

U.S. GENERAL VIOLATED RULES WITH 'SATAN' SPEECHES

Aug 18, 11:06 PM (ET)

By Andrea Shalal-Esa

Note from Pastor Kevin: A country that disciplines a highly decorated General because he tells the truth is a country in free fall. Only God knows how long His mercy is going to keep us from hitting the ground hard.

*2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and **they will turn their ears away from the truth**, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (NKJ)*

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A U.S. Army general violated Pentagon rules by failing to properly clear speeches in which he described the war on terror as a Christian battle against Satan and should be punished, according to an inspector general's report obtained by Reuters on Wednesday.

The Department of Defense's watchdog agency said Lt. Gen. William Boykin, a top-ranking intelligence officer, used official data in some of the 23 religious-oriented speeches he gave after January 2002 which should have been cleared.

Boykin touched off a firestorm last October after giving speeches while in uniform in which he referred to the war on terror as a battle with Satan and said America had been targeted "because we're a Christian nation." He said later he was not anti-Islam or any other religion.

Boykin was obliged to clear the speeches, given "the sensitive nature of his remarks concerning U.S. policy and the likelihood that he would be perceived by his audiences as a DOD spokesman based on his official position and his appearance in uniform," the report said.

Boykin, an evangelical Christian, violated other rules by failing to issue a required disclaimer at the speeches that he was not representing official Pentagon policy, it said. He also failed to report his receipt of one travel

payment exceeding \$260 from a non-government source, said the report, which was submitted to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The report said Boykin did make "good faith efforts" to consult legal advisers about his speaking activities and that should be considered when the Army Secretary assessed the seriousness of the violations. "We recommend that the Acting Secretary of the Army take appropriate corrective action with respect to Lt. Gen. Boykin," the report said. The investigation did not focus on whether the substance of Boykin's remarks was appropriate for a senior Pentagon official or whether it compromised his fitness for performing his duties.

A Pentagon spokeswoman had no comment on the report, or what type of punishment the general would face. "That report has not been released. At this point it would be inappropriate for me to comment," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jane Campbell.

Ibrahim Hooper of the Council on American Islamic Relations welcomed the report's findings but said they came too late to prevent damage to the image of the United States and the U.S. military in the Muslim world. He said his group supported Boykin's right to free speech, but not his speeches while in uniform. "He's free to have views on Islam that are objectionable. We don't like it, but he has that right, just not as a representative of the U.S. military," Hooper said.

Muslim groups and U.S. lawmakers condemned Boykin's comments when they were reported last fall and President Bush said the remarks "didn't reflect my opinion."

At the time, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld praised Boykin's "outstanding record" and refused to reprimand the general, who played a role in a 1993 clash with Somali warlords and the ill-fated hostage rescue attempt in Iran in 1980. Since then, Muslim groups also raised questions about what role Boykin, deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence, may have played in creating U.S. military interrogation policy amid a scandal over the abuse of prisoners in Iraq.

Boykin issued a written apology last October to anyone offended by his remarks, but did not take any of them back.