Honorable Herbert H. Lehman  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Lehman:

The Secretary of Defense has requested that I reply to your inquiry of 21 March relative to Eastern Orthodox clergymen being commissioned as chaplains in the Armed Forces.

Special legislative action is not necessary to make it possible for Eastern Orthodox clergy to be commissioned as chaplains in the Armed Forces. They are commissioned under the same commissioning procedures as clergy of all other denominations. Denominational quotas are based upon the membership strength of the individual denomination in relationship to the whole religious strength of the United States.

Any Eastern Orthodox clergyman meeting the professional and educational qualifications required of clergy of other denominations is eligible to submit an application for commission as chaplain in the Armed Forces.

At the present time the Navy has six Orthodox Chaplains serving on active duty and there are five serving actively with the Air Force. The Army does not have any Orthodox Chaplains on active duty at the moment but will give every consideration to applications submitted by Eastern Orthodox clergy who are able to meet the requirements for appointment.

We will be happy to provide you with the information concerning requirements for commissioning in the Chaplaincy within the Armed Forces if you desire this information.
Your interest in the religious welfare of our military personnel is deeply appreciated. If we can provide further information, please advise.

Sincerely,

Patrick Ryan
Chaplain (Major General) USA
Chairman