

## **Big lies as the UN suppresses truth with ideology**

By Jennifer Oriel, The Australian, 5 October 2015

In his first month as Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull's most decisive actions have been in cultural and international relations. His government has signed Australia up to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, announced a bid for membership of the Security Council and declared candidacy for a seat on the Human Rights Council.

The multilateral moves have taken a nation accustomed to Tony Abbott's more hawkish foreign policy by surprise. While the renewal of soft power relations with the UN may be viewed favourably, Australia's new era of cosmopolitanism should be tempered by political realism.

### **There is something rotten in the heart of the UN**

Even ardent advocates of the classical liberal ideals that inspired the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are beginning to recognise there is something rotten in the heart of the UN. Since the turn of the century, it has been beset by corruption and a culture of profligacy which would likely elicit strong criticism were the organisation a private enterprise. But it is the emerging culture of dishonesty at the UN which poses the greatest threat to its legitimacy as an independent and trustworthy arbiter of human rights and justice worldwide.

Dishonesty and double standards mark the rise of the UN in the realm of 21st-century human rights. In Australia, Europe, Canada and the US, human rights commissions have undermined evidentiary standards by supplanting empirical truth with emotionalism, campaigned against border integrity, criticised national security policy, engaged in judicial activism and sought to censor freethinkers. They have been unrelenting in the pursuit of a neo-Marxist social agenda that respects neither parliamentary process nor the views of citizens who pay their wages.

### **Their use of dishonesty to achieve political ends**

The most pressing problem with UN human rights advocates, however, is their use of dishonesty to achieve political ends. When attorney-general George Brandis rightly criticised Australian Human Rights Commission president Gillian Triggs for fibbing about the presence of armed guards at immigrant processing centres, he was accused of violating her human rights.

Rather than correcting Triggs's misrepresentation of the truth, the UN defended it.

Michel Forst, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders, asked the government to explain its actions while condemning its alleged violation of Triggs's rights. The violation of truth was not raised as a matter of vital interest. While that may offend our moral sensibilities, it is consistent with UN values.

### **The UN has created a new value system**

The UN has created a new value system where the truth is subordinated to human rights activism. For example, in the report Human Rights Defenders, it states that the "critical test" of a human rights defender is not to be correct — to base their case on objective and validated truth — but to pursue rights. Human rights have been transformed into a master ideology that transcends truth.

As history has shown, the supersession of objective truth with political ideology produces big lies. The big lie of the modern age is that secure-border policy produces more harm to humankind than it prevents. The UN is a powerful purveyor of the lie that effectively protects people-smugglers and frequently proves lethal to their human cargo.

In the organisation's latest attack on Australia's highly successful secure-border policy, UN migrant rights rapporteur Francois Crepeau whipped up a media storm on the false claim he was denied adequate access to immigration centres.

### **Hysterical claims as though they constituted fact**

The leftist media reported Crepeau's hysterical claims as though they constituted fact. Nowhere was his history of criticising conservative government policy reported. His recent attack describing defence of the continuous historical tradition of British culture as "bullshit" went unremarked. No one questioned his ability to conduct an impartial investigation into Australia's immigration processing centres given he is one of only eight council members of the Global Detention Project, an activist group highly critical of such centres.

The Turnbull government passed its first test on border security by refusing to submit to Crepeau's fantastical claims. But it faces an uphill battle to convince the electorate that deeper engagement with the UN is in the national interest and will produce return on investment.

### **The Syrian crisis has exposed the UN's radical impotence**

The Syrian crisis has exposed the UN's radical impotence in dealing with the major security threat of our age, Islamist terrorism. Its bloated bureaucracy is too dilatory to respond to the multi-ethnic civil wars that have emerged as the greatest global threat to human rights. Rather than realise the liberal universalist order out of such chaos, the UN appears beholden to its greatest detractors, communist and Islamist states.

### **The world's worst human rights violators populate the Human Rights Council**

Russia has emerged as the strongman of the UN in responding to the Syrian crisis and Islamist states now comprise the largest voting bloc at the UN General Assembly. The world's worst human rights violators populate the Human Rights Council. The minority of UN members that constitute the liberal democratic world order which inspired its inception cannot compete with the sheer size and determination of authoritarian states to overwhelm it.

Turnbull has initiated a marathon of diplomacy by committing Australia to the UN until at least 2030, if our bid for Security Council membership is successful. We will undoubtedly hear more about how deeper engagement with the UN will form a part of Turnbull's recast foreign policy strategy.

The easy route for the government would be to stage a UN love-in with the leftist media and ignore the warning signs about declining public trust in the liberal institutional order. But there is little point in denying that the free world's relationship with the UN is rapidly approaching a tipping point where we must decide whether to dig in and deepen engagement, or declare it a lost cause and start anew.

### **UN has abused public trust by elevating ideology over truth**

The UN remains a vital part of the liberal international order, but it has abused public trust by elevating ideology over truth and defending the indefensible in a desperate bid to remain relevant. In its recasting of foreign affairs, the Turnbull government should embrace a critical and transformative approach to international relations, acknowledging the UN requires serious structural reform if it is to become a force for good in the 21st century.

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