



# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

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July 13, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington DC 20500

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Dear Mr President:

I am writing to express deep disappointment by millions of secular Americans over the continuing insertion of Christian doctrine into the U.S. military.

It was disheartening to see your participation in one such unconstitutional exercise, the embarrassingly sectarian and primitive prayer delivered on behalf of the United States at the D-Day commemoration by U.S. Army Chaplain (Col.) Thomas MacGregor. Your bowed head and "amen" at the conclusion, televised around the world, sent an unfortunate signal of acquiescence and approval of the intermingling of religion and government.

It is difficult to understand how the chaplain's prayer could not have been "vetted," given the White House's current policy requesting and vetting prayer at several of your appearances.

We consider the White House as culpable in this violation as the U.S. Army, and urge that in the future, you will proactively work to ensure that the federal military and government avoid an appearance of endorsing and preferring one religion over another, or religion over nonreligion.

Enclosed please find my letter of complaint to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, a transcript of the inappropriate prayer in question, and a secondary objection to the unseemly piety at "goarmy.com/chaplain," in which the U.S. government advertises that military chaplains are "shepherds," who are "endowed" and "led by God."

While this complaint deals with only two episodes, these are symptomatic of a much broader problem, namely the misuse of military authority and position by many individuals to promote their brand of religion while they are on the job. The numerous scandals under the Bush Administration have yet to be addressed by your Administration, and we urge you to launch an investigation into widespread proselytizing in all branches of the military which cross the line from accommodation into outright misuse of office to promote personal religious beliefs.

We would appreciate your prompt assistance to remedy widespread Establishment Clause violations in the U.S. military.

Very truly yours

Annie Laurie Gaylor

Dan Barker, Co-President • Annie Laurie Gaylor, Co-President • Anne Nicol Gaylor, President Emerita

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