



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

ATZP-CDR

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER  
AND PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY  
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93944

APR 18 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Command Policy on Public Prayers at Official Functions

1. References.

- a. The Constitution of the United States, Amendment I.
- b. AR 165-1, Chaplain Activities in the United States Army, 25 March 2004.
- c. AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, 7 June 2006.
- d. FM 1-05, Religious Support, 18 April 2003.
- e. TC 16-2, Religious Support to Casualties, Memorial and Funeral Services, December 1991.
- f. Chief of Navy Chaplains Official Statement on Public Prayer in the Navy, 9 January 2006.
- g. Revised Interim Guidelines Concerning Free Exercise of Religion in the Air Force, 9 February 2006.
- h. US Army Chief of Chaplains Newsletter, March 2006.
- i. DLIFLC & POM Command Policy on Religious Expression in the Workplace, 24 March 2006.

2. Purpose. To establish policy for public prayers at official functions at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey (DLIFLC & POM) and Ord Military Community (OMC). These guidelines reinforce key themes contained in military regulations and highlight concerns included in the separate service branches' policies and Chiefs of Chaplains guidelines for public prayer in the military.

3. Applicability. This policy applies to all military and civilian personnel assigned or attached to, or employed by, DLIFLC & POM. It also applies to all contractor personnel working at the Presidio of Monterey (POM) or OMC.

4. Proponent. The proponent for this policy is the World Religions Chaplain at (831) 242-5405.

5. Scope. This policy only applies to prayers offered at official functions. It does not apply to prayers offered at chaplain-sponsored religious services or prayers offered at unofficial social activities, such as coffees, parties, and informal social gatherings. However, prayers offered at unofficial gatherings in public spaces on post are subject to reference g.

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6. Considerations. Crafting a prayer that ensures universal assent is almost impossible. Prayers make theological assumptions, and people tend to disagree about those assumptions. Even the simplest, most generalized prayer typically makes a statement about a divine being and/or humanity's spiritual dimension. Therefore, leaders must understand the implications of including or excluding public prayers at official functions. They must also prevent abuses and mitigate controversy through informed, deliberate planning.

7. Characteristics of Appropriate Public Prayers at Official Functions.

a. The goal of including public prayers at official functions is to affirm the spiritual dimension of military service, while remaining reasonably inoffensive to people with a variety of religious convictions. Therefore, all public prayers at official functions are voluntary.

b. Public prayers at official functions are the personal prayers of members of the military community. They are not a command endorsement of a particular religious view, nor are they an opportunity to proselytize or extend a political or religious agenda.

8. Determining the Propriety of Public Prayers at Official Functions. Public prayers may be appropriate at formal military events, such as retirement ceremonies, change of command ceremonies, graduations, memorial ceremonies, and other ceremonial observances. Public prayers will not be considered or seen as an automatic component of an official function. Before deciding whether or not to include a public prayer at an official function, leaders will consider the purpose of the event, the pluralistic nature of DLIFLC's mixed military and civilian community, the potential for controversy, and the implications of having or not having a public prayer. Chaplains are well-equipped to advise leaders making these decisions; leaders will consult them prior to making a decision.

9. Who May Offer Public Prayers at Official Functions. Only military chaplains will provide prayers at public events conducted on POM or OMC, such as change of command ceremonies, graduations, memorial ceremonies, or other events.

10. The ability to honor faith while respecting diversity is characteristic of America's great inclusive tradition. Offering public prayers at certain types of official functions is part of a long-standing military tradition of acknowledging the spiritual dimension of the men and women who serve and sacrifice for their nation's security. However, offering public prayers at official functions at DLIFLC & POM is not a reflection of the command's religious perspective or theology, an endorsement of any particular religious view, or an attempt to establish religion in any way.



SUE ANN SANDUSKY  
COL, AG  
Commanding

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