U.S. Troops Were Told Iran War Is for "Armageddon," Return of Jesus

Advocacy group reports commanders spread similar messages at more than 30 installations in every branch of the military

JONATHAN LARSEN
MAR 03, 2026

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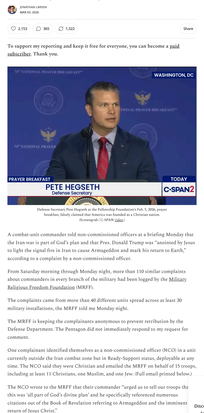

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth at the Fellowship Foundation's Feb. 5, 2026, prayer breakfast, falsely claimed that Iran was launched as a Christian nation. (Screenshot, C-SPAN video)

A combat-unit commander told non-commissioned officers at a briefing Monday that the Iran war is part of God's plan and that Pres. Donald Trump was "anointed by Jesus to fulfill the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon and mark his return to Earth," according to a complaint by a non-commissioned officer.

From Saturday morning through Monday night, more than 150 similar complaints about commanders in every branch of the military had been logged by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF).

The complaints came from more than 40 different units spread across at least 30 military installations, the MRFF told me Monday night.

The MRFF is keeping the complainants anonymous to prevent retribution by the Defense Department. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to my request for comment.

One complainant identified themselves as a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in a unit currently outside the combat zone but in Ready Reserve status, deployable at any time. The NCO said they were Christian and emailed the MRFF on behalf of 15 troops, including at least 13 Christians, one Muslim, and one Jew. (Full email printed below.)

The NCO wrote to the MRFF that their commander "urged us to sell our troops the idea we 'all part of God's divine plan' and he specifically referenced numerous citations out of the Book of Revelation referring to Armageddon and the imminent return of Jesus Christ."

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Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has enshrined evangelical Christianity at the uppermost levels of the U.S. military, giving monthly prayer meetings throughout if Pentagon. Last year, the Pentagon confirmed to me that Hegseth attends a weekly White House Bible study. It's led by a preacher who says God commands America to support Israel.

Monday's email from the NCO said that their commander's remarks "destroy morale and unit cohesion and are in violation of the oaths we swore to support the [C]onstitution."

MRFF President and Founder Mikey Weinstein, a veteran of the Air Force and the Reagan White House, told me that since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran early Saturday morning, the MRFF has been "inundated" with similar complaints:

> These calls have one damn thing in freaking common; our MRFF clients (service members who seek MRFF aid) report the unrestricted euphoria of their commanders and subordinates chains as to how this new "biblically-sanctioned" war is clearly the undeniable sign of the expeditious approach of the fundamentalist Christian "End Times" as vividly described in the New Testament Book of Revelation.
>
> Many of their commanders are especially delighted with how graphic this battle will be zeroing in on how blood all of this must become in order to fulfill and be in 100% accordance with fundamentalist Christian end of the world eschatology.

Weinstein cited constitutional and Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) prohibitions against injecting religious beliefs into official military instruction or messaging.

He said, "Any military members seeking to take advantage of their subordinates by advocating their blood-soaked, Christian nationalist wet dreams upon the flames of this latest non-Congressionally sanctioned attack against Iran, should be swiftly, aggressively and visibly prosecuted."

Weinstein added that the MRFF receives similar complaints about Christian eschatology — end-of-the-world theology — "whenever this shit blows up with Israel in the Middle East."

After the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, for instance, the MRFF received a complaint about an Air Force commander who said at a briefing that, "[T]he war between Israel and Hamas also had been foretold by the Book of Revelation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and no one can do anything about that."

After 9/11, Pres. George W. Bush referred to the American "crusade" against terrorism, evoking the ancient clashes between Christian crusaders and Muslims. Bush's language was seen as potentially inspiring Muslims to take up arms against the U.S., if it proclaimed itself a Christian army waging war on Islam.

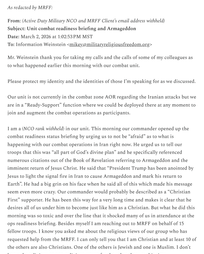
French foreign minister Hubert Vubrine said, "One has to avoid falling into this huge trap, this monstrous trap" set by al Qaeda with the 9/11 attacks. Bush dropped the term "crusade."

While Christian nationalism has simmered in the military for decades, Hegseth has ended even the pretense of official intolerance for it. Trump, too, has cast himself as a champion of Christian exceptionalism, embedding it within divisions of the executive branch.

As I revealed last year, Hegseth sponsors the weekly White House Bible study that preaches support for Israel.

Some Christians claim biblical prophecy requires Israel to exist for Jesus to return. But Hegseth's Bible study leader, preacher Ralph Drollinger, teaches that the reason to support Israel is that God will bless Israel's allies and curses Israel's enemies, even though Israel killed Jesus. In his view, the historic root of antisemitism, has been relieved by every major religion.

After Israel's attack on Iran last year, Drollinger dedicated two weeks of lessons to preaching against the Israel. His lessons went out to White House cabinet members and members of Congress even as Israel, too, was lobbying for U.S. engagement.



Hegseth has also initiated monthly prayer sessions, most recently featuring Doug Wilson, the far-right Christian nationalist. He has also brought in other preachers from his personal circle, including any attempt at making the meetings ecumenical.

Hegseth himself also speaks at these meetings, proselytizing his personal religious beliefs. "This is ... I think, exactly where we need to be as a nation, at this moment," Hegseth reportedly said. "In prayer, on bended knee, recognizing the providence of our lord and savior Jesus Christ."

While the MRFF historically has been able to get the Pentagon to swat down Christian incursions into the military, the Trump administration is quite skeptical of military norms and law. It remains to be seen whether and how wholesale Christianization of the Iran war will be opposed by officials inside the Pentagon, or political and legal advocates for secular values outside it.

NCO Email to MRFF

As redacted by MRFF:

From: *[Active Duty NCO] NCO and MRFF Client's email address redacted*
Subject: Unit mandatory religious briefing about Armageddon
Date: March 2, 2026 at 1:02:53 PM MST
To: Information Weinstein <mikeyweinstein@militaryreligiousfreedom.org>

Mr. Weinstein thank you for taking my calls and the calls of some of my colleagues as to what happened earlier this morning with our combat unit.

Please protect my identity and the identities of those I'm speaking for as we discussed.

Our unit is not currently in the combat zone AOR regarding the Iranian attacks but we are in a "Ready-Support" function where we could be deployed there at any moment to join and augment our brothers and sisters in operations.

I am a (NCO and) soldier in our unit. This morning our commander opened up the combat readiness status briefing by urging us to not be "afraid" as to what is happening with our sister operations in Iran right now. He urged us to tell our troops that this was "all part of God's divine plan" and he specifically referenced numerous citations out of the Book of Revelation referring to Armageddon and the imminent return of Jesus Christ. He said that "President Trump has been anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon and mark his return to Earth". He had a big map of Iran behind him and he told all of us that which made his message seem even more crazy. Our commander would probably be described as a "Christian First" supporter. He has been in the Army for a very long time and makes it clear that he desires all of us under him to become just like him as a Christian. But what he did this morning was so toxic and over the line that it shocked many of us in attendance at the pre-readiness briefing. Besides myself I am reaching out to MRFF on behalf of 15 fellow troops. I know you asked me about the religious views of our group who has requested help from the MRFF. I can only tell you that I am Christian and at least 10 of the others are also Christians. One of the others is Jewish and one is Muslim. I don't know the religious or non-religious status for the other three at this time.

I and my fellow troops know that it is completely wrong to have to suffer through what our commander said today. It's not just the separation of church and state as we discussed Mr. Weinstein. It's the fact that our commander feels as though he is fully supported and justified in the entire (combat zone) name selfish chain of command to inflict his Armageddon views of our attack on Iran on those of us beneath him in the chain of command.

I hope by sending this email to you that this will help expose these wrong actions which destroy morale and unit cohesion and are in violation of the oaths we swore to support the constitution.

Full Statement from MRFF President Mikey Weinstein

"Since the start of the unprovoked American and Israeli war on Iran, this past Saturday morning, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation has been literally inundated with desperate calls for help from military members across all branches, organizations and MOS/FAC/SPEC designations (military occupational areas). Well over 180 calls have already come in and more keep coming.

These calls have one damn thing in freaking common; our MRFF clients report the unrestricted euphoria of their commanders and command chains as to how this new "biblically-sanctioned" war is clearly the undeniable sign of the expeditious approach of the fundamentalist Christian "End Times" as vividly described in the New Testament Book of Revelation.

Many of their commanders are especially delighted with how graphic this battle will be zeroing in on how blood all of this must become in order to fulfill and be in 100% accordance with fundamentalist Christian end of the world eschatology.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation demands that all personnel in the Department of Defense (not "War") remember and fully internalize that the oaths they swear are not to the nominal, secularistic, strange, POS Pharaoh, nor to little Perry 'Kegseth' nor to Jesus Christ. On the contrary, their oath is SOLELY to the United States Constitution, which includes both a full separation of church and state mandate in the First Amendment and NO establishment of any sort of partial 'religious test' in Clause 3 of Article VI."

Any military members seeking to take advantage of their subordinates by advocating their blood-soaked, Christian nationalist wet dreams upon the flames of this latest non-Congressionally sanctioned attack against Iran, should be swiftly, aggressively and visibly prosecuted for numerous violations of the military criminal code known as the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

You know, that very same criminal code that Secretary 'Kegseth' is trying to prosecute Arizona Senator Mark Kelly under for simply advising military members not to obey illegal orders; you know that same criminal code that Secretary 'Kegseth' subordinates to acknowledge that the Iran war has been sanctioned by the fundamentalist Christian nationalist version of our Lord and Savior and the New Testament's specific order to bring about the end of the world and usher in the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ."

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