



# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

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SENT VIA U.S. MAIL & E-MAIL

January 20, 2010

The Honorable Dr Robert M Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Gates:

On behalf of our 14,000 membership, our national organization, which works to promote the constitutional principle of separation between church and state, is writing to express our shock and concern over the outrageous revelations exposed this week by ABC News. It is chilling to learn that the Pentagon knowingly has contracted since 1995 with a military outfitter, Trijicon, which inscribes New Testament bible verses on rifle sights for the Marines and Army. The clear message this sends is that the Pentagon expects soldiers to shoot Muslims (or others) in the name of Jesus.

Equally shocking were the comments yesterday by Air Force Maj. John Redfield, who told the Associated Press such bible inscriptions do not violate U.S. military rules and “they’ll continue to be used.” The U.S. military appears unconcerned and unrepentant over this major Constitutional and security breach. This violation conjures up not only a blood-thirsty Crusade against Muslims in the name of Christianity, but the practice of the Nazis, who inscribed “Gott mit uns” (God With Us) on the buckle of uniform belts.

The Pentagon must take immediate steps to ensure the replacement all such sights on any weapons purchased by the United States, whether for use in Iraq and Afghanistan, or elsewhere. Trijicon, whose Web site openly admits its biblical foundation, and which reportedly has a \$660 million multiyear contract to provide up to 800,000 sights to the Marine Corps, and additional contracts for the Army, should bear that cost—not American taxpayers. It is not enough to banish the inscriptions from future purchases—although at this point the U.S. military has not even suggested doing this much!

Second, we ask that you adopt and announce a proactive policy ensuring that religious messages, emblems, citations, bible verses, inscriptions, etc., are never part of the military arsenal, civilian uniforms, etc., including a screening process to enforce this regulation. Finally, we ask for a formal investigation, and a public explanation and apology from the Pentagon. Whoever has currently approved these sights should be fired or should resign.

Religion has run amok at the Pentagon, but this newly exposed scandal goes beyond a simple state/church breach. The Pentagon is dangerously inflaming the perception that the United States is indeed engaged in a Crusade. This is not only a Crusade against Islam, but a Crusade against non-Christian Americans and military personnel—and against the very Constitution itself which all military personnel take an oath of office to uphold. The U.S. Constitution is secular and godless, and its only references to religion in government are

exclusionary, such as that there shall be no religious test for public office. The Pentagon is abrogating our Bill of Rights, which protects freedom of conscience, and ensures that citizens, including those in the military, shall be free from government-fostered religion.

This longstanding practice, which has also occurred on your watch, endangers not only national security but our secular form of democracy.

May we hear what steps the Pentagon is taking to remedy this egregious violation at your earliest convenience?

Very truly,

*Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker*  
Annie Laurie Gaylor and Dan Barker  
Foundation Co-Presidents

cc: President Barack Obama