



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

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20310-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

My name is Mikey Weinstein and I am the Founder and President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF). MRFF is a national civil rights advocacy organization focusing on fighting to preserve the separation of church and state in the United States armed forces.

On behalf of our Foundation's clients, which number well over 66,000 active duty, Reserve, Guard, retired, and former (veteran) members of the Department of Defense (DoD), MRFF hereby demands that you and the entire DoD apparatus publicly disavow the heinous Constitutional travesty perpetrated recently (January 12, 2020) in which a copy of the Christian bible (King James Version; "KJV") was officially "blessed" at the Washington National Cathedral (WNC) and accepted by the US Air Force Chief of Chaplains as the "official Bible for the new (United States) Space Force." Adding substantially to the unbridled ignominy and shame of this event, WNC then shortly thereafter proudly and prominently announced on social media, essentially to The World, the entirety of the foregoing but then brazenly added more fuel to the fire by further announcing that this blessed bible "...WILL be used to swear in ALL commanders of America's newest military branch" per the Tweet posted recently (emphasis added):

<https://twitter.com/WNCathedral/status/1216418699898474502>

Seriously, Mr. Secretary, it does not take a seasoned, Constitutional legal scholar to understand that this instant, tyrannical action viciously violates the United States Constitution's No Establishment Clause as well as Clause 3, Article 6 which makes any "religious test" to hold official government office likewise unconstitutional. This horrid example of DoD-endorsed, fundamentalist Christian supremacy, primacy, domination, bullying, bigotry, exclusivity, exceptionalism and triumphalism also violates bedrock Constitutional caselaw as well as a plethora of DoD Directives, Regulations, and Instructions. (For merely one pertinent example, please see Air Force Instruction 1-1, Section 2.12.)

Sir, this sordid matter is horrendously divisive and is fatally biased. Indeed, Secretary Esper, this "blessing" event and its concomitant widespread dissemination, publicized as an official U.S. armed forces event, is in practical effect declaring the newly formed United States Space Force to be a uniquely and exclusionary Christian military service. Further, it incontrovertibly declares to anyone who does not believe in the divinely inspired nature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as detailed in the KJV bible, that they are NOT welcome to serve in or for the new U.S. Space Force.

As you must know, Mr. Secretary, the effectiveness of any military force depends TOTALLY upon maximizing good order, morale, discipline, and unit cohesion. The nefarious actions detailed in this letter derisively marginalize a massive percentage of our honored military fighting forces by literally ripping asunder all of those combat capability goals to achieve optimal DoD mission accomplishment!

Thus, should we REALLY be blatantly branding for ALL to see and internalize that our nation's newest (or any) armed service branch is uniquely and solely "Christian"? Should or can we legally REQUIRE all commanders, regardless of their beliefs, to take their oath of office with their hand on this or any book or spiritual text when their oath is specifically mandated to SOLELY support and defend the U.S. Constitution itself? Our secular American heritage, values, and over 230 years of nonsectarian, Constitutional governance scream strongly, "No!"

Mr. Secretary, we at MRFF might wish to believe that this instant disgrace was an unendorsed, unofficial, rogue action initiated by the parent U.S. Air Force and its Chief of Chaplains (a Major General who damn well should have known better!). Perhaps this unconstitutional disaster ensued without your knowing endorsement or that of the Secretary of the Air Force, Ms. Barrett, Air Force Chief of Staff, General Goldfein, or even the newly-named Chief of Space Operations, General Raymond. But, frankly, that seems to be a bit hard to believe at this point, sir.

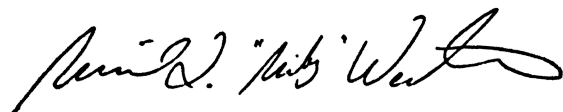
Nevertheless, irrespective of who knew what and when, MRFF now implores that you immediately exercise your Constitutional responsibility forthwith and forcibly, publicly, unambiguously and comprehensively disavow and rescind this anti-American, divisive and wholly illicit action of fundamentalist, Christian religious extremism.

Sir, you must wipe the nascent U.S. Space Force clean of this shameful stain of unconstitutional, original sin.

To this end, sir, MRFF now demands that you initiate an immediate, full DoD investigation to visibly and aggressively punish all those individuals who knew or should have known what was to transpire at this despicable, official, DoD, Christian "bible blessing" event at the WNC.

Thank you in advance for your timely consideration and cooperation. MRFF awaits your official response to our demands.

Respectfully,



Michael L. "Mikey" Weinstein, Esq.
Founder and President
Military Religious Freedom Foundation

cc:
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley
Secretary of the Air Force, Barbara M. Barrett
Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General David L. Goldfein