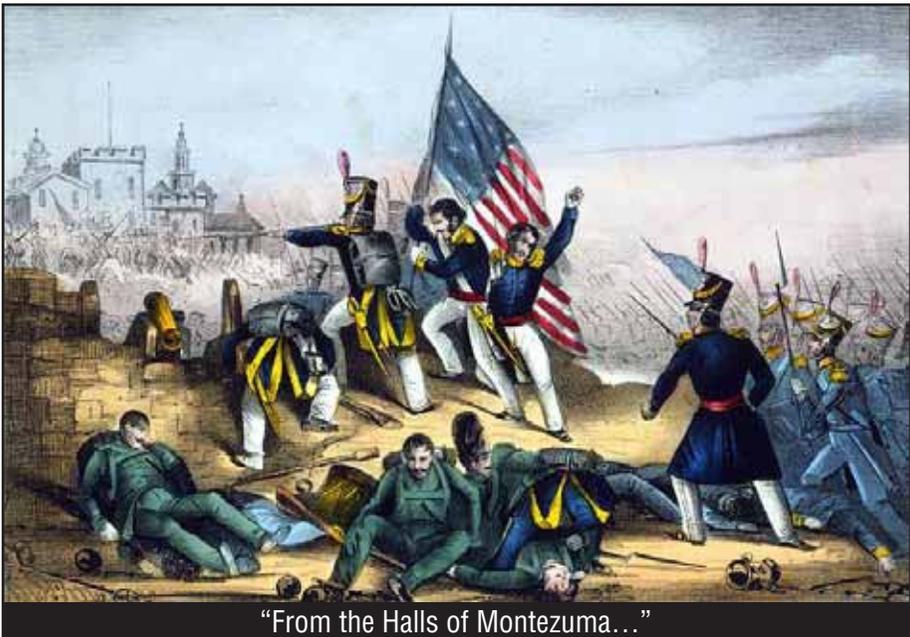
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America's 200-Year War with Islamic Terrorism

The opening line of the Marines' Hymn "From the Halls of Montezuma" refers to the Battle of Chapultepec, the engagement between Mexican and American armies during the Mexican-American War in 1847. "When that battle ended, the United States had won a decisive military victory over General Santa Anna's Mexican army that was holding Chapultepec Castle, located just west of Mexico City."¹ "To the shores of Tripoli" commemorates the actions of the United States Marines and their part in the capture of Derna on April 27, 1805. It seems that we are still fighting Tripoli, but this



"From the Halls of Montezuma..."



new battle is over the facts and interpretation of history. A single line in the first Treaty of Tripoli (ratified June 10, 1797) is continually cited as incontrovertible evidence that our founders self-consciously denied any attachment to the Christian religion, and that there has always been a radical separation between religion and civil government. This conclusion is based upon Article 11 of the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli which reads:

As the government of the United States of America *is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion*,—as it has in itself no character of enmity against the law, religion or tranquility of Musselmen [Muslims],—and as the said States [of America] never have entered into any

war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.²

Who would have thought that a long-forgotten treaty would play such an important role in the debate over religious freedom, justice, and Christian involvement in politics?

Several anti-Christian groups have used the 1797 Treaty with Tripoli—which was drawn up in attempt to put an end to raids on American ships by Barbary Coast pirates—to drive a provocative wedge into our culture and disrupt the idea that religion played a major role in the founding of our nation. The only way the debate can be



Captain Stephen Decatur's conflict with the Algerine at Tripoli during recapture of the *USS Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli (1804)

settled is to survey the historical record. When surveyed, the record will show that the Treaty of Tripoli does nothing to disturb the proposition that America was founded as a Christian nation.

The Washington Connection

The phrase “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion” has been attributed to George Washington numerous times. A portion of the above quotation found its way into the September/October 1980 issue of *Liberty Magazine*, a publication of Review and Herald Publishing Company. The full-page reproduction of Article XI gives the impression that George Washington wrote the words. Washington’s signature follows the excerpted line that reads, “The United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.” As we will see, Washington neither wrote nor signed the treaty.

“It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.”

—George Washington



The Encyclopedia of Philosophy concocts a story of how Washington “acquiesced” to the radical deistic views of Joel Barlow, the American consul in Algiers, by maintaining that America was not a Christian nation. Here is how the story is reported:

In answer to a direct question from a Muslim potentate in Tripoli, Washington acquiesced in the decla-

ration of Joel Barlow, then American Consul in Algiers, that “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.”³

This excerpt gives the impression that Washington went to Tripoli and had a conversation with the Muslim potentate where Washington answered a question relating to America’s religious foundation. This is pure fiction. As far as we know, Washington had no direct involvement with the Treaty. He had left office before the Treaty was signed and had no opportunity to review it.

Norman Geisler, evangelical author of *Is Man the Measure* and many other books on Christian apologetics, uncritically accepts the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy’s* conclusion concerning the Treaty of Tripoli and George Washington’s part in it. Geisler states that “our nation’s founders were largely humanistic (or deistic). . . . There were few evangelical Christians among the signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Witherspoon being a notable exception. And



Joel Barlow,
American Consul in Algiers

when George Washington was asked if the United States was a Christian country, he replied that ‘the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.’”⁴ Geisler offers no evidence that Washington was ever asked this question. As subsequent study will demonstrate, Washington never made a statement even remotely resembling the one being attributed to him by these scarcely researched articles.

During the 1984 presidential election, People for the American Way (PAW) aired a commercial entitled “Founding Fathers/Separation of Church and State.” Noted actor Martin Sheen narrated the propagandistic segment. Sheen said: “Today the voices evoking religious dogma have invaded the highest places of government, challenging the ideas of our Founding Fathers and the separation of church and state.” What did PAW use to support this claim of the views of the founding fathers? PAW turned to a chopped quotation from the Treaty of Tripoli and maintained that they were the words of George Washington. Sheen continued: “‘The government of the United States,’ insisted Washington, ‘is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion or any other religion.’”⁵ PAW cannot even misquote with integrity. Nowhere does the Treaty of Tripoli contain the words “or any other religion.”

The issue regarding whether Washington ever said or wrote that the government of the United States was not founded on the Christian religion is an old debate. Others more honest than today’s critics of the Christian America position have called the story of Washington’s denouncement what it really is—a myth.

There is a myth (and it was revived in 1962 during the discussion following the Supreme Court’s decision against the constitutionality of state-sponsored prayers in public schools) to the effect that Washington once declared while he was President that the government of the United States was not a Christian nation.⁶

A book dispelling hundreds of similar false quotations and misleading attributions states that “the statement was not Washington’s” and that diplomats had used that particular phraseology because they were “eager to make it clear that Christianity was not an American state religion, and that therefore the U.S. government bore no official hostility toward Islam.”⁷ This is as close to the truth as it gets.

The evidence supporting America’s Christian founding is overwhelming. Those who dispute the claim cannot do it honestly. They must play fast and loose with the facts because the historical evidence is so against them. In an address to the Delaware Chiefs on May 12, 1797, Washington stated: “You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ.”⁸

George Washington stated that “it is the duty of all *nations* to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.” He went on in his Thanksgiving Proclamation of October 3, 1789, to write, that as a nation “we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great *Lord and Ruler of Nations*, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions.”⁹ Just above his signature to the United States Constitution, these words appear: “Done in the Year of our Lord . . . one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven.” This is a direct reference to Jesus Christ.

The Adams Connection

Jim Castelli, in an article titled “‘Christian America’: A Myth Keeps Living On,”¹⁰ attaches the name of John Adams to the infamous phrase. President Adams did sign the Treaty on June 10, 1797, three days after it was passed by the Senate. However, a study of Adams’ private and public statements show that he believed that Christianity must be rooted within the nation’s culture in order for the nation to survive. Adams expressed his religious views on numerous occa-

sions, but his call for a National Fast Day on March 6, 1799, is the most expressive:

As no truth is more clearly taught in the Volume of Inspiration, nor any more fully demonstrated by the experience of all ages, than that a deep sense and a due acknowledgment of the growing providence of a Supreme Being and of the accountableness of men to Him as the searcher of hearts and righteous distributor of rewards and punishments are conducive equally to the happiness of individuals and to the well-being of communities.... I have thought proper to recommend, and I hereby recommend accordingly, that Thursday, the twenty-fifth day of April next, be observed throughout the United States of America as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that the citizens on that day abstain, as far as may be, from their secular occupation, and devote the time to the sacred duties of religion, in public and in private; that they call to mind our numerous offenses against the most high God, confess them before Him



“I have thought proper to recommend, and I hereby recommend accordingly, that Thursday, the twenty-fifth day of April next, be observed throughout the United States of America as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer...”

—*John Adams*

with the sincerest penitence, implore his pardoning mercy, **through the Great Mediator and Redeemer, for our past transgressions, and that through the grace of His Holy Spirit, we may be disposed and enabled to yield a more suitable obedience to his righteous requisitions in time to come;** that He would interpose to arrest the progress of that impiety and licentiousness in principle and practice so offensive to Himself and so ruinous to mankind; that He would make us deeply sensible that “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” [Prov. 14:34].¹¹

The “Great Mediator and Redeemer” is Jesus Christ. On another occasion, John Adams wrote to Thomas Jefferson stating, “The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were ... the general principles of Christianity.”¹² A few years later Adams wrote a letter to Jefferson in which he stated that “Without religion this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite society, I mean hell.”¹³ While Washington and Adams did not have any direct hand in drafting the Treaty, this does not change the fact that the phrase “As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion” still needs to be explained.

America’s First War on Terror

Attempts to appease Islamic Muslim radicals by discounting America’s Christian heritage had been tried before. How do we reconcile the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli, which “was negotiated under Washington, ratified by the Senate, and signed by President John Adams,”¹⁴ with the overwhelming evidence of America’s Christian heritage? Why put such a specific statement regarding the Christian religion in a treaty with a Muslim nation? Why is this the only treaty that includes this phrase? It’s easy to understand given the accommodating statements about Islam made by President George W. Bush

and his cabinet in an attempt to accommodate Muslim nations. The United States is still attempting to pacify Muslim religious fears. Consider the following:

[In 2009] the U.S. military is confirming that it has destroyed some Bibles belonging to an American soldier serving in Afghanistan.

Reuters News says the Bibles were confiscated and destroyed after Qatar-based Al Jazeera television showed soldiers at a Bible class on a base with a stack of Bibles translated into the local Pashto and Dari languages. The U.S. military forbids its members on active duty—including those based in places like Afghanistan—from trying to convert people to another religion.

Reuters quotes Maj. Jennifer Willis at the Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, who said “I can now confirm that the Bibles shown on Al Jazeera’s clip were, in fact, collected by the chaplains and later destroyed. They were never distributed.”

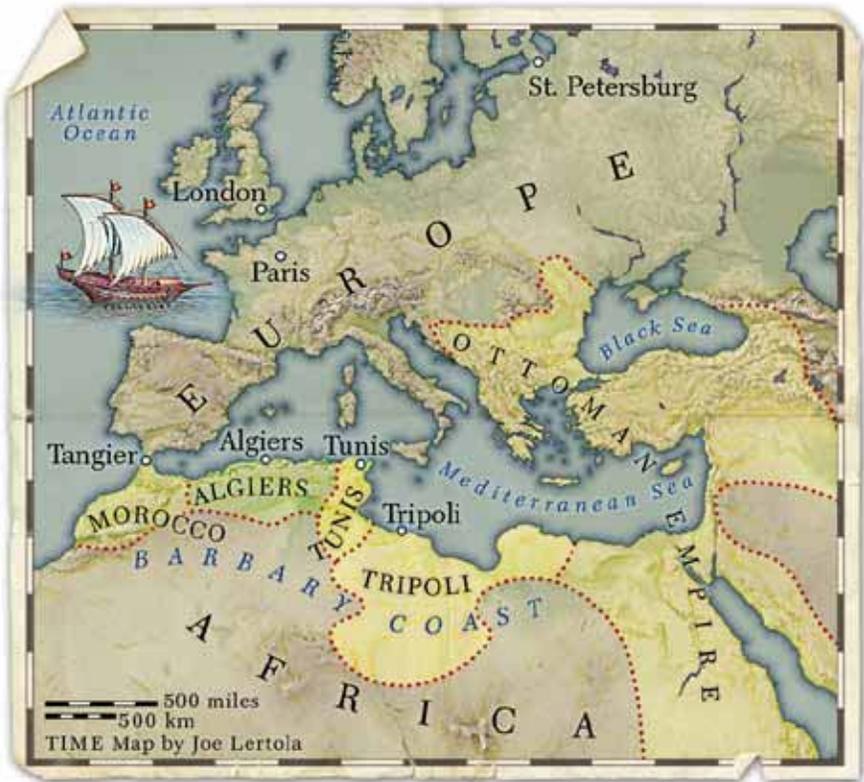
According to the military officials, the Bibles were sent through private mail to an evangelical Christian soldier by his church back home. Reuters says the soldier brought them to the Bible study class where they were filmed.

The Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, told a Pentagon briefing Monday that the military’s position is that it will never “push any specific religion.”¹⁵

Like today, there was a poorly conceived *diplomatic* reason for the inclusion of the “Christian religion” phrase. The Treaty of Tripoli is nothing more than a pronouncement “that ‘the Christian religion’ as

a formal institution was not a part of the American government in the same way that the religious structures of Islam are a part of Islamic governments. From many things that Adams and his contemporaries wrote it is clear that they did not use the word *religion* to exclude Christian ideas or principles as some do today. True, the founders did not make institutional religion a part of the government. But they never thought of excluding Christian principles.”¹⁶

We must also consider that a Muslim country could not and would not make a treaty with what it considered to be an infidel (Christian) nation unless it was a one-way street. Thomas Jefferson, embroiled in a war with Islamic terrorists in his day, commented, “Too long, for the honor of nations, have those Barbarians been suffered [permitted] to trample on the sacred faith of treaties, on the rights and laws of hu-



The Barbary Area Map

man nature!"¹⁷ Little has changed since the eighteenth century. Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who took office in August 2005, stated that "Anyone who signs a treaty which recognizes the entity of Israel means he has signed the surrender of the Muslim world." According to the Koran, the United States, like Israel today, was considered an infidel nation. Ahmadinejad described the current Islamic relationship between the United States as an "historic war between the oppressor¹⁸ and the world of Islam." For Ahmadinejad, this "historic war . . . dates back hundreds of years."¹⁹

In surveying all the evidence, and taking into account the circumstances surrounding the necessity for such a treaty, it is not hard to explain the disputed phrase. The statement in question was to assure a radically religious (Muslim) government that America would not depose that government and impose Christianity by force. A single phrase ripped from its historical context does nothing to nullify the volumes of historical evidence that Christianity was foundational to the building and maintenance of this nation.

Muslim Nations versus Christian Nations

In order to understand the statement "As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion," it must be read in context and with background knowledge of the religion of Islam. It is obvious by reading the original treaty that Tripoli considered America to be a Christian nation. In writing an annotated translation of the treaty in 1930, Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje of Leiden, Netherlands, reviewed the Cathcart copy and found numerous statements that clearly show that Tripoli considered America to be a Christian nation. Here is just one example:

Glory be to God! Declaration of the third article.
We have agreed that if American Christians are traveling with a nation that is at war with the well-preserved Tripoli, and he [evidently the Tripolitan] takes [prison-

ers] from the Christian enemies and from the American Christians with whom we are at peace, then sets them free; neither he nor his goods shall be taken.²⁰

The treaty constantly contrasts “Christian nations” (e.g., Article VI) and “Tripoli,” a Muslim stronghold that was used as a base of operations for Barbary pirates. Muslim nations were hostile to “Christian nations.” The Barbary pirates habitually preyed on ships from “Christian nations,” enslaving “Christian” seamen. “Barbary was Christendom’s Gulag Archipelago.”²¹

In Joseph Wheelan’s well researched and highly readable book on America’s first war on terror with radical Muslims, we learn that Thomas “Jefferson’s war pitted a modern republic with a free-trade, entrepreneurial creed against a medieval autocracy whose credo was piracy and terror. It matched an ostensibly Christian nation against an avowed Islamic one that professed to despise Christians.”²² Wheelan’s historical assessment of the time is on target. “Except for its Native American population and a small percentage of Jews, the United States was solidly Christian, while the North African regencies were just as solidly Muslim—openly hostile toward Christians.”²³

In drafting the treaty, the United States had to assure the Dey (ruler) of Tripoli that in its struggle with the pirates “it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen,” that “the said states never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan [Muslim] nation” due to religious considerations. These are the qualifying statements in the treaty that explain why the phrase “founded on the Christian religion” was used.

A survey of the state constitutions, charters, national pronouncements, and official declarations of the thirteen state governments would convince any representative from Tripoli that America was a Christian nation by law. The American consul in Algiers, Joel Barlow, had to construct a treaty that would assure the Dey of Tripoli that troops would not be used to impose Christianity on a Muslim people.

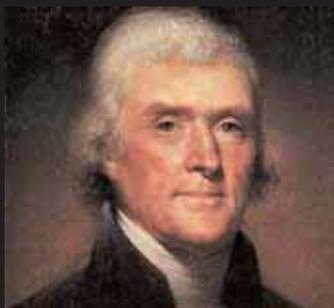
What was Mr. Barlow trying to say? Representing a nation whose laws do not make heresy a crime, and which has no established church or official religion, was he not trying to reassure those of a different religious and cultural tradition that we, for our part, had worked out an arrangement between the prevailing religion in America and our government that did not commit the destiny of that faith into the keeping of the state? Our government, therefore, could enter into amicable relationships with nations whose religion differs from our own.

History supports such an interpretation.²⁴

Tripoli may have feared a crusade-like invasion from the American navy. (Muslims well remembered the Crusades and the expulsion of Muslims from Grenada by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492.) America was not founded as a Christian nation in the same way that Libya was founded as a Muslim nation. "Christianity was not an American state religion and therefore the United States government bore no official hostility toward Mohammadanism."²⁵ The Dey of Tripoli had to be convinced that America, as a Christian nation, would not impose its religion on the Muslim people. "Could it have been that in Article 11, America was assuring Tripoli and all of the Barbary States that the United States did not have a state church system and would therefore not attack Tripoli for religious reasons of forced conversion?"²⁶ This seems to be the best explanation of the phrase found in Article 11 of the Treaty.

A study of later treaties with Muslim nations seems to support this conclusion. The 1816 "Treaty of Peace and Amity with Algiers" is a case in point: "It is declared by the contracting parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony between the two nations; and the Consuls and

the Agents of both nations shall have liberty to celebrate the rights of their prospective religions in their own houses.”²⁷



“Too long, for the honor of nations, have those Barbarians been suffered [permitted] to trample on the sacred faith of treaties, on the rights and laws of human nature!”

—*Thomas Jefferson*

There remains a strange curiosity about the original treaty and its translation.

As even a casual examination of the [annotated translation of 1930](#) shows, the Barlow translation is at best a poor attempt at a paraphrase or summary of the sense of the Arabic; and even as such its defects throughout are obvious and glaring. Most extraordinary (and wholly unexplained) is the fact that [Article 11](#) of the Barlow translation, with its famous phrase, “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion,” does not exist at all. There is no [Article 11](#). The Arabic text which is between [Articles 10](#) and [12](#) is in form a letter, crude and flamboyant and withal quite unimportant, from the Dey of Algiers to the Pasha of Tripoli. How that script came to be written and to be regarded, as in the Barlow translation, as [Article 11](#) of the treaty as there written, is a mystery and seemingly must remain so. Nothing in the diplomatic correspondence of the time throws any light whatever on the point.

The 1805 Treaty

Piracy, kidnapping, and enslaving Christian seamen remained a problem despite the 1797 Treaty. In addition, Tripoli demanded increased tribute payments in 1801. Dumas Malone, Jefferson's biographer, writes: "Treaties had been made with these petty piratical powers in the past, all of them calling for what amounted to tribute. The United States was acting like the other nations with commerce to protect, but Jefferson had opposed this sort of policy from the time he was in France, believing that the only effective language to employ against these brigands of the sea was that of force. He never believed in buying peace with them, and actually he was the first President to use force against them. John Adams was not undispensed to do so, but the Father of the United States Navy stayed his hand because of the troubles with France."²⁸



United States Navy
Commander Edward Preble
(1761-1807) blockaded
Tripoli from 1803 to 1805.

When President Jefferson refused to increase the tribute, Tripoli declared war on the United States. A United States navy squadron, under Commander Edward Preble, blockaded Tripoli from 1803 to

1805. After rebel soldiers from Tripoli, led by United States Marines, captured the city of Derna, the Pasha of Tripoli signed a treaty promising to exact no more tribute.

It is important to note that the 1805 treaty with Tripoli differs from the 1797 Treaty in that the phrase “as the Government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion” is conspicuously absent. Article 14 of the new treaty corresponds to Article 11 of the first treaty. It reads in part: “[T]he government of the United States of America has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Musselmen.” Assurances are still offered that the United States will not interfere with Tripoli’s religion or laws.

It’s obvious that by 1805 the United States had greater bargaining power and did not have to knuckle under to the demands of this Muslim stronghold.²⁹ A strong navy and a contingent of Marines also helped. But it wasn’t until Madison’s presidency that hostilities finally stopped when he declared war against Algiers.³⁰

Those who use the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli as a defense against the Christian America thesis are silent on the 1805 treaty. For example, Alan Dershowitz cites the 1797 as “the best contemporaneous evidence” against claims that the United States was founded as a Christian nation,³¹ but he says nothing of the later renegotiated and revised treaty

The Treaties of 1783, 1814, 1822, and 1848

In the December 2005 issue of *Mother Jones* magazine, the editors write that Article 11 of the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli is “as succinct a statement as we have from the Founding Fathers on the role of religion in our government, ...and so stands today as an official description of the founders’ intent.”³² If treaties are going to be used to establish the religious commitment of America, then it’s essential

that we look at more than one treaty. In 1783, at the close of the war with Great Britain, a peace treaty was ratified that began with these words: "In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the hearts of



John Jay (1745–1829), American statesman, first Chief Justice of the United States signed the 1783 treaty with Great Britain.

the most serene and most potent Prince George the Third, by the Grace of God King of Great Britain.”³³ The treaty was signed by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay. Keep in mind that it was Adams who signed the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli, even though he was not a Trinitarian.

In 1822, the United States, along with Great Britain and Ireland, ratified a “Convention for Indemnity Under Award of Emperor of Russia as to the True Construction of the First Article of the Treaty of December 24, 1814.”³⁴ It begins with the same words found in the Preamble to the 1783 treaty: “In the name of the Most Holy and Indivisible Trinity.” Only Christianity teaches a Trinitarian view of God. The 1848 Treaty with Mexico begins with “In the name of Almighty God.” The treaty also states that both countries are “under the protection of Almighty God, the author of peace...”³⁵ If one line in the 1797 Treaty of Tripoli turns America into a secular State (which it does not), then how do the critics deal with the treaties of 1783, 1822, 1805, and 1848? They usually don’t.

Chris Rodda spends 35 pages on the “Treaties with the Barbary States” in his book *Liars for Jesus: The Religious Right’s Alternative Version of American History* but never explains why the phrase was added to the Treaty. It seems rather odd to include such a phrase explaining what something is not. Furthermore, as Rodda states, “the President, the Senate, and the people of the United States apparently accepted without question an official statement that ‘*the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion....*’” I doubt that “the people” ever saw the treaty. There surely were many Christians in the Senate. Why didn’t they object to the statement? Given the religious nature of all state constitutions, some of which were explicitly Christian (e.g., North Carolina), it seems rather odd that there were no protestations unless the statement had the particular purpose assuring a Muslim stronghold that America did not merge church and state. The language was designed to give assurances to Tripoli that the United States would not interfere in any way with “the law, *religion* or tranquility of Musselmen.”

Rodda writes “that the Muslims in the Barbary states wrongly assumed that the United States was a Christian nation like the nations of Europe.”³⁶ That’s the point! The Muslims believed, because of the language of the official documents of the United States—state constitutions, the use of “the Year of our Lord” in the Constitution, and calls for national days of prayer and thanksgiving with references to Jesus Christ—that America was a Christian nation. How could they think otherwise? America did not have State churches. This all explains very well why the statement regarding the “Christian religion” was added with no protestations.

Rodda offers this “explanation” as to why the “Christian religion” statement does not appear in the 1805 Treaty: “the events that occurred between 1797 and 1805 made it necessary to rewrite it.”³⁷ But why? He states that “Tobias Lear left out the phrase ‘*is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion*’ but claims “there is nothing significant about this.” How does he know this? If the phrase was significant

for Rodda and his fellow skeptics when it appeared in the 1797 Treaty, it seems that leaving it out of the 1805 Treaty had some significance other than the phrase “was unnecessary, and, with what was being added, made the sentence too long.”³⁸

5th CONGRESS.]

No. 122.

[1st Session.]

TRIPOLI.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, MAY 26, 1797.

UNITED STATES, May 26, 1797.

Gentlemen of the Senate:

I lay before you, for your consideration and advice, a treaty of perpetual peace and friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and subjects of Tripoli, of Barbary, concluded, at Tripoli, on the 4th day of November, 1796.

JOHN ADAMS.

Treaty of peace and friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli, of Barbary.

ARTICLE 1. There is a firm and perpetual peace and friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and subjects of Tripoli, of Barbary, made by the free consent of both parties, and guaranteed by the most potent Dey and Regency of Algiers.

ART. 2. If any goods belonging to any nation, with which either of the parties is at war, shall be loaded on board of vessels belonging to the other party, they shall pass free, and no attempt shall be made to take or detain them.

ART. 3. If any citizens, subjects, or effects, belonging to either party, shall be found on board a prize vessel, taken from an enemy by the other party, such citizens or subjects shall be set at liberty, and the effects restored to the owners.

ART. 4. Proper passports are to be given to all vessels of both parties, by which they are to be known. And considering the distance between the two countries, eighteen months, from the date of this treaty, shall be allowed for procuring such passports. During this interval the other papers, belonging to such vessels, shall be sufficient for their protection.

ART. 5. A citizen or subject of either party having bought a prize vessel, condemned by the other party, or by any other nation, the certificates of condemnation and bill of sale shall be a sufficient passport for such vessel for one year; this being a reasonable time for her to procure a proper passport.

ART. 6. Vessels of either party, putting into the ports of the other, and having need of provisions or other supplies, they shall be furnished at the market price. And if any such vessel shall so put in, from a disaster at sea, and have occasion to repair, she shall be at liberty to land and re-embark her cargo without paying any duties. But in no case shall she be compelled to land her cargo.

ART. 7. Should a vessel of either party be cast on the shore of the other, all proper assistance shall be given to her and her people; no pillage shall be allowed; the property shall remain at the disposition of the owners; and the crew protected and succored till they can be sent to their country.

ART. 8. If a vessel of either party should be attacked by an enemy, within gun-shot of the forts of the other, she shall be defended as much as possible. If she be in port she shall not be seized on, or attacked, when it is in the power of the other party to protect her. And when she proceeds to sea, no enemy shall be allowed to pursue her from the same port, within twenty-four hours after her departure.

ART. 9. The commerce between the United States and Tripoli; the protection to be given to merchants, masters of vessels, and seamen; the reciprocal right of establishing consuls in each country; and the privileges, immunities, and jurisdictions, to be enjoyed by such consuls, are declared to be on the same footing with those of the most favored nations respectively.

ART. 10. The money and presents demanded by the Bey of Tripoli, as a full and satisfactory consideration on his part, and on the part of his subjects, for this treaty of perpetual peace and friendship, are acknowledged to have been received by him previous to his signing the same, according to a receipt which is hereto annexed, except such part as is promised, on the part of the United States, to be delivered and paid by them on the arrival of their consul in Tripoli; of which part a note is likewise hereto annexed. And no pretence of any periodical tribute or further payments is ever to be made by either party.

ART. 11. As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Mussulmen; and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext, arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.

ART. 12. In case of any dispute, arising from a violation of any of the articles of this treaty, no appeal shall be made to arms; nor shall war be declared on any pretext whatever. But if the consul, residing at the place where the dispute shall happen, shall not be able to settle the same, an amicable reference shall be made to the mutual friend of the parties, the Dey of Algiers; the parties hereby engaging to abide by his decision. And he, by virtue of his signature to this treaty, engages for himself and successors to declare the justice of the case, according to the true interpretation of the treaty, and to use all the means in his power to enforce the observance of the same.

Signed and sealed at Tripoli, of Barbary, the 3d day of Junad, in the year of the Hegira 1211—corresponding with the 4th day of November, 1796, by

JUSSOF BASHAW MAHOMET, *Bey*.
MAMET, *Treasurer*.
AMET, *Minister of Marine*.
SOLIMAN KAYA.
GALEL, *General of the Troops*.
MAHOMET, *Commander of the City*.
AMET, *Chamberlain*.
ALLY, *Chief of the Divan*.
MAMET, *Secretary*.

Signed and sealed at Algiers, the 4th day of Argill, 1211—corresponding with the 3d day of January, 1797, by

HASSAN BASHAW, *Dey*,

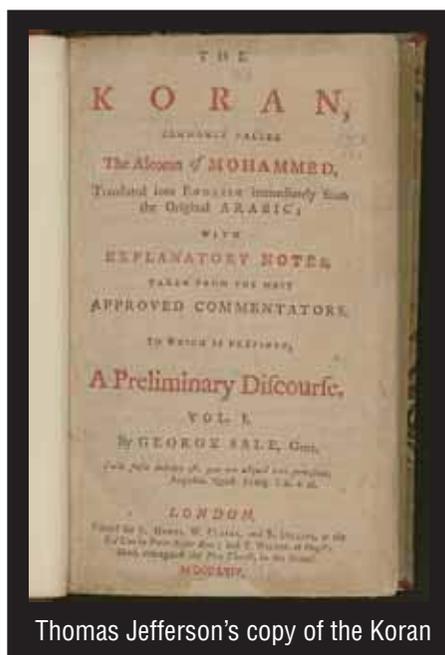
And by the agent Plenipotentiary of the United States of America,

JOEL BARLOW.

When Peace Means War

Thomas Jefferson was a student of the Koran. He owned a two-volume English translation edition first published in 1734. He understood that the Koran's peace initiatives were double-talk and one-sided. Peace meant the absence of any religious or political opposition. This is the indisputable history of Islam as historian Paul Johnson argues:

Koranic teaching that the faith or "submission" can be, and in suitable circumstances must be, imposed by force, has never been ignored. On the contrary, the history of Islam from Arabia was followed by the rapid conquest of North Africa, the invasion and virtual conquest of Spain, and a thrust into France that carried the crescent to the gates of Paris. It took half a millennium or reconquest to expel the Moslems from Western Europe. The Crusades, far from being an outrageous prototype of Western imperialism, as is taught in most of



Thomas Jefferson's copy of the Koran

our schools, were a mere episode in a struggle that has lasted 1,400 years and were one of the few occasions when Christians took the offensive to regain the “occupied territories” of the Holy Land.³⁹

As early as 1786, Jefferson, who was serving as the ambassador to France, and John Adams, the Ambassador to Britain, met in London with Ambassador Abdrahaman, the Dey of Tripoli's ambassador to Britain, in an attempt to negotiate a peace treaty based on Congress' vote of funding. Peace would come at a price. If America wanted “temporary peace,” a one-year guarantee, it would cost \$66,000 plus a 10% commission. “Everlasting peace” was a bargain at \$160,000 plus the obligatory commission. This only applied to Tripoli. Other nations would also have to be paid. The amount came to \$1.3 million. But as we saw above, there was no assurance that the treaties would be honored. In vain Jefferson and Adams tried to argue that the United States were not at war with Tripoli. In what way had the U.S provoked the Muslims, they asked? Ambassador Abdrahaman went on to explain “the finer points of Islamic jihad” to the Koranically challenged Jefferson and Adams. In a letter to John Jay, Jefferson wrote the following:



Ambassador Abdrahaman, the Dey of Tripoli's ambassador to Britain:

A non-aggressing nation is still at war with Islam, as long as it hasn't embraced Islam.

The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the Laws of their Prophet, that it was written in their Koran, that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, and to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners, and that every Musselman [Muslim] who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise.⁴¹

Abdrahman was paraphrasing the Koran’s “rules of engagement” found in the 47 Surah: “Whenever you encounter the ones who disbelieve [during wartime], seize them by their necks until once you have subdued them, then tie them up as prisoners, either in order to release them later on, or also to ask for ransom, until war lays down her burdens.” Unless a nation submitted to an Islamic nation, whether it was the aggressor or not, that nation was by definition at war with Islam. Jihad means “to submit.” A non-aggressing nation is still at war with Islam as long as it hasn’t embraced Islam. Islam’s goal is to conquer the world, either by the submission of one’s will or by Allah’s sword.⁴¹



The Last American

I am reminded of the sobering messages on the dedication page of J. A. Mitchell’s *The Last American* (1889) and the book’s closing words: “To those thoughtful Persians who can read a warning in the sudden rise and swift extinction of a foolish people [the Americans] this volume is dedicated.... Again upon the sea. This time for Persia, bearing our wounded and the ashes of the dead [last American]; those of the

natives are reposing beneath the Great Temple [U.S. Capitol]. The skull of the last Mehrikan I shall present to the museum at Teheran.”

It's no wonder that Jefferson studied the Koran. He realized that if Americans ever capitulated, the *Muslims* would be singing “From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of A-mer-i-ca.”



Illustration from *The Last American* depicting the ruins of the “Great Temple” (U.S. Capitol)

Notes

1. John Hoyle, "[From the Halls of Montezuma. . .](#)," (April 25, 2009)
2. William M. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909*, 4 vols. (New York: Greenwood Press, [1910] 1968), 2:1786.
3. Ernest Campbell Mossner, "Deism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 2:334.
4. Norman L. Geisler, *Is Man the Measure: An Evaluation of Contemporary Humanism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 124–125.
5. Press release from People for the American Way: "Founding Fathers/Separation of Church and State," (September 20, 1984), 1.
6. Paul F. Boller, Jr., *George Washington and Religion* (Dallas, TX: Methodist University Press, 1962), 87. Quoted in M. Kimberly Roberts, *The Tripoli Treaty of 1797: Its Use as a Precedent for Separation of Church and State*, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Public Policy, CBN University, Virginia Beach, VA, 1986, 7.
7. Paul F. Boller, Jr., and John George, *They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 129.
8. George Washington, "Address to Delaware Chiefs," *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources: 1749–1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 15:55.
9. George Washington, "Proclamation: A National Thanksgiving," *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1902*, ed. John D. Richardson, 11 vols. (Washington, DC: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1907), 1:64.
10. This article appeared in newspapers across the country on July 4, 1984.
11. John Adams, "National Fast Day," *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 1:284–286.
12. John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, June 28, 1813, in Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 2:339–340.
13. John Adams to Thomas Jefferson (April 19, 1817) in Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, DC: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), 15:105.
14. Mark A. Noll, Nathan Hatch, and George M. Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), 131.

15. Fred Jackson, "[U.S. military destroys soldier's Bibles](#)," OneNewsNow (May 5, 2009).
16. Gary T. Amos, *Defending the Declaration* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1989), 9.
17. Thomas Jefferson, congratulatory letter to Lt. Andrew Sterett (1760–1807). Quoted in Joseph Wheelan, *Jefferson's War: America's First War on Terror, 1801–1805* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 102
18. The Christian United States.
19. Golnaz Esfandiari, "[Israel should be 'wiped off the map': Iran President](#)" (October 27, 2005).
20. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796e.asp
21. Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (New York: Barnes & Noble, [1977] 1992), 4. The 1815 Treaty of Peace and Amity with Algiers includes the following in Article XV: "On a vessel or vessels of war belonging to the United States anchoring before the city of Algiers, the Consul is to inform the Dey of her arrival, when she shall receive the salutes which are, by treat or custom, given to the ships of war of the most favored nations on similar occasions, and which shall be returned gun for gun; and if, after such arrival, so announced, any Christians whatsoever, captives in Algiers, make their escape and take refuge on board any of the ships of war, they shall not be required back again, nor shall the Consul of the United States or commanders of said ships be required to pay anything for the said Christians." (Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers*, 1:7).
22. Wheelan, *Jefferson's War*, xxiii.
23. Wheelan, *Jefferson's War*, 7.
24. *The Remnant*, "Memorandum No. XXXIII," Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education (September 22, 1965), 2.
25. Boller, *George Washington and Religion*, 23. Quoted in Roberts, *The Tripoli Treaty of 1797*, 87.
26. John W. Whitehead, "The Treaty of Tripoli," *The Rutherford Institute* (January/February 1985), 11.
27. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements Between the United States of America and Other Powers*, 1:15.
28. Dumas Malone, *Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801–1805* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 4:97–98.
29. Michael Beschloss mentions the fact that "a treaty favorable to the United States was signed in 1805," but says nothing about the 1797 treaty with its accom-

modationist language. (*American Heritage Illustrated History of the Presidents* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 58).

30. Lewis Lord, "Pirates!," *U.S. News & World Report* (February 25/March 4, 2002), 50.

31. Alan Dershowitz, *America Declares Independence* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), 64. Also see Noll, *et al.*, *The Search for Christian America*, 79; Jim Walker, "This Happy State," *Liberty Magazine* (July/August 2002); Rob Boston, "Joel Barlow and the Treaty with Tripoli: A Tangled tale of Pirates, A Poet and the True Meaning of the First Amendment," *Church & State Magazine* (June 1997).

32. "The Great Debate of Our Season," *Mother Jones* (December 2005), 26. The article is also available online at www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2005/12/great_debate.html

33. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909*, 1:586.

34. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909*, 1:634.

35. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909*, 1:1107.

36. Chris Rodda, *Liars for Jesus: The Religious Right's Alternate Version of American History*, vol. 1 (New Jersey: published by the author, 2006), 301.

37. Rodda, *Liars for Jesus*, 315.

38. Paul Johnson, "Relentlessly and Thoroughly': The Only Way to Respond," *National Review* (October 15, 2001).

39. Paul Johnson, "Relentlessly and Thoroughly': The Only Way to Respond," *National Review* (October 15, 2001).

40. Quoted in Wheelan, *Jefferson's War*, 40–41.

41. Robert Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2006) and Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2005).