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Sects and New Religious Movements:
Questions and Challenges
for Armed Forces and National Security [1]

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As I began to try to gather some information for preparing this paper, I very soon realized how little material seemed to be available about this specific topic. After sending letters and e-mail messages to a number of fellow researchers around the world, I got many negative replies, which could more or less be summarized with those words which a British colleague wrote to me: "the really interesting answer is that the new religious movements on the whole don't have any significance as far the armed forces go"! Actually, there seems to be no specific research about sects and new religious movements in the armed forces.

There are several reasons for this absence of research, the first and most obvious one being the low numerical strength of most of the groups which could be included in such a category. In addition, the groups which are called "sects" or "new religious movements" (NRMs) constitute by no means a coherent family of religious groups, they are of the most varied kinds and there is no common denominator between all of them, except the fact that they are non conventional religious groups when compared to mainstream religious organizations; in addition, nearly all of them were born either during the XIXth or during the XXth century; unfortunately, in some countries (including European ones), public opinion lump them all together, but this doesn't make them a clearly circumscribed population for a scholarly research regarding the presence of some of their members in the miltary. Even more so because there is no possible legal definition of what a "sect" or "NRM" is: the proper approach is to see such groups as a part of a growing religious pluralism in our modern societies — and consequently the armed forces, since they tend to mirror developments in the societies to which they belong.

Definitions: sects, cults, new religious movements

The word "sect" was used during centuries of Christian history for labelling groups organized around teachings considered to be heretical [2] . Those so-called "heretics" had been former members of the Church, and from the beginning a sect was defined in relationship to the Church and the doctrinal orthodoxy which the Church claimed to represent. The definition of sects as it was originally developed by the social sciences in the XXth century followed the pattern of a dichotomy between "Church" and "sect". Max Weber (1864-1920) and Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) developed a theory of "Church" and "sect" as contrasting types of religious organizations. The Church tends to accept the existing social order and aspires to gather in its fold the entire society, while the sect is seen as a group which rejects any compromise with the established system and gathers only those deeply-convinced believers who volunteer for leading a life fully consistent with their religious beliefs — to quote only some of the characteristics found in those early sociological works about sectarianism. However, very soon, it

appeared that this definition didn't adequately cover the religious reality as seen in countries, like the United States, without the tradition of an established State Church. In his book, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929), Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962) introduced the concept of "denomination" as a kind of intermediate stage between Church and sect [3] : after the fervor of the first generation of believers decreases, a sect would lose somewhat its radicalism and accept to compromise, thus coming closer to the characteristics of a "Church".

Church, sect and denomination as defined by the social sciences all clearly belong to the area of Christianity [4] (even if some non-Christian groups have sometimes adopted such words for describing themselves, e.g. "Buddhist Churches of America", "Church of Scientology"...). But what about those groups which don't derive from Christianity and are not imported non-Christian world religions? American Christian authors were using the word "cult" to describe religious groups which they considered as having clearly moved away from the core beliefs of traditional Christianity: for instance, Christian Science, New Thought, Spiritualism, Theosophy... [5] The word remained however confined to the English-speaking world, and those same groups were described as "sects" in literature published in other languages. It seems that the first sociological use of "cult" was elaborated in 1932, in order to describe a "very amorphous, loose-textured, uncondensed type of social structure", putting the emphasis upon purely personal experience and being "the most ephemeral of all types of religious structure" [6] . Subsequently, some researchers saw cults not only from the viewpoint of their degree of structuration, but also as truly alternative religions, as cultural innovators. "While most sects follow familiar cultural patterns to a large extent, 'cults' follow an altogether different religious structure, one foreign and alien to the prevalent religious communities" [7] . Unlike sects, i.e. schismatic groups, cults in most cases "do not have a prior tie with another established religious body in the society in question. The cult may represent an alien (external) religion, or it may have originated in the host society, but through innovation, not fission." [8]

With so many words already in use, why was still the expression NRMs added to them — to the point that it comes to be today probably the most widely used among sociologists of religion? The popularity of the label NRMs in the academic community (although it is far from satisfactory, since "new" is by definition bound to become very soon outdated! [9]) is to a large extent due to the fact that words like "cults" and "sects" have become heavily loaded in common language: "This popular use of the term [cult] has gained such credence and momentum that it has virtually swallowed up the more neutral historical meaning of the term from the sociology of religion." [10] From the 1970s, the term NRMs (or new religions [11]) became widely used, but applied to all kinds of groups, from the Jesus People to Eastern religious movements. It "is used to cover a disparate collection of organisations, most of which have emerged in their present form since the 1950s, and most of which offer some kind of answer to questions of a fundamental religious, spiritual or philosophical nature" [12] . Obviously, any definition remains rather vague. As James Beckford observed:

> *[...] the term "NRM" was originally applied to a plurality of freshly observed groups. It did not refer to any particular group in isolation from the wider phenomenon. This means that, in application to separate movements in isolation, the term is problematic: it applies more appropriately to them collectively. [...] It is only because a number of separate religious groups became popular among some young people at roughly the same time that use of the term "NRM" can be defended. For it refers to them collectively — not separately. [13]*

However, even such a useful clarification might be put into question today, since some authors, in order to avoid words like "sects" and "cults", use the term NRM for all kinds of non conventional religious groups, including those born in the XIXth century.

This is not the place to go deeper into such questions, but it was necessary to bring first some light about terms which are often used without trying to define them. Anyway, it is true that those are certainly not absolute categories: a group can be considered as a "sect" in some country and not in another one; for instance, Evangelical missionaries are sometimes seen with suspicion as dangerous sects in some parts of South America or Eastern Europe, which obviously is very different from the North American perception of those same groups; many other examples could be found. The inclusion of such or such group in my comments definitely doesn't imply any judgemental categorization: I just take as a point of departure the situation that a group within a specific society is generally not considered as a conventional religious faith, and I will try to examine possible consequences from the perspective of armed forces and security.

The very brief overview of definitions and the use of various terms has also provided an opportunity to remember that there are today in several countries, including Western European ones, quite heated controversies around a variety of unconnected NRMs. In recent years, parliamentary reports were published, which sometimes included lists of several dozens religious movements. Since armed forces are certainly not insulated from debates going on in the wider society, such controversies will also to some extent make an impact upon the way in which the military will react to this proliferation of religious groups. I suspect that, if I had dealt with this topic 30 years ago, our main concern would have been to examine how far believers in non conventional religious messages could adequately be accommodated in the armed forces, and what provisions should and could reasonably be made for those refusing to bear arms and claiming the right to conscientious objection. Some aspects of those questions remain relevant for us today, but questions will also arise which we wouldn't even have considered earlier in this century. In May 1998, I visited the Defenselink databank on the Internet, and I made a search for terms like cults and NRMs. My search resulted in finding several statements made in 1997 by high American defence officials about... new forms of terrorism! One said: "Terrorism has become the weapon of choice for some governments, single-issue groups and cults" [14] , while the other one (no less than U.S. Secretary of Defence William S. Cohen) claimed that, "as the new millenium approaches, the United States faces a heightened prospect that regional aggressors, third-rate armies, terrorist cells, and even religious cults will wield disproportionate power by using — or even threatening to use — nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons against our troops in the field and our people at home" [15] . No doubt that such things might happen in the future, as the shocking attack against the Tokyo's subway showed in March 1995. But a sound and realistic estimate of such potential threats should be made: when an article in a security periodical about "Cults, Rights and Terrorists" begins with comments like: "In North America, between three and ten million people are involved in 700 to 3,000 cults [...]. In Britain there are 500 cults, with a combined membership of half a million [...]", even if the article concludes with the wise remark that the challenge "is how to distinguish the minority of dangerous cults from the huge number of harmless ones, and take the necessary action without encroaching on every person's right to religious freedom" [16] , the impression likely to linger in the mind of the reader is that any group labelled as cult belongs to a potentially dangerous category, unless it has been proven to be otherwise... One then understands better why groups are anxious not to be labelled as cults and why sociologists studying them show some understanding for such concerns.

Armed forces and alternative religions

The question of religious pluralism in the armed forces is not a new one. It is enough to read historical books about religion in the military in order to see that the presence of non conventional religious faiths already gave rise to questions many years ago. For instance, in Germany, from the late XIXth century, Seventh-Day Adventists serving in the armed forces had troubles when they wanted to be free from service on Saturday in order to be able to respect the Sabbath; and life in the military led to some difficulties for other religious minority groups, for instance, ministers of minor denominations or religions were not exempted from military service in war-time, and consequently had to leave their local communities without pastoral care [17] . However, it is true that most groups then considered as sects posed few problems to military authorities in European or North American countries, except for those whose pacifist beliefs prevented them from accepting any kind of military service; we should remember that conscientious objection in the West began as a "sacred resistance", mainly rooted in the Anabaptist tradition, before it took more secularized forms [18] . The existence of this religious protest against military service led also to early attempts to accommodate those who refused any use of weapons [19] . But this paper doesn't deal with the historic peace churches (Mennonites, Quakers and Church of the Brethren), although they were also labelled as "sects" during long periods in their history [20] .

The religious situation has become quite different today. While it is true that only a small minority of the population belongs to non-conventional religious groups, the religious landscape itself has become much more diverse and it is very unlikely that the trend toward diversity might be reversed: what we are seeing today is probably only a foretaste of how the future will look. Among people serving in the armed forces, there are not only "Christian dissenters" of various persuasions, but also men (and sometimes women) whose religious orientation has no Christian roots — and not forgetting that, in most European countries, the number of religiously unaffiliated people is growing [21] and the influence of the traditional Churches has decreased [22] .

The reaction toward this situation is not the same in different countries — due also to different historical experiences and different religious situations. Basically, we can distinguish three types of countries:

1. In the *United States*, religious pluralism has been acknowledged as a fact in the armed forces for a number of years already: "There are an estimated 700 different religions and beliefs in the U.S. military attended to by the U.S. military Chaplains" [23] and "the composition of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board has grown beyond 245 recognized groups [denominations or faith groups] in 1998." [24] For many years, Christian Science and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have had recognized agencies for endorsing ministers to serve in the armed forces [25] ; in recent times, there have been Buddhist and Muslim chaplains ministering in the U.S. military. The list of the endorsing agencies is in itself quite a fascinating document to read, mirroring the religious diversity of the United States [26] , but it should be clear that it has nothing to do with a list of "approved theologies" [27] . As Captain Mel Ferguson (Executive Director of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, Washington D.C.) wrote to me: "[...] we do not make distinctions between 'major' and 'minor' or 'minority' religious groups. Our policies dictate that we support all religious and ethnic religious groups, their rights and needs, under our Constitutional mandate of 'free exercise of religion'." [28] Chaplains are recruited on a "best qualified" basis. "[...] there was a time that accession or recruiting quotas were established, based upon the size of a religious denomination, and the perceived number of military men and women affiliated with that denomination. However, quotas were deemed as unconstitutional. Today it is the practice to establish 'guidelines' for approximate numbers of chaplains from a particular faith group. However, the emphasis remains on 'best qualified' candidate for the chaplaincy." [29] Of course, even in a religiously plural environment, such developments don't go without some resistence, including among chaplains themselves. "In the early 1990s, when the army began preparations to induct a Muslim chaplain, evangelicals at the Chaplain School seemed disgruntled at the prospect." [30] And "opposition to Mormon chaplains participating in the Protestant chapel program became stronger in the 1980s than it had been in the 1970s." [31] In the armed forces as well as in the wider society, growing pluralism and other similar trends are inevitably accompanied by some counter-reactions [32] . But, to some extent, one can say that the U.S. military has a policy allowing it to accommodate nearly any group which has members in the military, and that the way to chaplaincy is in principle opened also to members of groups which would be labelled "sects" in many parts of the world [33] .

2. In *Western European countries*, chaplaincy is generally provided by the traditional, established Churches or religions. Depending on the countries, one finds either Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish chaplains or only the first two confessions, or just one of them; there are Orthodox chaplains in Greece, of course, as well as in Finland (along with Lutheran ones). In a few countries, there are among the Protestant army chaplains some who belong to Free Churches. In the Netherlands, there are "humanist counselors" with the same status as other chaplains for those soldiers not belonging to any religion [34] . The fact that other religious groups don't have chaplains has not only to do with the fact that those are not one of the traditional mainline religions, but at least as much with the reality that there are not enough of their faithful serving in the armed forces to justify the presence of a chaplain. For instance, in Germany, the legal dispositions provide for 1 chaplain of the respective faith for every 1,500 members of the Catholic or Protestant Church. The State is open to the possibility of establishing chaplaincy for members of other religious groups, and had actually approached the Jewish community as well as Free Churches in the 1950s, when the current regulation on chaplaincy was being elaborated, but those religious groups didn't feel the need for it [35] . There is currently no other religious group reaching the quorum of 1,500 soldiers in the German *Bundeswehr* [36] , and the members of those minor groups are dispersed around the country, which would make a ministry to them by representatives of their own faith quite problematic for obvious practical reasons. However, the army tries to facilitate the religious life of members of those smaller religious communities, e.g. the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), through granting them special leave and financing their travel costs in order to allow them to take part to their religious celebrations [37] . In addition, in several countries where military service is still compulsory, any religious community having a sufficient number of members can get exemption for at least some of its ministers. For instance, in Switzerland, according to the Ordinance on military exemption of October 1995, exemption can be granted upon simple request to any minister of the Federation of Protestant Churches, of some Free Churches, of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Old Catholic Church; the same possibility is also open for any religious group counting at least 2,000 members in Switzerland for one of its ministers to be exempted, and an additional minister for every subsequent 800 members. Although an official detailed list is not publicly available, ministers belonging to some "sects" or NRMs have been exempted as a result of this ordinance. It seems to me that regulations like those in Germany regarding chaplaincy or in Switzerland regarding exemption of military service for religious ministers, are basically fair and non-discriminatory: they don't pass any judgement about what a religion should be, but they take into account in a neutral way a social fact, i.e. the statistical importance of a group in society and in the military, and draw consequences from this fact.

3. In the *post-communist Eastern European countries*, the problem in recent years was obviously first to see how religious life could again be granted its space in the armed forces from which it had

been banned for many years. It has not been possible for me to conduct a proper survey of the situation in various post-communist countries, and they are at the beginning of their experiences with religious pluralism in the armed forces as well as in their societies at large. Several post-communist countries (not yet all of them) grant the possibility of a non-military service for those people who don't want to serve in the army for religious reasons [38] . It is too early to expect clear guidelines regarding religious pluralism and the possibility of accommodating non conventional religious groups in the armed forces, even more so due to the fact that several newly active religious groups are the subject of heated debates and criticisms in post-communist countries. In addition, the question of the military chaplaincy for the older religious minorities is not solved in several of those countries. Finally, the need of a kind of "reconstruction" after the sad years of communist domination is acutely felt, and if the impulse given by chaplains of the traditional religions in the military is sometimes seen as welcome, the proselytism of sects and NRMs is often seen as a threat for this renewal rather than as a contribution to it, which creates suspicions not exactly conducive to attempts to accommodate them. Their status in the military will closely be associated with the evolution of the way they are considered in the society at large.

Several questions associated with various sects and NRMs can be considered from the perspective of armed forces. Until recent years, in those countries where military service was compulsory, the refusal of the Jehovah's Witnesses to serve presented a permanent problem. Each year, in several countries, hundreds of young people who were otherwise law-abiding citizens were sent to jail due to the stance of political neutrality toward the State institutions required from them by the teachings of their movement. The phasing out of conscription in a growing number of countries has contributed to solve the problem. In addition, recent developments in the attitude of the Witnesses themselves have created new possibilities; while remaining faithful to their principle of "neutrality" toward the world and its institutions, their doctrine allows since 1996 for a civilian service (as a part of national service under a civilian administration). The new development in their doctrine was announced in this way:

> *[...] there are lands where the State, while not allowing exemption for ministers of religion [39] , nevertheless acknowledges that some individuals may object to military service. In some places a required civilian service, such as useful work in the community, is regarded as nonmilitary national service. Could a dedicated Christian undertake such a service? [...] a dedicated, baptized Christian would have to make his own decision on the basis of his Bible-trained conscience. […]*

What if the Christian's honest answers to such questions lead him to conclude that the national civilian service is a 'good work' that he can perform in obedience to the authorities? That is his decision before Jehovah. Appointed elders and others should fully respect the conscience of the brother and continue to regard him as a Christian in good standing. If, however, a Christian feels that he cannot perform this civilian service, his position should also be respected. [40]

In France, where 7,593 Witnesses had been imprisoned between 1950 and 1992, the problem had already been solved shortly before; "the French authorities decided that, from February 1995, when a young man is called up for military service, and responds in writing that he has religious objections, he is to be sent a formal 'decision' requiring him to carry out his national service obligations in the manner of conscientious objectors, that is, civilian service for twenty months." [41] The 200 Witnesses still behind bars in June were released in September by presidential decree. In Switzerland, a popular vote in 1992 finally allowed for the organization of a system of civilian service, which functions since 1996 and is accepted by the Jehovah's Witnesses in accordance with their new standpoint; the administration in charge of civilian service checks with the national headquarters of the Jehovah's Witnesses if the candidate is actually a baptized and active member and, if such is the case, the request is usually granted — since it is known that being a member of the movement implies for a Witness to refuse military service. Finally, there have been very positive recent developments in Greece, which had been regularly criticized in reports by human rights organization regarding the treatment of people refusing to serve in the military; the vast majority of imprisoned conscientious objectors in Greece were Jehovah's Witnesses [42] . When the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance of the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations visited Greece in June 1996, there were 353 Jehovah's Witnesses in prison as a direct result of their refusal to serve in the military; due to the nature of those detainees, there had however been some efforts to gather as many of them as possible in a single prison in Salonica and to separate them from other categories of detainees [43] . Fortunately, in June 1997, the Greek Parliament adopted a law introducing the right to claim conscientious objector status and to perform an alternative civilian service. Although human rights

organization like Amnesty International consider that the law doesn't go far enough (and "fails to recognize that conscientious objectors have the right to develop conscientious objection during military service"), in addition to its punitive length (the double time compared to military service), the Jehovah's Witnesses have decided to accept it. The new law has been in force since January 1998.

As scholars have pointedly remarked, "the treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses in contemporary democracies can be viewed as an index of the liberalization of conscientious objection in those countries and also as a measure of the tolerance of a country's civic culture." [44] According to Belgian human rights activist Willy Fautré (Human Rights Without Frontiers), the problem of conscientious objection for religious reasons can be considered today as solved in countries belonging to the European Union [45] . There are still problems reported in some post-communist Central and Eastern European countries; obviously their solution will be connected with the political and cultural developments in those countries and are not purely a military problem.

Conscientious objection was the most often quoted question related to religious minority groups in the military, but there are other aspects which we should examine as well. As we know, members of a missionary-minded religious group are usually anxious to share their faith with a wider audience, and even more so when a group is relatively small and young, because it is then a vital necessity for the survival and the development of the group. And the context of the armed forces has the potential to provide not only the official chaplains, but also members of other religious groups with opportunities to get in touch with people they might never have met otherwise. In her excellent book about American Evangelicals and the U.S. military, Anne C. Loveland observes that the purpose in developing an activity in the armed forces was a double one: to care for the religious needs of Evangelical youth serving in the armed forces, but as well to reach other people (unchurched, non-believers, etc.); the armed forces were seen as a mission field [46] . Regarding the question of missionary activities within the armed forces, there has been a quite interesting case decided by the European Court of Human Rights. The case involved three military officers serving in the Greek Air Force and at the same time followers of a Pentecostal Church (definitely a group considered as a "sect" in Greece, but certainly not so in several other countries around the world) [47] . Between 1986 and 1989, all three "allegedly approached various airmen serving under them, all of whom were Orthodox Christians, and spoke to them about the teachings of the Pentecostal Church. In addition, two of the applicants attempted to convert a number of civilians." They were charged with offences of proselytism [48] . They were condemned and, finally, appealed to the European Court of Human Rights. Interestingly, the Court distinguished between the proselytising of the civilians and the proselytising of the airmen. Regarding the proselytising of the civilians, the Court found that the applicants were protected by Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights, according to which the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion includes the right "to manifest his religion or belief" [49] ; the measures taken against two of the applicants for proselytism in respect of the civilians were unjustified and amounted to a violation of Article 9, because "the civilians whom the applicants attempted to convert were not subject to pressures and constraints of the same kind as the airmen". Regarding the airmen, the Court took into consideration the fact that, while the Convention applies in principle to members of the armed forces as well as to civilians, "when interpreting and applying its rules in cases such as the present, it is necessary to bear in mind the particular characteristics of military life and its effects on the situation of individual members of the armed forces".

In this respect, the Court notes that the hierarchical structures which are a feature of life in the armed forces may colour every aspect of the relations between military personnel, making it difficult for a subordinate to rebuff the approaches of an individual of superior rank or to withdraw from a conversation initiated by him. Thus, what would in the civilian world be seen as an innocuous exchange of ideas which the recipient is free to accept or reject, may, within the confines of military life, be viewed as a form of harassment or the application of undue pressure in abuse of power. It must be emphasised that not every discussion about religion or other sensitive matters between individuals of unequal rank will fall within this category. Nonetheless, where the circumstances so require, States may be justified in taking special measures to protect the rights and freedoms of subordinate members of the armed forces.

Although there was no evidence that the officers had used threats or inducements, "it appears that they were persistent in their advances and that these two airmen felt themselves constrained and subject to a certain degree of pressure owing to the applicants' status as officers, even if this pressure was not consciously applied". There are no such laws like the Greek one against proselytism in other European countries, insofar as I know, but the considerations made by the Court about the special character of life in an army might certainly be invoked by anybody who might happen to be pressured by a military superior attempting to make him or her change his or her religious or ideological opinions. Actually, although in this case the officers belonged to a religious minority, in other cases it might much

more likely be invoked to protect the rights of soldiers belonging to some non conventional religious group.

Life in the military does certainly have consequences also for the religious worldview of those who pass through this experience. According to the observations made by Chaplain Joseph P. Rappl about the U.S. armed forces, "very few chaplains remain in an exclusivist position throughout their careers. Many chaplains move through inclusivist positions and a few begin to hold pluralistic views." Except probably in religiously monolithic countries, chaplains serving in multireligious countries or countries where there are at least two major Churches will be expected (although not explicitly) to tone down what might be divisive [50] and thus undermine the motivation of the soldiers; in addition, they may also be called to facilitate the religious life and practices of people belonging to other Churches or religions, which would not very often be the case for most religious ministers in civilian life. According to the Chaplains Office of the Swiss Army (in which there are only Roman Catholic and Reformed chaplains [51]), today there no longer is a great emphasis upon the differences between the two mainline Churches and chaplains are expected to work in an ecumenical spirit and to minister to members of both Churches if there is a need [52] . The current dispositions ruling the activities of the chaplains (in force since January 1997) explicitly mention the possibility of celebrating ecumenical services instead of separate celebrations for each Church [53] . Such ecumenical celebrations tend more and more to become the rule rather than the exception: according to the observations made by a chaplain serving in the Swiss Army, this seems to meet the current expectations of most of the Swiss soldiers, who don't like to be separated from their fellow soldiers belonging to the other main Church when a religious service is celebrated. The same chaplain sees the army as a place of "ecumenical ferment" [54] . The question can however be asked about the way this increasingly ecumenical attitude will be felt among those people (admittedly in small numbers) belonging to religious minorities *not* ecumenically-minded? [55] Will this lead them to put into question their exclusivist worlview, or rather comfort them in the view that they belong to the small flock of the elect? [56] Could it happen in some cases that the armed forces promote a "religiously correct" viewpoint from which some religious groups might feel left out? Conversely, can life in the army also provide for opportunities to improve understanding between adherents to various religious groups at a time of increasing pluralism and so contribute to some extent to the cohesion of society? It is certainly not illegitimate to ask such questions.

A "threat" of religious "cults"?

Since the armed forces are one of the instruments of security policy, it is certainly not illegitimate to ask ourselves here how far it should become concerned with potential problems posed by a few non conventional religious groups (although it should always be emphasised first that most "sects", "cults" or "alternative religions" are peaceful groups of believers and loyal citizens). As we all know, since the Cold War fortunately came to its end, there has been at the same time a sense of relief and an uncertainty about where the threat might now be? After all, if there is no threat, is there still a need for armed forces? The continuation of conflicts or potential for conflicts in several areas around the world (including on the European continent) are a sufficient proof that armed forces are still necessary, even if they have to be adjusted to a new strategic environment as well as to technological developments. However, one cannot deny that there has been in the past ten years a preoccupation about possible new challenges to our security. And among those new "threats", the so-called "cults" come into the picture too. Let's read the introductory words of an article published in 1997 by a free-lance author in a respected series of security studies:

> *most of the available literature on what are formally known as New Religious Movements, has tended to interpret them as sociological, psychological or theological phenomena rather than as the potentially subversive and even violently anti-social groups that some have now proved themselves to be. As a result, law enforcement authorities, governments and the general public have found great difficulty in accurately assessing this new threat. [57]*

It is obvious that religious beliefs can strangely lead to the most admirable, loving and peace-building behaviour as well as to the most horrendous acts of violence. For some groups of believers, the images of warfare so commonly found in religious language become all too real. As Mark Juergensmeyer remarked, "those who want their use of violence to be morally sanctioned but who do not have the approval of an officially recognized government find it helpful to have access to a higher source: the metamorality that religion provides. By elevating a temporal struggle to the level of the cosmic, they can bypass the usual moral restrictions on killing." [58] I am afraid that we will again

experience in the future some tragedies caused by alternative religious groups, affecting either their members or a segment of the wider society. I think too that we should give more attention to the role played by religious factors in international security. But I am equally convinced that we should be very careful when assessing informations about such topics, because there are a lot of fantasies circulated by amateur "experts" who know actually little about such groups and have never conducted serious, first-hand research in the field; and I think also that there is not a specific kind of violence connected to "cults" (as if that would be a clearly-defined category in itself!), and that such phenomena of violence and subversion motivated by religious beliefs are not a category in themselves (except for the relative lack of knowledge about such groups which there usually is among security experts and creates difficulties for a sound assessment).

However, I will briefly examine a few cases of security threats posed by some religious sects and alternative movements, which might affect under some aspects the armed forces. In 1996-97, when a commission of the Belgian Parliament conducted an investigation about sects, which gave birth to a thick report and has resulted into the creation of a watching-group monitoring "harmful sects", the members of the commission gathered some informations from the head of the intelligence and security service of the Belgian armed forces (*Service Général du Renseignement et de la Sécurité des Forces Armées* [SGR]). He reported a "sporadic" interest toward sects by his agency, mostly in order to be able to determine how far a person belonging to such a group can be trusted and given responsabilities in the armed forces, i.e. if membership in some group (religious or not) may present some threat for the armed forces. According to the head of the SGR, the number of members of the armed forces in Belgium likely to belong to a sect or to maintain close relationships with such a group is insignificant; the only case which he could report was a military who had several members of his family belonging to the Church of Scientology [59] . It is likely that investigations in several other countries would lead to similar conclusions. It is true that the first and main immediate risk for the armed forces would be the infiltration of people with subversive intentions who might get into the armed forces either for gaining a know-how or for reachings positions where they might use their power for the benefit of the group to which they belong. Such a group would probably also try to infiltrate not only the armed forces, but other State institutions as well. It is well-known that, in the 1970s, the private intelligence service of the Church of Scientology managed to gain access to some U.S. government offices and copied illegally thousands of documents from their files, before the FBI discovered what was going on and intervened [60] . So it cannot be ruled out that some group might attempt to conduct a similar operation at some point, even possibly one directed toward some section of the armed forces. However, there should be some major interest of the group in entering into such a risky venture; regarding the case which I have just mentioned, the aim of Scientology was not to take over power, but to gather intelligence regarding actions felt by the movement as threats, first of all investigations conducted by the Internal Revenue Service. In addition, in such groups with a rather high turnover rate, there is a permanent risk that one of the members involved in such an operation might defect from the group and expose its activities. It remains true that the risk cannot be ruled out that a group with potentially dangerous aims might infiltrate people at a low-key position, but close to highly-placed persons, and thus gain access to some sensitive information. Attention to the background of external consultants providing computer systems should also be given. But it is not a problem specific to religious groups, and in most cases adequate security measures and controls should allow to counter such attempts (if they happen). And that shouldn't turn into an hysteria where any member of a non conventional religious group in a sensitive position would be seen as a potential infiltrator!

Another potential danger is violent action by a religious group convinced to have some mission to fulfill and whose members might try to get the necessary technical knowledge in the armed forces, or to use violent means against the armed forces as a symbol of the hated State. Events like the bombing in Oklahoma City have shown what can happen [61] . It must be noted that, for reasons which cannot be discussed in detail here, there seem to be more sects prone to violent activism in the United States than in Europe. A number of radical religious groups have developped strange theological views mixing religious ideas, conspiracy theories and calls for militant action; sometimes, it goes beyond rhetoric [62] . One of the most obvious examples of groups with such dangerous potentialities is presented by some of the racist "Identity Churches" [63] ; although there are a few adherents to such theories here and there outside the United States, it remains mostly an American phenomenon, at least in its violent manifestations. Of course, such groups should be and are monitored by law-enforcement agencies. Often, those groups proclaim quite openly what their goals are (and it would be enough to land their leaders in jail in countries where there is not the same respect for free speech as in the United States). Sometimes, some of their members turn to criminal behaviour. It is interesting to remark that according to the conclusions of a research paper written in 1996 by a student at the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, right-wing extremists and hate-motivated groups (some of whom, but not all, are connected to fringe religious ideologies) are trying to recruit active-duty military personnel for several reasons, including their know-how and their access to weapons and munitions ("inside" points

of contact for possible thefts) [64] .

It is, however, a milieu which is relatively clearly identified — more dangerous would be security threats coming from unexpected corners, from small groups which had never been noticed before as a potential danger. But there have been few such cases until now: Aum Shinrikyo was being suspected of using violence against opponents or dissidents, David Koresh had already shown a violent behaviour against a competing leader, etc. Probably any indication of tendency to violence or interest for firearms by a leader of such a group should be considered as a warning signal. On the other hand, one must admit that it is more difficult to interpret correctly the possible practical consequences of a religious discourse: especially when it comes to millenial theory, even predictions about imminent, major disasters and turmoils should not always be understood in a literal way: there are people who announce that the world will end tomorrow and cultivate the most grandiose perspectives about the soon-to-come new world order while remaining quiet and law-abiding taxpayers! There is a latent and permanent risk that some millenarian groups, maybe totally unknown even from most experts, turn tomorrow into violent action in order to make their prophecies come true. In some cases, it might be prevented; in other cases, no.

The Japanese Aum Shinrikyo case is at this point the best (or worst!) example of a group which had people of the armed forces among its members and which engaged into serious criminal and subversive activities [65] . Shoko Asahara had no less dream than to rule Japan and already organized the leadership of the group on the pattern of the ministries of the future, Aum Shinrikyo-led governement of Japan. The Tokyo subway gas attack of March 20, 1995, is well-known enough to dispense me to tell again the story; it should just be mentioned that it was not the first attempt of Aum Shinrikyo people at using biological or chemical weapons (for instance they had tried to spread anthrax virus in the streets of Tokyo in 1993), fortunately not always with success, and even the March 1995 attack might have be much more disastrous, had it been better conceived [66] . Of special interest to us here is the fact that Aum Shinrikyo had recruited a number of members of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces (SDF). According to a book written by two Western investigative journalists well-acquainted with the Japanese world, Aum Shinrikyo had recruited up to forty active-duty members of the SDF, plus a few dozens veterans, which is not insignificant for a group which probably had no more than 10,000 members in Japan. A first lieutenant in an anti-tank helicopter unit allegedly stole"an impressive array of classified military documents", including a training manual about special weapons [67] . It is however not certain that Aum Shinrikyo deliberately tried to recruit people belonging to the SDF [68] : it might be that the group just seized opportunities provided by some of those converts. Another aspect of the activities of Aum Shinrikyo which should be mentioned here is the connection which the group developped with Russia in the 1990s, converting actually more people in Russia than in Japan. "Most informed sources point out that the main role in establishing Russia'a contacts with Aum and its penetration into Russia belonged to Oleg Lobov, the then Secretary of the Security Council [...]." [69] And Aum also tried to buy in Russia some of the material which it needed.

Conclusion: armed forces and religious pluralism

At the core of all the topics discussed in this paper lies the fundamental question of how to face a growing religious pluralism. It is not necessarily a matter of the number of people involved in alternative religious practices (which, by the way, may become at least in part more and more mainline), but the multiplication of religious paths available on the market, which has direct consequences for the life in the military, since it is a mirror of changes in the society to which it belongs. The need to adjust to religious pluralism is not felt as acutely everywhere:

* In Switzerland, in 1997, the Commission for Coordinated Chaplaincy decided that it was not necessary to develop guidelines regarding the attitude toward "foreign world religions", since the chaplains are supposed to be able by themselves to know how to behave adequately. When asked about possible problems around non conventional religions, the person in charge of the Swiss Office for Chaplaincy at the Ministry of Defence told me that he could not remember any such problem in recent years, and so there is no need felt to train the chaplains for facing such situations. Probably the feeling would be similar in some other European countries.

* In the United Kingdom, efforts are being made to accommodate people belonging to non-Christian faiths, since there is an active policy being implemented in order to recruit more people "from minority ethnic and religious groupings"; a directive issued in December 1997 addresses possible areas of concern for "ethnic minorities" (special religious dietary requirements, wearing of turbans by Sikh military personnel, dress codes for Muslim servicewomen, etc.) [70] ; by analogy, they might have an impact on attitude toward members of non-ethnic religious minorities.

* In the United States (a much more religiously and ethnically diverse country, there is no doubt about it), there are clear directives of the Department of Defense about "accommodation of religious practices in the military" (the current ones edicted in 1988) [71] . They provide guidelines "to promote standard procedures for resolving difficult questions", while admitting that "in view of the different mission requirements of each command, individual consideration of specific requests for accommodation is necessary".

Obviously, in any army, the main concern of a commander regarding religious matters should be to accommodate them insofar it is reasonable and possible, and to avoid differentiating between members of mainline Churches and non conventional religious groups.

But the attitude in the military will be influenced not only by the individual views of such or such commander, but at least as much and even more by developments in the wider society. If the topic of "sects" had been included in the programme of the conference at which this paper was presented, it was probably due at least in part to the discussions, media reports and controversies around sects in several European countries during the past few years. And if those discussions derive sometimes from legitimate concerns about the dubious activities of a few groups, they reflect also to some extent the uneasiness which is felt in our societies about the increasing presence of new, little known religious messages.

N.B.: les liens indiqués dans les notes étaient tous accessibles en 1999. Certains sont vraisemblablement périmés aujourd'hui.

[1] Several people have been quite helpful in sharing informations for preparing this paper, and it could not have been written without their help. In addition to several names mentioned in footnotes, I want especially to thank the following people (in alphabetical order): Prof. James Beckford (University of Warwick); Harry Coney (INFORM, London); Prof. Boris Z. Falikov (Russian State University of Humanities, Moscow); Captain Melvin Ray Ferguson (Armed Forces Chaplains Board, Washington); Commander Gilbert Gibson (Office of the Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Navy); Lieutenant-Colonel Edwin Jean Gould (British Embassy, Berne); Michael W. Homer (Salt Lake City, Utah); Dr. Massimo Introvigne (CESNUR, Torino); Ian Pointer (Service Personnel Policy, Ministry of Defence, London); Captain Arnold E. Resnicoff (Staff Chaplain, U.S. European Command, Stuttgart); Prof. James T. Richardson (University of Nevada, Reno). I thank also all the other people who kindly gave me their assistance or suggested ideas, including several of my former colleagues at the Swiss Ministry of Defence.

[2] About the history of the concept of "sect", see the first part of a book by Marc van Wijnkoop Lüthi, *Die Sekte... die anderen? Beobachtungen und Vorschläge zu einem strittigen Begriff*, Luzern: Edition Exodus, 1996.

[3] The word was already in use in the United States for describing all kinds of religious groups (mainstream as well as non conventional) in a neutral way.

[4] Some typologies of sects were however applied to groups of non-Christian origins as well: see Bryan R. Wilson, *Religious Sects*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970.

[5] See Gaius Gleen Atkins, *Modern Religious Cults and Movements*, New York / Chicago: Revell, 1923.

[6] Howard Becker, *Systematic Sociology*, 1932, quoted in Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Cults, New Religions and Religious Creativity*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, p. 53. The concept of cult was developed upon the basis of the category of "mysticism" used by Troeltsch (which Troeltsch had introduced as a third type, different from the Church as well as from the sect).

[7] J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America*, revised and updated edition, New York / London: Garland, 1992, p. 4.

[8] Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p. 25.

[9] As the Japanese case shows: the expression "new religions" has been in use in popular as well as academic discourse in Japan for a longer time than in the West (Japan has been a fertile ground for

the emergence of dynamic indigenous NRMs since the XIXth century), and in the late 1970s some Japanese scholars suggested that newly emergent types of new religions (*shinshûkyô*) should be called "new new religions" (*shin shinshûkyô*); it has gone so far as to baptize some still newer groups "new new new religions" (*shin shin shinshûkyô*)! See Johannes Laube (ed.), *Neureligionen: Stand ihrer Erforschung in Japan. Ein Handbuch*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995, pp. 18-19.

[10] James T. Richardson, "Definitions of Cult: From Sociological-Technical to Popular-Negative", in Lorne L. Dawson (ed.), *Cults in Context: Readings in the Study of New Religious Movements*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1996, pp. 29-38 (p. 30). This article had originally been published in the *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 34, 1993, pp. 348-356.

[11] Following the publication of a book by Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions*, Garden City (N.Y.): Doubleday, 1970. "NRMs" and "new religions" are commonly used as equivalent expressions, but in my view should (and could usefully) be distinguished: a new religion should describe a (relatively) autonomous new religious tradition (in the way the Bahá'í Faith, despite its Shiite roots, is clearly a religion different and independent from Islam), while a "NRM" is a new religious organization remaining within the sphere of a preexisting religious tradition.

[12] Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* , London: HMSO, 1989, p. 9.

[13] James A. Beckford, *Cult Controversies: The Societal Response to New Religious Movements*, London / New York: Tavistock, 1985, p. 14.

[14] Source: http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/di97/di1231.html.

[15] Source: http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/prolif97/message.html.

[16] *Intersec*, Vol. 6, Issue 9, September 1996, p. 331.

[17] See Arnold Vogt, *Religion im Militär: Seelsorge zwischen Kriegsverherrlichung und Humanität. Eine militärgeschichtliche Studie*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984, pp. 221-225, 283-285, 614-623.

[18] See Charles C. Moskos and John Whiteclay Chambers (eds.), *The New Conscientious Objection: From Sacred to Secular Resistance*, New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, chapters 1 and 16. I thank Prof. Karl W. Haltiner (Zurich) for having recommended to me this essential volume.

[19] For instance, in Berne (Switzerland), it was decided in 1853 that people belonging to the Anabaptist tradition would be granted the right to noncombattant military service (Theodor Wyder, *Wehrpflicht und Militärdienstverweigerung: Entstehung, Gesetz, Arten und Sanktionen in der Schweizer Armee*, 2nd ed., Bern: Peter Lang, 1998, p. 68. In Russia, "in 1874 an exemption from military service was granted by the Tsar's government to members of religious pacifist communities, mainly Mennonites. The same year, the Rules concerning Military Service specified that Mennonites [...] should instead have the right to serve in fire-fighting brigades, in naval workshops, and in 'special mobile forestry teams, eployed to develop wood areas in the south of the empire'." (according to the April 1997 Amnesty International report, *Russian Federation: The Right to Conscientious Objection to Military Service* [http://www. amnesty.org//ailib/aipub/1997/EUR/44600597.htm]). However, this led some 18,000 Mennonites to emigrate to North America, because they "felt this to be a violation of conscience, or an indication of further threats to their faith" (Cornelius J. Dyck [ed.], *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, Scottdale [Pennsylvania]: Herald Press, 1981, p. 181).

[20] For a short summary, see Donald F. Durnbaugh and Charles W. Brockwell, "The Historic Peace Churches: From Sectarian Origins to Ecumenical Witness", in Marlin E. Miller and Barbara Nelson Gingerich (eds.), *The Church's Peace Witness*, Grand Rapids (Michigan): William B. Eerdmans, 1994, pp. 182-195.

[21] For instance, in Switzerland, at the time of the 1990 national census, 7.4% of the people described themselves as religiously unaffiliated, while they were only 3.8% ten years earlier.

[22] For an overview of the current situation in Europe, see: Grace Davie and Danièle Hervieu-Léger (eds.), *Identités religieuses en Europe*, Paris: La Découverte, 1996.

[23] According to the "Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad to the Secretary of State and to the President of the United States" (released May 17, 1999 [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/990517_report/]).

[24] According to a very interesting, unpublished seminar presentation by Joseph P. Rappl, MA student at Duke University Divinity School, who is preparing a thesis about issues of religious pluralism in the armed forces. I am grateful to Prof. Jackson W. Carroll for having sent this paper and to Prof. James T. Richardson (University of Nevada at Reno) for having located this research in progress.

[25] For instance, according to the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, the three first Mormon chaplains in the U.S. Army were appointed in 1917; the first Mormon Naval chaplain served in World War II, and the first Mormon Air Force chaplain was appointed in 1948.

[26] It includes ten Christian, Jewish and Muslim umbrella agencies, dozens of Christian agencies representing nearly all possible theological orientations and families of Churches (large groups as well as tiny ones), as well as a Hindu agency (Chinmaya Mission West), a Buddhist agency (Buddhist Churches of America), an Islamic agency and the Unification Church (which does not mean, of course, that all those groups necessarily have a military chaplain). I thank Captain Mel Ferguson (Armed Forces Chaplain Board) for having faxed this list to me.

[27] Remark by Captain A.E. Resnicoff, personal e-mail communication, May 3, 1998.

[28] Personal e-mail communication, April 28, 1998.

[29] Personal e-mail communication, April 29, 1998.

[30] Anne C. Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993*, Baton Rouge / London: Louisiana State University Press, 1996, p. 304.

[31] *Ibid*., p. 313

[32] See for instance reactions against Wiccan practices at a military base once they become known to the public (Hanna Rosin, "An Army Controversy: Should the Witches Be Welcome?", in *Washington Post*, June 8, 1999).

[33] In its 1999 final report, the Advisory Committe on Religious Freedom Abroad (see note 23) recommended: "The military services should continue to promote religious diversity in the chaplains corps. Military chaplains, who increasingly reflect the diversity of American religious society, should become 'ambassadors' for religious freedom. When stationed abroad, chaplains should not only promote respect for local religious life with members of the U.S. armed forces, but should interact openly and generously with local religious figures and communities to help foster respect for the diversity of religious beliefs."

[34] In the early 1990s, for 102,550 people in the military in the Netherlands, there were 109 Protestant, 100 Roman Catholic, 33 humanist and 2 Jewish chaplains (Martin Bock, *Religion im Militär: Soldatenseelsorge im internationalen Vergleich*, München: Olzog Verlag, 1994, p. 65).

[35] Volkmar Kruk, "Die rechtlichen Probleme der Militärseelsorge", in *Neue Zeitschrift für Wehrrecht*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 1996, pp. 1-24 (p. 18).

[36] For instance, in 1994, there were some 300 Muslims in the German armed forces (among them 25 reserve officers). But obviously their number will grow in the future, first of all because more and more second and third generation people of Muslim background will apply for German citizenship, and with an eye on those developments to come, the Islamic Council in Germany (*Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, created in 1986) has already established a commission for questions related to military chaplaincy (Wolf D. Aries, "Traditionell ohne Probleme: Islamische Soldaten in der Bundeswehr", in *IFDT Information für die Truppe*, Vol. 38, No. 5, May 1994, pp. 54-57).

[37] Jörg Ennuschat, *Militärseelsorge: Verfassungs- und beamten-rechtliche Fragen der Kooperation von Staat und Kirche*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996, pp. 208-209.

[38] See for instance the article 4 of the 1997 Russian law on freedom of conscience and religious associations: "Citizens of the Russian Federation whose convictions or religious profession preclude performance of military service have the right to substitute alternative civic service for it." (an English translation of the law, by Prof. Paul Steeves, can be found on http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/freedomofconscienceeng.html).

[39] In countries where exemption from military service is granted to ministers of religion, Jehovah's Witnesses try to avail themselves of this provision, since they consider themselves as being ministers;

it has been actually granted to them in several countries.

[40] *The Watchtower*, Vol. 117, No. 9, May 1, 1996, pp. 19-20.

[41] Kevin Boyle and Juliet Sheen (eds.), *Freedom of Religion and Belief: A World Report*, London / New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 303.

[42] See the April 1997 report by Amnesty International, *Out of the Margins: The Right to Conscientious Objection to Military*
Service in Europe (http://www.amnesty.org//ailib/aipub/1997/EUR/ 40100297. htm).

[43] The full report of the June 1996 visit by the Special Rapporteur to Greece can be found on the Internet (gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ ga/docs/51/plenary/A51-542.EN1).

[44] C.C. Moskos and J.W. Chambers, *op.cit.*, p. 204.

[45] Telephone conversation with Willy Fautré, May 6, 1998.

[46] Anne C. Loveland, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

[47] Case of Larissis and Others v. Greece, February 24, 1998 (a summary of the judgment can be found on the Internet: http://www.dhcour.coe.fr/eng/press/Larissis.epresse.html; the full text can also be found on the Internet: http://web.tin.it/ cesnur_org/Larissis.htm).

[48] According to Greek legal dispositions, as quoted in the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights, proselytism is defined in the following way: "in particular, any direct or indirect attempt to intrude on the religious beliefs of a person of a different religious persuasion, with the aim of undermining those beliefs, eother by any kind of inducement or promise of an inducement or moral support or material assistance, or by fraudulent means or by taking advantage of the other person's inexperience, trust, need, low intellect or naïvety".

[49] Of course, the Court takes care to note that Article 9 does not cover "improper proselytism" and undue pressures.

[50] This makes some chaplains uncomfortable. In a recent article (see note 32), the *Washington Post* reports on a former U.S. Army Chaplain's experiences: "The guiding principle taught at the [Army Chaplain] School was Offend No One, Walton explained. Chaplains were trained to minister to any soldier who came seeking help no matter what their religion, and told never to criticize. For Walton, the job description might as well have been 'glorified social worker'. When he graduated, Walton was told to keep the name Jesus out of his sermons, to stick to God instead. When he refused, his name was removed from a roster of preachers for Sunday service."

[51] According to the results of the 1990 national census, 46.32% of the resident population in Switzerland belonged to the Roman Catholic Church and 39.98% were Protestant. Those results do also include the foreigners living in Switzerland (more than 16% in 1990), which form a heavy majority of the Muslims living in Switzerland and a clear majority of the members of the Eastern Christian Churches; this means that the actual percentage of Roman Catholics and Protestants serving in the armed forces is still higher.

[52] Telephone conversation with Urs Aebi (Office for Chaplaincy, Berne), April 29, 1998.

[53] "Reglement für den Dienst der Armeeseelsorge" (art. 27).

[54] Pierre-André Bettex, "Services religieux œcuméniques ou services par confession: à propos d'une intéressante inversion de priorités dans le RS 95", in *Der Feldprediger*, No. 81, mai 1996, pp. 34-37.

[55] In 1992, a request by the Roman Catholic traditionalist followers of the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre to the effect of having some of their priests serving in the Swiss Army was turned down (the Catholic traditionalist priests are exempted from military service, but some of them were ready to volunteer as military chaplains); the Roman Catholic bishops in Switzerland had declared their strong opposition to such an integration (which is their right, since a Roman Catholic priest or a Reformed minister not endorsed by his Church is not entitled to serve as a chaplain in the Swiss Army). The same decision had been taken regarding a request by a group of Free Churches not belonging to the Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland. Most interesting was the main reason given by the leading Swiss Army chaplains to the media in order to explain this exclusion of "Protestant

fundamentalists and Catholic traditionalists" from the chaplaincy: their lack of ecumenical spirit. On the other side, the leading cleric of the Roman Catholic traditionalists in Switzerland criticized the "religious neutrality" expected from chaplains in the Swiss Army (see *La Liberté* [Fribourg], March 23, 1993; *La Suisse* [Geneva], March 25, 1993).

[56] A U.S. Navy chaplain has given an interesting exemple of a way of accommodating an exclusivist religious group. On a U.S. ship, it was discovered that a member of The Way International was conducting an unauhorized Bible study. The person was interviewed by a chaplain and "did indicate that he felt military chaplains were 'compromised theologically' because they had to facilitate religion for all faith traditions. After the chaplain informed him that unauthorized meetings could not be held in a naval vessel, he gave the petty officer the opportunity to include his Bible study in the listing of other lay-led study groups and services. This the latter did, and his Bible study became a recognized part of the command religious program, open to attendance by all." (Reo N. Leslie, "*E Pluribus Unum*: Religious Pluralism in the Military", in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 1990, pp. 55-61 [p. 58]).

[57] Andrew Hubback, "Apocalypse When? The Global Threat of Religious Cults", in *Conflict Studies* (RICST), No. 300, June 1997, pp. 1-23.

[58] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p. 167.

[59] Chambre des Représentants de Belgique, *Enquête parlementaire visant à élaborer une politique en vue de lutter contre les pratiques illégales des sectes et le danger qu'elles représentent pour la société et pour les personnes, particulièrement les mineurs d'âge*, April 1997, Part I, pp. 57-58.

[60] The case is well-documented; it led to the conviction of nine Scientologists in 1979, while the Church of Scientology distanced itself from them and from any violation of the laws of the land. The text of the stipulation of evidence can be found on the Internet (ftp://ftp.primenet.com/users/c/cultxpt/stipul01.txt [and then ...stipul02.txt and...stipul03.txt]).

[61] However, it is worth mentioning here that the "terrorist cults" seem not to be very numerous at this point, and certainly much less than their secular counterparts or those terrorists connected to "major" religious traditions: in the report *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1997*, released in April 1998 by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism of the U.S. State Department, the only "cult" which is mentioned is Aum Shinrikyo; the report doesn't take into account U.S. domestic terrorism, but only "international terrorism" (http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/1997Report/ 1997index.html).

[62] Interesting observations about the milieu into which such groups flourish can be found in James A. Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism*, Seattle / London, University of Washington Press, 1990. See also Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah*, Syracuse (N.Y.): Syracuse University Press, 1997.

[63] For a good and complete introduction, see Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement*, Chapel Hill / London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

[64] Steven Mack Presley, "Rise of Domestic Terrorism and its relation to the United States Armed Forces", April 1996 (http://www.fas.org/ irp/eprint/presley.htm).

[65] In Western languages, in addition to journalistic books and a number of academic articles, there are two small books which should be mentioned about Aum Shinrikyo: Ian Reader, *A Poisonous Cocktail? Aum Shinrikyo's Path to Violence*, Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1996; Martin Repp, *Aum Shinrikyo: ein Kapitel krimineller Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg: Diagonal Verlag, 1997. Ian Reader is currently preparing a longer book about Aum Shinrikyo.

[66] "Relatively few people died because of the quick reacion of the Tokyo emergency services, the rapid identification of the poison as nerve gas and the corresponding medical response of hospitals. These factors, added to the fact that sarin was not in its purest form at the time of dispersal, may have saved hundreds of lives." (*SIPRI Yearbook 1996. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 701)

[67] David E. Kaplan and Andrew Marshall, *The Cult at the End of the World: The Incredible Story of Aum*, London: Arrow, 1996, p. 188.

[68] I. Reader, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

[69] Yulia Mikhailova, "The Aum Supreme Truth Sect in Russia", in *Japanese Studies. Bulletin of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia*, Vol. 16, No. 2-3, Sept.-Dec. 1996, pp. 15-34 (p. 20).

[70] "The Armed Forces place great importance on the spiritual development of Service personnel and are committed to giving individuals the opportunity to practice their religious observances wherever possible. A number of religious leaders act as advisers to the Armed Forces on matters of non-Christian religious requirements. Every reasonable effort is made for personnel to have contact with their religious leaders and visit places of worship (church, synagogue, mosque, temple). Wherever practicable, areas for worship will be made available in all Service establishments, including ships and submarines at sea." ("Religious and Cultural Guidance for Armed Forces Recruiting Staff", Issue 1, Dec. 1997) I thank Mr. Ian Pointer (Service Personnel Policy) for having made this document available to me.

[71] I want to thank here Captain A.E. Resnicoff for having sent this directive to me. He made the following observations: "The basic thrust of our accommodation policy can be summed up, in my opinion, in two ideas: 1) accommodate as much as possible — given the fact that there will sometimes be a limit; and 2) accommodate based on request, not the religion of the requestor." (personal e-mail communication, May 3, 1998)