DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC

FROM: HQ USAF/CC
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

SUBJECT: Maintaining Government Neutrality Regarding Religion

Leaders at all levels must balance Constitutional protections for an individual's free exercise of religion or other personal beliefs and its prohibition against governmental establishment of religion. For example, they must avoid the actual or apparent use of their position to promote their personal religious beliefs to their subordinates or to extend preferential treatment for any religion. Commanders or supervisors who engage in such behavior may cause members to doubt their impartiality and objectivity. The potential result is a degradation of the unit's morale, good order, and discipline.

Chaplain Corps programs, including activities such as religious studies, faith sharing, and prayer meetings, are vital to commanders' support of individual Airmen's needs and provide opportunities for the free exercise of religion. Although commanders are responsible for these programs, they must refrain from appearing to officially endorse religion generally or any particular religion. Therefore, I expect chaplains, not commanders, to notify Airmen of Chaplain Corps programs.

Our chaplains are trained to provide advice to leadership on matters related to the free exercise of religion and to help commanders care for all of their people, regardless of their beliefs. If you have concerns involving the preservation of government neutrality regarding religious beliefs, consult with your chaplain and staff judge advocate before you act.

NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
General, USAF
Chief of Staff