

Military Commander Tells Troops Bombing Iran Is ‘Part Of God’s Divine Plan’

Brandi Buchman

For some U.S. military commanders, the emerging war in Iran is part of a biblical plan to bring about the end of the world as we know it, according to complaints filed by over 100 service members.

The [Military Religious Freedom Foundation](#) has received a litany of complaints about religious ideology seeping into military orders since the [U.S. and Israel began bombing Iran](#), independent journalist Jon Larsen first [reported](#).

Mikey Weinstein, founder and president of MRFF, a nonprofit group established 21 years ago that focuses on ensuring constitutional protections for service members, spoke with HuffPost by phone Tuesday morning and illuminated some details of the complaints, which have come from more than three dozen military units situated in at least 30 different military installations.

“We started getting calls in the wee hours of Saturday morning from people saying their commanders were just jubilant about this and trying to tell people, ‘Don’t worry, it’s all part of God’s plan,’” Weinstein said.

Weinstein said the “metric promised” in the Bible’s Book of Revelation is horrifying and should worry everyone.

“They are promised a 200-mile-long river that is four-and-a-half feet deep filled with nothing but the blood that their weaponized version of Jesus will spill at the Battle of Armageddon,” Weinstein said. “That’s a lot of blood.”

Part of what makes the accounts so disturbing, Weinstein said, is that service members aren’t able to push back when they’re given orders that blur the line regarding the separation of church and state.

“This is all about time, place and manner,” he said. “If you’re being proselytized to by your superior, you can’t say, ‘Get out of my face.’ Under the military’s criminal code of justice, insubordination is considered a felony.”

One of the complaints MRFF received over the weekend came from a non-commissioned officer currently stationed outside of Iran but awaiting deployment at a moment’s notice. That officer filed the complaint on behalf of himself and 15 other troops, all of whom are of different religious backgrounds. (For their protection, MRFF is keeping the identity of these service members anonymous.)



Smoke rises up after a strike in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, March 1.

via Associated Press

The non-commissioned officer, who is Christian, reported to MRFF that a commander told them to tell fellow troops that the war in Iran was “all part of God’s divine plan.” The commander allegedly cited the Book of Revelation and the section specifically referring to Armageddon and the “imminent” return of Jesus Christ.

The non-commissioned officer said the messaging from higher-ups is not only “destroy[ing] morale and unit cohesion” among troops, but they also believe the commanders are flagrantly violating their oaths to uphold the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of religion.

According to the complaint first reported by Larsen, the commander said President Donald Trump “has been anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon and mark his return to Earth.”

The commander “had a big grin on his face when he said all of this which made his message seem even more crazy,” the complaint said.

“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 ... It’s the fact that our commander feels as though he is fully supported and justified by the entire (combat unit’s name

withheld) chain of command to inflict his Armageddon views of our attack on Iran on those of us beneath him in the chain of command,” the officer wrote in his complaint to MRFF.

Weinstein said some service members called him on Sunday to report that they were being invited to Bible studies at their commanders’ personal homes to “discuss how this was all part of the plan and it’s all being lived out in the Book of Revelation and Christian eschatology.”

Commanders were “in a hurry” to get subordinates on board, according to the complaints received by MRFF.

Once a service member makes a complaint to MRFF, finding a solution can be difficult. Service members have a few different options, Weinstein said: If troops are told they lack courage, intelligence or bravery because of their religious tradition or lack thereof, they can file an inspector general complaint or an ethics complaint within the military.

“But then you completely out yourself,” Weinstein said. “And when you do that in the military, you become what we call a ‘tarantula on a wedding cake.’ How long do you think that cake lasts at that wedding?”

Troops can complain to military judge advocates, lawyers or chaplains, but the latter can be especially tricky. The [majority of the U.S. military’s chaplains](#) are Christian and many are evangelical.

“By itself, that’s fine,” Weinstein said. “But if you are a Christian Nationalist, you don’t pay any attention to the time, place or manner ... with any sort of religious extremism, we end up not with little streams, or creeks or brooks, but with oceans and oceans of blood.”

Weinstein said none of this should necessarily be shocking. The evangelical leanings of the Trump administration — and in particular the Department of Defense — have not been a secret. At a [prayer breakfast](#) last month, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth claimed the U.S. was a “Christian nation,” and there are prayer meetings at the Pentagon each month.

But putting religion into politics is inflicting “generational damage” onto the U.S. and its military, Weinstein said.

The White House did not immediately return a request for comment.

Harrison Mann, a 13-year veteran of the U.S. Army who served under President [Barack Obama](#), during Trump’s first term and under President [Joe Biden](#), told HuffPost that for soldiers, there “isn’t much of a difference” inside the military — at least “culturally speaking” — even when presidents are “doing some really crazy stuff” publicly, he said.

Because of that, he argues it may be too soon to say whether Hegseth can actually inflict permanent damage to the military. Mann is, however, deeply worried about what happens to the public perception of the troops in the meantime.

“There’s danger in commanders telling soldiers they only vouch for Christians, whites or MAGA supporters. When the public starts to view the military that way too, then you get to a much more dangerous place where they no longer have trust in them,” he said.

Today, Mann is the associate director of campaigns for [Win Without War](#), a grassroots progressive foreign policy advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. that formed in 2003 in response to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Mann left his role as assistant to the head of the Middle East Center at the Defense Intelligence Agency, or DIA, in 2024, for moral reasons.

After the attacks in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Mann said his mission as a soldier primarily became about supporting Israel and sharing intel with Israeli military officials. But once he saw what the war in Gaza was becoming — “a genocide,” he said — he [resigned](#).

Mann knows from personal experience how frightening it can be for a soldier to speak out. The Trump administration’s politicization of the military, as the MRFF complaints clearly show, makes it harder. Mann worries it is fast creating a situation where subordinate leaders may believe the messaging from on high grants them “tacit approval to start imposing their own religious beliefs on others.”

“I can tell you I’m very worried,” he said. “I think most people who join the military, they want to do something they feel is noble and they want to do the right thing. But the potential consequences for refusing an unlawful order or standing up for what you think is right is very high ... So it goes back to the question: What can everyone else do to help them?”

To start, Mann said the public can broadcast support for service members who speak up or disobey unlawful orders or unconstitutional directives. That validation is in short supply inside the military, so it must come from the outside, he said.

“It’s very frightening to imagine that you would be on your own if you tried to defy an unlawful order,” Mann said. “We need to see increasing efforts by members of Congress to impeach Secretary Hegseth and everyone can put pressure on their lawmakers to support that effort.

“You can support a lot of the organizations like [About Face](#) and [Win Without War](#) that are trying to create a welcoming, safe space for service members who are experiencing this kind of unfair treatment,” he said.

Mann said he isn’t hopeless about the future even though there is much to despair over right now.

“It’s way too soon to give up. There’s just so much that we have not tried... there are so many pressure tactics that haven’t culminated yet. There’s so much people power that has not yet been mobilized. As terrifying as what is happening is, there’s a critical opportunity for growth and pushback against Trump’s agenda,” he said.

CORRECTION: *This story has been updated with Harrison Mann’s correct title.*
