



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
f o u n d a t i o n

Monday, July 25, 2016

Glenn A. Fine
Inspector General, Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

The Honorable Glenn Fine,

Hello, Mr. Fine. I am Mikey Weinstein, Founder and President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF). MRFF currently represents just under 47,000 active duty U.S. marines, sailors, soldiers, airmen, cadets, midshipmen, national guard, reservists and veterans, about 96% of whom self-identify as practicing Christians. Our MRFF clients have faced unconstitutional religious church/state violations and noxious abuse from their military superiors who almost exclusively brandish one particular version of Christianity, fundamentalist Christianity, as a weapon to intimidate, menace, harass, subdue, and terrify their otherwise helpless armed forces subordinates. Among its tens of thousands of military clients, MRFF currently represents 927 LGBT military members, hundreds of atheist, agnostic, secularist and humanist military members as well as slightly over 17% of all Muslim-Americans in today's U.S. military.

Most tragically, it has just come to the attention of MRFF that on July 12, 2016, Air Force Chief of Chaplains Maj. Gen. Dondi Costin blatantly violated both Air Force and DoD regulations prohibiting the endorsement of a non-federal entity by appearing in uniform and delivering the official benediction at a Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty (CARL) event. CARL is well known as a ragingly anti-LGBT organization which has a long, quite unapologetic and formidable history of homophobic behavior of the most repulsive nature and magnitude.

The event was a reception for CARL's "Torchbearer Award," with the award's recipient being Rep. Randy Forbes. Congressman Forbes is the founder of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, a caucus that has repeatedly introduced vile legislation attempting to undermine the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," with the horrid goal of allowing harassment of and discrimination against LGB service members to continue unchecked regardless of DoD policy.

Also violating the regulations prohibiting the endorsement of a non-federal entity by appearing in military uniform at this event was an Army chaplain, Maj. John Scott, who delivered the event's official invocation. There is more, sir. Air Force Deputy Chief of Chaplains Brig. Gen. Steven A. Schaick, who although not one of the event's speakers, also openly attended the event in his USAF uniform. (See attached photos from: <http://chaplainalliance.org/events/>)

In addition to Maj. Gen. Costin's unquestionable violation, i.e. Costin's endorsement of a non-federal

entity such as CARL by his mere participation in this event in uniform, the overwhelmingly clear and clarion-call message of this awards gathering which he was incontrovertibly endorsing was in ABSOLUTE contradiction of well established DoD policies and Constitutional law. This “awards event” was unquestionably a blatantly anti-LGBT, atheist-bashing, fundamentalist Christian supremacy event, with the other speakers including well-known anti-LGBT voices, most notably the notoriously Islamophobic, fundamentalist Christian bully, retired Lt. Gen. William "Jerry" Boykin. (See attached article found at <http://www.virtueonline.org/secular-civilians-assault-warfighters-faith>) MRFF has been instrumental in getting Boykin barred from speaking at events held at West Point and most recently Fort Riley, Kansas due to his abject and shocking hate speech towards Islam and Muslims. Further, here at this CARL awards event, Boykin’s statements sanctimoniously proclaiming that he's "never seen an atheist in a foxhole" are simply unconscionable and are viewed as utterly abhorrent and terribly destructive to good order, morale, discipline, and unit cohesion by the hundreds of thousands of honorable, non-religious U.S. military personnel.

Maj. Gen. Costin's uniformed participation in this fundamentalist Christian supremacy, primacy, and triumphalism event, which, in addition to its anti-LGBT message, also conveyed a blatantly anti-atheist message, was also in clear violation of AFI 1-1, Section 2.12, which states (emphasis added):

"Leaders at all levels must balance constitutional protections for their own free exercise of religion, including individual expressions of religious beliefs, and the constitutional prohibition against governmental establishment of religion. They must ensure their words and actions cannot reasonably be construed to be officially endorsing or disapproving of, or extending preferential treatment for any faith, belief, or absence of belief."

Maj. Gen. Costin's participation in this event can without question "reasonably be construed as" his "officially endorsing" and "extending preferential treatment for" the Christian religion, and "disapproving of" the "absence of belief."

Look, sir, the well known bigot Boykin’s hate speech, and the hate speech of his fellow speakers, such as the so-called event’s “moderator” for this CARL-sponsored, charade and spectacle of shame, FOX News' hyper-homophobic Todd Starnes, are one thing. On the other hand, having very senior, uniformed military personnel endorse and validate such wretched prejudice by their active and visible participation or even mere attendance, again IN FULL MILITARY UNIFORM, is quite another, Mr. Fine.

It is at once unlawful, unconstitutional, violative of DoD regulations and, thus, violative of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) itself.

Mr. Fine, as you well know, sir, these specific DoD regulations and policies violated by Maj. Gen. Costin, and the uniformed individuals mentioned supra, exist for a very specific reason. Indeed, sir, can you imagine what utter chaos would have transpired had uniformed field grade and flag officers openly participated in and publicly attended, for just one example, a lavish Planned Parenthood awards event (organized such as CARL’s “Torchbearer Award” affair) recognizing only pro-choice members of Congress, as CARL just did for Congressman Randy Forbes? Why, sir, there would be torrents of blood in the streets amid the ear-piercing screams of endless protestations from these very

same fundamentalist Christian bigots who planned and participated in CARL's homage to homophobia and anthem to anti-atheism.

Sir, on behalf of its many, many thousands of military and veteran clients, MRFF demands that your DoD Inspector General's Office (DoD IG) immediately and aggressively investigate the above-described, sordid actions of undeniable endorsement of fundamentalist Christian exceptionalism exhibited by USAF Chief of Chaplains Maj. Gen. Dondi Costin and all other uniformed military participants and attendees at CARL's July 12, 2016, "Torchbearer Award" event. MRFF further demands that Maj. Gen Costin and all others found to have violated DoD regulatory policies and the UCMJ be very visibly punished for their deliberate, willful and wanton transgressions.

Mr. Fine, this instant matter is not dissimilar from the infamous "Christian Embassy" (see attached press release here: http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/press-releases/christian_embassy.html) scandal of late 2006 where MRFF once again demanded swift and meaningful intervention by the DoD IG. In response to MRFF's valid demands, your office found 7 senior DoD military and civilian officials to have been in various degrees of complicity and violation of these very same DoD policies.

This time around, sir, MRFF asks you not to again mete out merely administrative slaps on the wrists to the violators.

Justice cries out for trial by courts-martial for those duly found to have criminally elevated their own personal sectarian version of horrifically homophobic, anti-atheist, fundamentalist Christianity over their sworn oaths to protect and defend the secular mandates of bedrock DoD regulations and the United States Constitution.



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CC:

Secretary of Defense – Ash Carter
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Secretary of the Air Force – Deborah Lee James
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force - David L. Goldfein
Randal G. Mathis, Mathis & Donheiser P.C. – MRFF Lead Trial Counsel

Following attachments in order:

Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty Photos

Virtue Online Article

Christian Embassy Press Release



Events



Attendees watch a video about the chaplaincy.



President Doug Lee welcomes the guests.



CH (MAJ) John Scott, USA, gives the invocation.



Bishop Derek Jones sings the National Anthem.



Attendees sing the National Anthem.



Fox News Correspondent Todd Starnes gives remarks.



LTG Jerry Boykin, USA (Ret.) gives remarks.



Representative Doug Collins (R-GA) gives remarks.



Representative John Fleming (R-LA) gives remarks.



Executive Director Ron Crews introduces the keynote speaker.



Senator James Lankford (R-OK) gives the keynote address.



Representative J. Randy Forbes (R-VA) is presented with the Torchbearer Award.



Representative J. Randy Forbes (R-VA) gives remarks.



CH (Maj. Gen.) Dondi Costin, USAF, gives the benediction.



From left: Jim and Darcy Terry, Ron and Jonda Crews, and John Scott



Todd Starnes (left) speaking with CH (COL) Andy Meverden, USA (Ret.) (right)



From left: Ron Benzing, Arthur Schulcz, and Daniel Blomberg



CH (Brig. Gen.) Steve Schaick, USAF, speaks with Doug Lee and guests



Representative Trent Franks (R-AZ) speaks with CPCF's Summer Ingram and a guest

[See Torchbearer Award Presentation To House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon Photos Here](#)

[See Religious Accommodations In The Armed Services Hearing Photos Here](#)

[See First Annual Torchbearer Award Panel And Reception Photos Here](#)



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By supporting the Chaplain Alliance, you enable us to secure the religious liberties of our chaplains and those they serve.

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DVD Series

The Chaplain Alliance and Alliance Defending Freedom present a special Military Edition of Doing the Right Thing. DVD's are available for a donation of \$15. To request your copy of this dynamic exploration of ethics email: info@chaplainalliance.org.

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Secular Civilians Assault Warfighters' Faith



Secular Civilians Assault Warfighters' Faith

By ANDREW E. HARROD

<https://juicyecumenism.com/2016/07/19/secular-civilians-assault-warfighters-faith/>

July 19, 2016

"There is an all-out assault on religious liberty in the military right now," stated retired Lieutenant General William G. "Jerry" Boykin at the Chaplains Association for Religious Liberty's (CARL) July 12 Torchbearer Award Reception. The famed former Delta Force commander and his fellow speakers at Washington, DC's Reserve Officers Association highlighted the damaging disconnect between an increasingly secularized America and its often devout defenders.

The opening remarks of the event's moderator, Fox News correspondent Todd Starnes, contrasted with the traditional Christian prayer and singing of the National Anthem that preceded the evening's speakers. He discussed Miley Cyrus' 2013 "twerk heard around the world," an "act of public debauchery" that occurred roughly simultaneously with Duck Dynasty star Phil Robertson's publicly castigated defense of natural man-woman marriage. "That is where we are as a country right now. Right is wrong, wrong is right, it is if our values have been turned upside down."

Starnes described a "war on the Judeo-Christian values that shaped and flavored the founding documents of our great country." "Without that Judeo-Christian foundation I believe the country crumbles," he added. "Proud to call myself a gun-toting, chicken-eating, Bible-clinging son of a Baptist," he defined himself as a "Duck Dynasty guy living

in a Miley Cyrus world and Washington is twerking all of us."

Air Force Chaplain Major General Dondi E. Costin concurred in his closing benediction that "we live in a world which is increasingly unrecognizable by our grandparents."

Senator James Lankford (R-OK) stated that modern Americans "live in a culture where, for whatever reason, people are becoming afraid of faith." He referenced the legislative efforts needed to include the United States national motto "In God We Trust" in the Capitol Visitors Center's design and recent Iowa infringements of religious liberty in the name of LGBT agendas.

Representative John Fleming noted that a "radical Left who wants to substitute government for God" was extending its agenda to the United States military. Service members are "being prosecuted and persecuted for the faith" even as recent proposals for military "atheist chaplains" threatened to take away precious billets from true spiritual counselors. An astonished Fleming observed that such atheists can only grimly say to service personnel on death's verge that "there is nothing after this."

The veteran Boykin confirmed Fleming's concerns with vivid testimony of his Delta Force service from its 1977 founding. Boykin recounted how the unit's legendary first commander, Colonel Charles Beckwith, a Green Beret who had survived a .50 caliber stomach wound in Vietnam, rejected Boykin's suggestion for a Delta Force chaplain. Beckwith had argued that he would simply double as chaplain, but then called upon Boykin to lead Delta Force in prayer the night before the April 24, 1980, Iran hostage rescue attempt. He read Isaiah 6:8 to the commandos and recalled that "there was a chance that none of us would come back, but certainly the odds were against us that all of us would come back."

The mission's tragic failure costing eight Delta Force deaths emphasized a chaplain's importance, as unit survivors faced their traumas without proper spiritual support, yet ensuing years brought no remedy. Delta Force participated in operations such as the 1983 Grenada and 1989 Panama liberations, but not until Boykin assumed command in 1992 could he prioritize a chaplaincy. Nonetheless, his men still awaited a chaplain when they fought through the October 3, 1993, Black Hawk Down engagement in Mogadishu, Somalia, that claimed 18 soldiers.

"I don't care what any of the nonsensical liberals say, I have never seen an atheist in a foxhole," Boykin stated, confirming an old adage with personal experience. He recalled a recurring tendency for soldiers before combat operations to approach chaplains at their quarters or in mess lines for spiritual reflection. Nonetheless, "we are trying to drive the most essential and most fundamental thing out of our military, and that is the faith component, by the evil that is being brought in to our military."

Boykin noted in particular that "this LGBT agenda of this administration is making life difficult, not just for chaplains, but for everybody." His words brought to mind Lieutenant Commander Wes Modder, a United States Navy chaplain who had faced before exoneration disciplinary action for expressing to naval personnel during counseling disapproval of homosexuality. Boykin's experience indicates that Modder's removal from service would severely damage morale for the personnel in his care.

Unfortunately, most Americans and their leaders cannot appreciate Boykin's insight across an ever growing military-civilian gap in a country where less than one percent of the population volunteers for a professional military. According to former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, President Barack Obama's only passionate defense interest was lifting the American military's ban on open homosexuality. Like Obama, homosexual activist and current Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning has never served in the military, where risks to life and limb give existential faith questions immediacy largely unknown in civilian life.

In such a context Boykin's old-fashioned, presently unfashionable views give him a "habit of getting in trouble," but in retirement he remains undaunted. Given his record of canceled military base speaking engagements, he joked about expecting a similar rescindment by higher authorities while recently traveling to a presentation at Fort Bragg,

Nth. Carolina. Nevertheless, "we have got quit worrying about what someone is going to say about us or what somebody is going to think about us."

With echoes of the Book of Ezekiel's watchman, Boykin emphasizes that courage of convictions has consequences for the next world as well as the present. "I do not want to see a man or a woman, go into combat, go into harm's way, go into danger, that has not heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ." "It's your fault if they go into harm's way and they have not heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ," he has said to Christian chaplains. Torchbearer Award recipient Representative Randy Forbes accordingly concluded in paraphrase of the Book of Jude: "fight for the faith."

END



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
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URGENT PRESS RELEASE

August 2, 2007

DoD Inspector General Finds Misconduct by Pentagon Generals Participating in "Christian Embassy" Promo Video: Military Religious Freedom Foundation's Expose Vindicated

At last, truth to power. As Mark Twain so presciently said, "A lie goes half-way around the world before truth gets its boots on." The Military Religious Freedom Foundation's (MRFF's) (<http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org>) long diligence in requesting investigation has now resulted in the US Department of Defense Inspector General's determination of misconduct on the part of high-ranking Pentagon personnel. For four years, MRFF Founder Mikey Weinstein has worked to ensure the Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom to which all Americans are entitled.

In response to the DoD Inspector General's Report (http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/press-releases/christian_embassy_report.pdf), the Military Religious Freedom Foundation Founder and President Mikey Weinstein released the following statement:

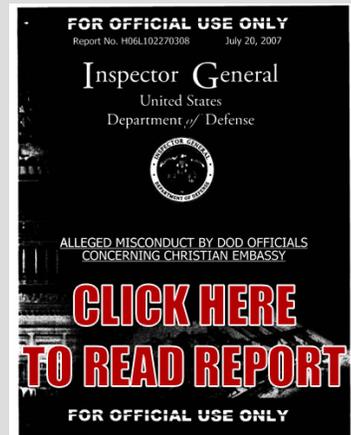
"This U.S. Department of Defense Inspector General's (DoD/IG) report confirms the intentional dismantling of the Constitutionally mandated wall separating church and state by some of the highest ranking officials in the Bush Administration and the U.S. military. Embarrassingly feeble excuses proffered by senior U.S. Army and Air Force generals and other senior officers reveal long and deep collusion with a fundamentalist, religious missionary organization, the 'Christian Embassy'. That these senior Pentagon officials control the world's largest nuclear, chemical and biological arsenal should eviscerate the American public's trust and confidence in their military and civilian leadership. The shocking allowance of unrestricted Pentagon access to fundamentalist Christian missionaries through the official 'badging' process is an outrageous national security breach of the highest order. Therefore, MRFF now demands immediate Congressional oversight hearings on this breach. Inexplicably, the DoD/IG failed to fault Secretary of the Army (and former Acting Secretary of the Air Force) Preston M. ('Pete') Geren, even though his role in the 'Christian Embassy' video clearly led the way for other senior officers' participation. MRFF intends to file expeditiously a comprehensive Federal lawsuit that will rapaciously pursue legal remedies to the multitude of horrific Constitutional violations this DoD/IG report reveals."

The 46-page report dated July 20, 2007 found that:

1. Pentagon Chaplain Colonel Ralph G. Benson obtained limited approval for the non-profit, non-Federal religious organization "Christian Embassy" to film in the Pentagon by mischaracterizing the purpose and proponent of their new, fundraising video. He had stated that the video was to document the Pentagon's own ministry rather than that of a non-Federal entity, when it was actually intended to attract new supporters.
2. Benson thus provided "Christian Embassy" a selective benefit, including permission to film and unescorted access to Pentagon areas and personnel that other organizations would not have received.
3. Seven high-ranking military officers, including major generals and brigadier generals were filmed in interviews with "Christian Embassy" during the duty day with rank clearly displayed in official and often identifiable Pentagon locations.
4. None of the officers had sought or received approval to participate in official capacity or uniform.
5. The officers' remarks conferred approval of and support to "Christian Embassy", and some officers' remarks implied that they spoke for a group of senior military leaders.
6. The officers defended their actions by asserting that "Christian Embassy" had become a **"quasi-Federal entity"**, since the **Department of Defense had endorsed the organization to General Officers for over twenty five years.** "Christian Embassy" is in fact affiliated with Campus Crusade for Christ, a worldwide evangelical missionary organization.
7. Chaplain Benson defended his actions by asserting a First Amendment Establishment Clause right in connection with his professional status.
8. Mr. Robert Varney, Executive Director of "Christian Embassy", testified that the new video was used for his organization's fundraising; indeed the new video covered exclusively the non-Federal organization, but did not mention the Pentagon's ministry.
9. The new, 2004 video updated "Christian Embassy's" prior promo video of 2001 and included



Click here to see
Mikey Weinstein's CNN interview



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Christian Embassy video

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*As we continue to fight in the
courts, the media, and in the minds
and hearts of our fellow citizens,
we need your ongoing support.*

- endorsements of the organization and its “services” from supporters working on Capitol Hill, other Federal agencies and embassies, wholly unconnected with the Pentagon’s ministry.
10. The non-DoD speakers on the video included six congressmen, two ambassadors, two ambassadors’ wives, as well as the Under Secretary of Benefits for Veterans’ Affairs and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, who acknowledged in the video “Christian Embassy’s” international and federal-governmental evangelical outreach.
 11. The report concluded that Major Generals Peter Sutton and John Catton, Brigadier Generals Vincent Brooks and Robert Caslen “improperly endorsed and participated with a non-Federal entity while in uniform”. It recommends that the Air Force and the Army “consider appropriate corrective action...”.
 12. The report also concluded that the Pentagon Chaplain’s office **authorized contractor badge status** to 34 religiously affiliated volunteers, including “Christian Embassy” employees. Further, it noted that the Inspector General’s office is “unconvinced” that these passes were properly authorized and “suggests that a **contractor badge is not appropriate for these individuals**”.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation prompted this investigation into the “Christian Embassy” video project in 2006 by demanding that the US Department of Defense Inspector General’s office investigate this travesty. The demand was reported on in the Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/10/AR2006121000883_pf.html And the full text was reported on Slate.com, <http://www.slate.com/id/2155453/>. This controversy was also discussed in the December 2006 issue of Harpers Magazine, <http://www.harpers.org/archive/2006/12/0081322>. The "Christian Embassy" video can be viewed at http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/Media_video/christian-embassy/index.html.
Americans have been unaware until now that their tax dollars have been used by the Pentagon for over twenty five years to further religious proselytizing.

ABOUT MIKEY WEINSTEIN

Michael L. “Mikey” Weinstein is Founder and President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (<http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org>). He is an attorney and businessman who spent over three years as a White House counsel in the Reagan White House. He was formerly General Counsel for H. Ross Perot and Perot Systems Corporation. An Honor Graduate from the USAF Academy, he served on active duty in the USAF as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) for ten years. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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