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news

Navy Chaplain May Face Court-Martial For Praying

Clergyman Prayed In Uniform Outside White House

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NORFOLK, Va. -- A chaplain stationed at Naval Station Norfolk said he could face court-martial for praying in uniform outside the White House.

Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt said he prayed at a March 30 protest opposing Department of Defense rules forbidding military chaplains from invoking the name of Jesus Christ.

He's accused of violating an order not to appear in uniform at news conferences in support of personal or religious issues.

The issue seems to hinge on whether his praying at the event was permissible participation at a bona fide religious service. Klingenschmitt is rejecting non-judicial punishment in favor of trial by court-martial.

In addition, he's filing a complaint against the Navy claiming the threat of punishment against him amounts to

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religious harassment and he's appealing to the White House to end what he claims are the military's attempts to take reprisals against a whistle-blower.

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