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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6060

October 17, 2003

Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Enclosed are copies of articles that have appeared in the press recently about public statements allegedly made in uniform by Lieutenant General William G. Boykin, U.S. Army, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

In matters pertaining to religious beliefs, practice and expression, the Armed Forces have traditionally permitted as much latitude as possible, consistent with the requirement for good order and discipline and the military's ability to accomplish its mission. We recognize the right of every American to free speech. However, as is well established, there are limits on the right of expression for service members.

Public statements by a senior military official of an inflammatory, offensive nature that would denigrate another religion and which could be construed as bigotry may easily be exploited by enemies of the United States and contribute to an erosion of support within the Arab world, and, perhaps, increased risk for members of the U.S. Armed Forces serving in Muslim nations.

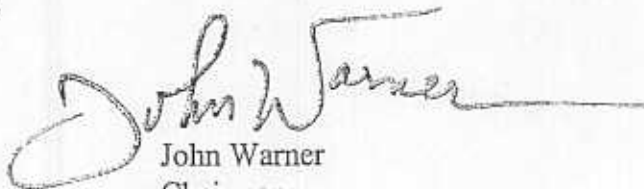
It is the responsibility of the United States Senate to render constitutional "advice and consent" with respect to the officer corps. Implicit in this confirmation process is our judgment that officers, especially those of flag and general rank, are persons possessing sound judgment and a respect for the rights and beliefs of others.

We recommend that you refer this matter to the Department of Defense Inspector General for a thorough review of the facts, and a determination as to whether or not there has been any inappropriate behavior by Lieutenant General Boykin. Please advise the Committee of the results of this review.

Sincerely,



Carl Levin
Ranking Member



John Warner
Chairman

Enclosures

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General Casts War In Religious Terms

The top soldier assigned to track down Bin Laden and Hussein is an evangelical Christian who speaks publicly of 'the army of God.'

By Richard T. Cooper, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has assigned the task of tracking down and eliminating Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and other high-profile targets to an Army general who sees the war on terrorism as a clash between Judeo-Christian values and Satan.

Lt. Gen. William G. "Jerry" Boykin, the new deputy undersecretary of Defense for intelligence, is a much-decorated and twice-wounded veteran of covert military operations. From the bloody 1993 clash with Muslim warlords in Somalia chronicled in "Black Hawk Down" and the hunt for Colombian drug czar Pablo Escobar to the ill-fated attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran in 1980, Boykin was in the thick of things.

Yet the former commander and 13-year veteran of the Army's top-secret Delta Force is also an outspoken evangelical Christian who appeared in dress uniform and polished jump boots before a religious group in Oregon in June to declare that radical Islamists hated the United States "because we're a Christian nation, because our foundation and our roots are Judeo-Christian and the enemy is a guy named Satan."

Discussing the battle against a Muslim warlord in Somalia, Boykin told another audience, "I knew my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol."

"We in the army of God, in the house of God, kingdom of God have been raised for such a time as this," Boykin said last year.

On at least one occasion, in Sandy, Ore., in June, Boykin said of President Bush: "He's in the White House because God put him there."

Boykin's penchant for casting the war on terrorism in religious terms appears to be at odds with Bush and an administration that have labored to insist that the war on terrorism is not a religious conflict.

Although the Army has seldom if ever taken official action against officers for outspoken expressions of religious opinion, outside experts see remarks such as Boykin's as sending exactly the wrong message to the Arab and Islamic world.

In his public remarks, Boykin has also said that radical Muslims who resort to terrorism are not

representative of the Islamic faith.

He has compared Islamic extremists to "hooded Christians" who terrorized blacks, Catholics, Jews and others from beneath the robes of the Ku Klux Klan.

Boykin was not available for comment and did not respond to written questions from the Los Angeles Times submitted to him Wednesday.

"The first lesson is to recognize that whatever we say here is heard there, particularly anything perceived to be hostile to their basic religion, and they don't forget it," said Stephen P. Cohen, a member of the special panel named to study policy in the Arab and Muslim world for the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

"The phrase 'Judeo-Christian' is a big mistake. It's basically the language of Bin Laden and his supporters," said Cohen, president of the Institute for Middle East Peace and Development in New York.

"They are constantly trying to create the impression that the Jews and Christians are getting together to beat up on Islam. We have to be very careful that this doesn't become a clash between religions, a clash of civilizations."

Boykin's religious activities were first documented in detail by William N. Arkin, a former military intelligence analyst who writes on defense issues for The Times Opinion section.

Audio and videotapes of Boykin's appearances before religious groups over the last two years were obtained exclusively by NBC News, which reported on them Wednesday night on the "Nightly News with Tom Brokaw."

Arkin writes in an article on the op-ed page of today's Times that Boykin's appointment "is a frightening blunder at a time that there is widespread acknowledgment that America's position in the Islamic world has never been worse."

Boykin's promotion to lieutenant general and his appointment as deputy undersecretary of Defense for intelligence were confirmed by the Senate by voice vote in June.

An aide to the Senate Armed Services Committee said the appointment was not examined in detail.

Yet Boykin's explicitly Christian-evangelical language in public forums may become an issue now that he holds a high-level policy position in the Pentagon.

Officials at his level are often called upon to testify before Congress and appear in public forums.

Boykin's new job makes his role especially sensitive: He is charged with speeding up the flow of intelligence on terrorist leaders to combat teams in the field so that they can attack top-ranking terrorist leaders.

Since virtually all these leaders are Muslim, Boykin's words and actions are likely to draw special scrutiny in the Arab and Islamic world.

Bush, a born-again Christian, often uses religious language in his speeches, but he keeps references to God nonsectarian.

At one point, immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the president said he wanted to lead a "crusade" against terrorism.

But he quickly retracted the word when told that, to Muslim ears, it recalled the medieval Christian crusaders' brutal invasions of Islamic nations.

In that context, Boykin's reference to the God of Islam as "an idol" may be perceived as particularly inflammatory.

The president has made a point of praising Islam as "a religion of peace." He has invited Muslim clerics to the White House for Ramadan dinners and has criticized evangelicals who called Islam a dangerous faith.

The issue is still a sore spot in the Muslim world.

Pollster John Zogby says that public opinion surveys throughout the Arab and Islamic world show strong negative reactions to any statement by a U.S. official that suggests a conflict between religions or cultures.

"To frame things in terms of good and evil, with the United States as good, is a nonstarter," Zogby said.

"It is exactly the wrong thing to do."

For the Army, the issue of officers expressing religious opinions publicly has been a sensitive problem for many years, according to a former head of the Army Judge Advocate General's office who is now retired but continues to serve in government as a civilian.

"The Army has struggled with this issue over the years. It gets really, really touchy because what you're talking about is freedom of expression," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"What usually happens is that somebody has a quiet chat with the person," the retired general said.

Times staff writer Doyle McManus contributed to this report.

Los Angeles Times
October 16, 2003

The Pentagon Unleashes A Holy Warrior

A Christian extremist in a high Defense post can only set back the U.S. approach to the Muslim world.

By William M. Arkin

In June of 2002, Jerry Boykin stepped to the pulpit at the First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Okla., and described a set of photographs he had taken of Mogadishu, Somalia, from an Army helicopter in 1993.

The photographs were taken shortly after the disastrous "Blackhawk Down" mission had resulted in the death of 18 Americans. When Boykin came home and had them developed, he said, he noticed a strange dark mark over the city. He had an imagery interpreter trained by the military look at the mark. "This is not a blemish on your photograph," the interpreter told him, "This is real."

"Ladies and gentleman, this is your enemy," Boykin said to the congregation as he flashed his pictures on a screen. "It is the principalities of darkness. It is a demonic presence in that city that God revealed to me as the enemy."

That's an unusual message for a high-ranking U.S. military official to deliver. But Boykin does it frequently.

This June, for instance, at the pulpit of the Good Shepherd Community Church in Sandy, Ore., he displayed slides of Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and North Korea's Kim Jung Il. "Why do they hate us?" Boykin asked. "The answer to that is because we're a Christian nation. We are hated because we are a nation of believers."

Our "spiritual enemy," Boykin continued, "will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus."

Who is Jerry Boykin? He is Army Lt. General William G. "Jerry" Boykin. The day before Boykin appeared at the pulpit in Oregon, the Pentagon announced that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had nominated the general for a third star and named him to a new position as deputy undersecretary of Defense for intelligence.

In this newly created position, Boykin is not just another Pentagon apparatchik or bureaucratic warrior. He has been charged with reinvigorating Rumsfeld's "High Value Target Plan" to track down Bin Laden, Hussein, Mullah Omar and other leaders in the terrorism world.

But Gen. Boykin's appointment to a high position in the administration is a frightening blunder at a

time when there is widespread acknowledgment that the position of the United States in the Islamic world has never been worse.

A monthlong journalistic investigation of Boykin reveals a 30-year veteran whose classified resumé reads like a history of special operations and counter-terrorism. From the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt in 1980 to invasions in Grenada and Panama, to the hunt for drug lord Pablo Escobar in Colombia, to Somalia and various locales in the Middle East, Boykin has been there. He also was an advisor to Atty. Gen. Janet Reno during Waco.

He has risen in the ranks, starting out as one of the first Delta Force commandos and going on to head the top-secret Joint Special Operations Command. He has served in the Central Intelligence Agency and, most recently, he commanded Army Special Forces before being brought into the Rumsfeld leadership team.

But Boykin is also an intolerant extremist who has spoken openly about how his belief in Christianity has trumped Muslims and other non-Christians in battle.

He has described himself as a warrior in the kingdom of God and invited others to join with him in fighting for the United States through repentance, prayer and the exercise of faith in God.

He has praised the leadership of President Bush, whom he extolled as "a man who prays in the Oval Office." "George Bush was not elected by a majority of the voters in the United States," Boykin told an Oregon congregation. "He was appointed by God."

All Americans, including those in uniform, are entitled to their views. But when Boykin publicly spews this intolerant message while wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army, he strongly suggests that this is an official and sanctioned view — and that the U.S. Army is indeed a Christian army.

But that's only part of the problem. Boykin is also in a senior Pentagon policymaking position, and it's a serious mistake to allow a man who believes in a Christian "jihad" to hold such a job.

For one thing, Boykin has made it clear that he takes his orders not from his Army superiors but from God — which is a worrisome line of command. For another, it is both imprudent and dangerous to have a senior officer guiding the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan who believes that Islam is an idolatrous, sacrilegious religion against which we are waging a holy war.

And judging by his words, that is what he believes.

In a speech at a church in Daytona, Fla., in January, Boykin told the following story:

"There was a man in Mogadishu named Osman Atto," whom Boykin described as a top lieutenant of Mohammed Farah Aidid.

When Boykin's Delta Force commandos went after Atto, they missed him by seconds, he said. "He went on CNN and he laughed at us, and he said, 'They'll never get me because Allah will protect me.

Allah will protect me.'

"Well, you know what?" Boykin continued. "I knew that my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol." Atto later was captured.

Other countries, Boykin said last year, "have lost their morals, lost their values. But America is still a Christian nation."

The general has said he has no doubt that our side is the side of the true God. He says he attends prayer services five times a week.

In Iraq, he told the Oregon congregation, special operations forces were victorious precisely because of their faith in God. "Ladies and gentlemen I want to impress upon you that the battle that we're in is a spiritual battle," he said. "Satan wants to destroy this nation, he wants to destroy us as a nation, and he wants to destroy us as a Christian army."

Since 9/11, the war against terrorism has become almost exclusively a special operations war, melding military and CIA paramilitary and covert activities with finer and finer grained integrated intelligence information. Hence, the creation of Boykin's new job as deputy undersecretary of Defense for intelligence.

The task facing Boykin, Rumsfeld insiders say, is to break down the wall between different intelligence collectors and agencies and quickly get the best information and analysis for American forces in the field.

But even as he begins his new duties, Boykin is still publicly preaching.

As late as Sept. 27, he was in Vero Beach, Fla., speaking on behalf of Visitation House Ministries.

In describing the war against terrorism, President Bush frequently says it "is not a war against Islam." In his National Security Strategy, Bush declared that "the war on terrorism is not a clash of civilizations." Yet many in the Islamic world see the U.S. as waging a cultural and religious war against them. In fact, the White House's own Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World reported this month that since 9/11, "hostility toward America has reached shocking levels."

"Arabs and Muslims respond in anger to what they perceive as U.S. denigration of their societies and cultures," the report stated.

The task for the U.S., the report said, is to wage "a major struggle to expand the zone of tolerance and marginalize extremists."

Appointing Jerry Boykin, with his visions of holy war in the Islamic world, to a top position in the United States military is no way to marginalize extremism.