



INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350-1500

NOV 1 2016

Mr. Michael L. Weinstein, Esq.
Military Religious Freedom Foundation
13170-B Central Avenue, SE, Suite 225
Albuquerque, NM 87123

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

This is in response to your July 25, 2016, letter and October 20, 2016, email message to Acting Inspector General Glenn A. Fine regarding Air Force Chief of Chaplains Major General (Maj Gen) Dondi Costin's attendance and benediction at a Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty (CARL) event.

We referred your letter to the Air Force Inspector General (IG) to address whether Maj Gen Costin improperly endorsed and participated with a non-federal entity while in uniform by attending and giving the benediction at the July 12, 2016, CARL event. We asked the Air Force IG to examine both the act of giving the benediction and its content. After conducting interviews and gathering additional facts, the Air Force IG found that Maj Gen Costin's benediction was a generic, non-sectarian prayer seeking God's blessing on the event's honoree, Congressman Randy Forbes. The Air Force IG found no prima facie evidence that Maj Gen Costin endorsed CARL by appearing in uniform and performing the benediction, thereby implying Air Force sponsorship of CARL or sanction of a particular cause, or discrediting the Armed Forces.

We reviewed the matter, to include the Air Force IG's assessment. We also concluded Maj Gen Costin's attendance and benediction did not violate Department of Defense or Air Force standards on endorsement of or participation with a non-federal entity, uniform wear, public speaking, or free exercise of religion.

Finally, with regard to your October 20 email message, your assertion that DoD IG assigned Army Chaplain Lt. Col Grace Hollis to investigate the Air Force Chief of Chaplains is not accurate. Neither the DoD IG nor Air Force IG assigned Lt. Col. Hollis to investigate Maj Gen Costin's benediction at the CARL event, and Lt. Col. Hollis was not involved in the matter in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marguerite C. Garrison".

Marguerite C. Garrison
Deputy Inspector General for
Administrative Investigations