

THE RISKS OF PROGRESSIVE IDEOLOGIES IN THE U.S. MILITARY

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
THE BORDER, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND ACCOUNTABILITY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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THE RISKS OF PROGRESSIVE IDEOLOGIES IN THE U.S. MILITARY

Thursday, January 11, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, THE BORDER, AND FOREIGN
AFFAIRS

Washington, DC

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Glenn Grothman [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Grothman, Comer, Gosar, Foxx, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, LaTurner, Fallon, Perry, Garcia, Raskin, Lynch, Goldman, Porter, and Frost.

Also present: Representative Waltz.

Mr. GROTHMAN. This hearing of the Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs will come to order. I would like to welcome everybody who is here. Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time, and without objection, we are honored to have the Representative Waltz of Florida waived on to this subcommittee—he has got a lot of military experience—for the purpose of questioning the witnesses at today’s Subcommittee hearing.

I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Good morning. I want to welcome everyone to this hearing before the Subcommittee on National Security, the Border and Foreign Affairs. Today’s hearing is on “The Risks of Progressive Ideologies in the U.S. Military.”

I want to express gratitude to our witnesses for being here. It is my sincere hope that this hearing provides a platform for a constructive dialog on the issues that face today’s military.

The questions we intend to address today are not just about readiness, or the military’s personnel system, but how ideological concerns and debates within civil society are imported into and impact the military’s ability to recruit, train, and especially operate effectively in a dynamic threat environment.

The term “wokeness” has become a topic of discussion, both within and outside military circles, and is prompting us to scrutinize how ideological shifts may impact the readiness and effectiveness

of our armed forces, as well as how our military is affected once they begin to adapt this kind of woke ideology.

Our military is grappling with the Biden Administration's social experiments of integrating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion—or what is referred to as “DEI”—into their ranks. The Pentagon often fails to recognize the financial burden these priorities place on taxpayers. DEI managers are making over \$180,000 per year, which in my mind sends a message in its own right. In fact, the Department of Defense recently requested \$117 million for diversity and inclusion initiatives as part of the President's fiscal 2024 budget request. Unbelievable.

To be clear, acknowledging the various experiences of our service members may have the potential to enhance our overall strength and resilience as a nation and fighting force. At the end of the day, our differences must yield to what we have in common—a duty to protect the American freedoms we hold dear.

I have concerns with how the DEI bureaucracy implements its framework within the military, not to mention I think the DEI framework is not something that is even necessarily true. I think it unnecessarily divides people, instead of building up cohesion. It has the potential to harm unit cohesion and undermine our soldiers' effectiveness.

Between this and our Secretary of Defense being incapacitated for several days and not telling anyone, shows a concern about the seriousness with which the Biden Administration leads our armed forces.

We need to understand the influence of progressive ideologies on military policy, and whether progressive ideologies are even true. We need to understand the extent to which ideological considerations are shaping decisionmaking processes.

Our armed services have long been a bastion of meritocracy, where individuals are promoted based on their skills, competence, and dedication to duty.

It is crucial that we examine whether the emphasis on ideological frameworks is affecting the core principles of a merit-based military. Furthermore, I think it is important to examine whether this DEI ideology is even factually true or whether it just serves to divide Americans.

At today's hearing, we aim to understand the implications of these ideological shifts on military readiness and effectiveness. Our witnesses will provide insights into how these ideologies may influence training, operational procedures, and the overall cohesiveness of our military units.

This hearing is an examination of how ideological considerations, even well-intentioned ones, erode the fundamental principles that have historically defined our military and ensure unit cohesion and force readiness. I think throughout our history our military understands that we are fighting for, I think, the greatest country in the world, and I think all of our soldiers and sailors ought to understand that.

Our focus is to ensure that our military remains a beacon of excellence, while adapting to the evolving needs of our Nation and the threats we face from our adversaries. It is about leveraging the

full spectrum of talent within our Nation for the cohesive strength of our armed forces.

Thank you again for appearing here today, and I look forward to the discussions that will unfold during today's hearing.

I now recognize Ranking Member Garcia for the purpose of making his opening statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will just be honest that I am a bit dismayed and disappointed to be here at this hearing today. Back in March, we held a hearing called "Ensuring Force Readiness: Examining Progressivism's Impact on an All-Volunteer Military." And back then in March, I was dismayed that the Majority chose to ignore what I believe are the root causes and challenges we are facing to recruitment and retention in our armed services, such as the need for improved mental health support for our service members, the continued need to implement the I Am Vanessa Guillen Act and the need to crack down on sexual violence, the need for reliable and reportable childcare for our warfighters who are deployed on a moment's notice, and so much more, especially when our economy is creating record numbers of jobs in the private sector and our military has to compete for top talent.

Now data and evidence show that sexual assault, mental health care, affordable childcare are all real factors that affect military recruitment, retention, and readiness. During that hearing, many of us stressed that to recruit from the most diverse generation in history we also need a military that looks like America. We need a cohesive military which does not allow bigotry within its ranks.

But the hearing also found that attacks on military leaders and family hardships may be significant factors in dissuading otherwise motivated young people from pursuing military careers, and, of course, depriving our country of incredible talent.

The idea that, quote, "wokeness" is a top national security threat did not make any sense then and does not make any sense today. And it makes even less sense now given the world that we face.

Now I believe that overemphasis on this far right talking point is what inspired Senator Tommy Tuberville to launch his unprecedented blockade of military officer promotions. Senator Tuberville intentionally blocked more than 400 general and flag officers within the DoD from Senate confirmation and promotion. Even more junior officers lost the opportunity to rise in rank, with massive impacts on factors such as retention, pay, pension, and future opportunities. The stunt did far more to undermine our military readiness than anything else.

And so, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record, once again, the letter I sent calling for a hearing on national security implications of the Senator's blockade of military promotions into the record.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, sir.

And I cannot really understand why we are also holding a second hearing on this topic, when we could be working in a bipartisan way to address real challenges to our national security. And Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for our bipartisan work on our UAP

Disclosure Bill, and I think that is the kind of bipartisan effort that we should be working on today.

We should also be talking about our real national security threats. Our allies in Ukraine need immediate aid, we need to support Taiwan, and provide aid, of course, in the Middle East.

Now we could hold hearings that use data and evidence to demonstrate that American aid boosts our national security at minimal cost and highlight how our aid safeguards democracy and freedom against brutal aggressions. We could even show how Ukraine aid directly benefits communities all across our country, who benefit from investment and jobs, and drive how these investments will uphold our national security in the long term.

But instead, we are holding Ukraine and other crucial foreign aid hostage. Instead, many are debating that we bring back indefinite detention for children at the border, defund Catholic charities, and end the right to asylum—linking that to aid impacts our national security. Some also appear to be using Putin’s talking points that want to sell out our allies and partners. There is obstruction, of course, around issues around the border, saying that we do not want bipartisan border security actions, and one of our congressional colleagues even said the quiet part out loud, and I will quote, “Let me tell you. I am not willing to do a damn thing right now to help a Democrat or to help Joe Biden’s approval ratings.” That is not the type of bipartisan work that we need on this issue, and yet here we are investigating wokeness.

Now it is not wokeness that is threatening our national security, whatever that word actually means. The real threat to our security is a far right, extreme, obstruction of dysfunction and culture war stunts.

This hearing is disappointing, but I look forward to working with our Chairman and hope there can be bipartisan solutions.

I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I am pleased to introduce our witnesses today. Our first witness is Will Thibeau, Director of the American Military Project at the wonderful Claremont Institute, where he works on analyzing the institutional integrity of the U.S. military. He also has experience serving in Iraq in the 75th Ranger Regiment as a platoon leader and company executive officer.

The next witness is Matt Lohmeier, former U.S. fighter pilot and former commander with the U.S. Space Force. He is also a best-selling author and consultant on defense-related issues.

Our final witness is Ty Seidule, a retired U.S. Army brigadier general and professor of history at the U.S. Military Academy. He is also a visiting professor at the Hamilton College, and in 2021, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin appointed him to the National Commission on Base Renaming.

I welcome each of you here today and look forward to your testimony.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), I will have the witnesses please stand and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. THIBEAU. I do.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I do.

Gen. SEIDULE. I do.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Let the record show all the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you. You may take your seat.

We appreciate you being here today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statements, and they will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statement to 5 minutes.

As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that when it is on the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes the light will turn yellow, which means you have 1 minute left. When the red light comes on your 5 minutes have expired, and we ask you to wrap up as quickly as possible.

I now recognize Mr. Thibeaudeau for your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF WILL THIBEAUDEAU
DIRECTOR
AMERICAN MILITARY PROJECT
THE CLAREMONT INSTITUTE**

Mr. THIBEAUDEAU. Good morning, Chairman Grothman, Ranking Member Garcia, Members of the Subcommittee, and my fellow panelists.

It is my contention that the military must only consider factors of personnel, programs, and policy that genuinely better the armed forces' ability to fight and win our Nation's wars. Merit must not be the first consideration for this analysis, but the exclusive lens through which elected officials and military leaders make these kinds of decisions.

Diversity is an ideology that exists in our social mores as something that the military must embrace as a point of fact, as a principle, as opposed to just a byproduct of selecting the best people for the job. It is as if the armed forces march to the beat of a corporate or university drum.

In reality, though, the existence of a professional, permanent standing military demands that the institution exists apart from ideologies and politics prevalent in modern-day American, regardless of their political affiliation. And therefore, the military must balance functional considerations—again, those capabilities required to fight and win wars—with social considerations or those political and ideological realities which define American life for the rest of us.

Increasingly though, objective military professionalism is now seen as one factor among many that allow leaders to, quote, "comprehensively evaluate a person, system, or policy," this, of course, being a euphemism for innate characteristics like race or sex. This programmatic consideration of these innate characteristics is toxic because it redefines the concept of merit-based standards. When diversity goals exist for military units or the service academies, standards become minimum expectations to meet before fully evaluating other parts of a participant's career or life. Standards are no longer how the military selects the best, based on an order of merit list, but just how you get in the door.

The mere factor of political considerations outside military competence demands that human characteristics one does not choose about themselves, become critical filters for military decisions. Consideration for diversity is one mark of the blend that the old historian, Samuel Huntington's "military mind" made, with the hallmarks of a society that are built around different ideals than that which makes the military successful.

Despite the Army's current recruiting slogan, the military is not a place where you can be all you can be. Instead, it should be a time of service and a career for our Nation where one gives all there is to give, no matter the cost. Our military is filled with men and women who live by this principle, but our policies and slogans should reflect this ethic of service.

At stake, though, is much more than the relative quality of military units. The integrity of our republic is intentioned with a military that evaluates matters of politics and identity. When standards become minimum expectations, they are not markers of achievement to select the best.

In other sectors of society, the consequences of shirking the exclusivity of merit amount to a bad hire in the finance department or the wrong university president, or maybe a missed revenue projection that last fiscal quarter, but the military is and should be different. History is littered with examples of militaries whose consideration of political ideology precipitated a collapse in military professionalism, led to defeats on the battlefield, and all of which served as a precursor to the collapse of those nations. America should not wait to find out if we can outrun the drumbeat of such history.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to the conversation.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Mr. Lohmeier.

**STATEMENT OF LT. COL. MATTHEW LOHMEIER (RET.)
FORMER COMMANDER
U.S. SPACE FORCE**

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Good morning. My name is Matt Lohmeier, and I am an Air Force Academy graduate, former F-15C fighter pilot, and was a Lieutenant Colonel and Commander in the Space Force.

In 2021, I was fired from my command for writing a book, "Trying to Reverse the Trend of the Overt Politicization of the Uniformed Services." Specifically, I criticized the military's diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings, which, at my own base, were illegally occurring despite an executive order from the Commander in Chief. The diversity, equity, and inclusion industry is steeped in critical race theory and is rooted in anti-American Marxist ideology. I watched DEI trainings divide our troops ideologically and, in some cases, sow the seeds of animosity toward the very country they had sworn an oath to defend.

Before writing that book, I submitted a formal written complaint to the Space Force Inspector General's Office detailing that such violations were occurring, including illegal race-based discrimination, but my complaint was never investigated and was later dismissed by then-Lieutenant General Stephen Whiting, whom the

Senate just confirmed for his fourth star. After 2 months, I received a written dismissal of my complaint from General Whiting.

Personally, I have always advocated for a non-political military work environment.

Today, I am here to testify about the ongoing Marxist-inspired efforts to subvert and weaken our military and broader American society. We often refer to these efforts as wokeism, but it is also a culture war. Yet, even in this Committee, there are differing views about whether there is such a thing as a “culture war” underway.

Some Members of this Committee have been outspoken critics of DEI initiatives, to include CRT, drag shows on military bases, trans activism, LGBTQ pride celebrations, and woke military recruiting videos, all things that are visible components of an ongoing culture war.

Ranking Member Garcia, as he just mentioned, on the other hand, and asserted as recently as 2 weeks ago, says that the culture wars are, quote/unquote, “phony” and are merely a political talking point of Republicans.

It is nothing, if not incredible, for a Member of this Subcommittee to assert that culture wars are “phony” while another Member, who is not present at the moment, of this Committee is a member of the so-called progressive “Squad,” was herself a Black Lives Matter organizer and activist, an organization whose publicly avowed ideology is Marxism, and whose activist ambition is social and cultural revolution.

Service members who wear the uniform of their country do not want to see these things in the military workplace. They do not want to see them at their bases. In most cases, this is true regardless of their race or their political worldview.

Despite that reality, Pentagon officials requested \$140 million to expand woke diversity initiatives in Fiscal Year 2024, double what it has been the previous 2 years. There are few things taxpayers such as myself feel less essential to the mission of the United States military than expanding diversity mandates and indoctrination.

And now an important point. Such aggressively opposed ideological worldviews competing for institutionalization through policy epitomizes and formalizes what is properly termed a culture war. The fact that these debates now infect the U.S. military workplace is an offense to people like me who love their country and all people, regardless of race, gender, sexual preference, or background.

I would like to briefly draw attention to two of a handful of exhibits I have submitted for the Committee’s review and for entry into the official record of today’s hearing.

The first is a 100-page document which includes real-world unsolicited feedback from military service members. I submit it for the record because to spend even a few minutes with the document is to get a sense for how DEI trainings are hurting morale, dividing and distracting troops, disincentivizing Americans from service, and thereby destroying our recruiting and retention efforts.

The second is a letter signed by 185 retired general and flag officers, previously sent to leaders in the House, which they did, in fact, receive. Despite their warning about DEI’s divisive impacts in the military workplace and their request for Congress to end fund-

ing for all such initiatives, the Congress ultimately did not use its power to put an end to DEI funding in the recently approved NDAA. Thank you to those of you, by the way, who tried to introduce useful legislation. The men and women who sent that letter raised the warning voice and tried their best to respectfully influence our Nation's lawmakers.

I said in my book, back in 2021, that if we did not abandon the diversity and inclusion trainings then we would see unprecedented "recruitment and retention woes." That has been true, and we have seen as a nation that it is not getting any better, hence the need for a hearing like this.

I also said that unless we abandon our present hate-filled and divisive path, and repent as a Nation, we will destroy ourselves, and I reaffirm that view here today, and I am grateful to answer any questions this Subcommittee may have for me. Thank you.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Mr. Seidule.

**STATEMENT OF BRIGADIER GEN. TY SEIDULE (RET.)
VISITING PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
HAMILTON COLLEGE
PROFESSOR EMERITUS HISTORY
WEST POINT**

Gen. SEIDULE. Chairman Grothman and Ranking Member Garcia and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee.

I served in the U.S. Army for 36 years. My wife is an Air Force brat, daughter of a fighter pilot. During our career, she supported families in peace and war. For that entire time, we lived on Army posts and one Navy base, raised our two boys. My son, Peter, who is with me today, served in the First Cavalry Division. We are an Army family for life.

I have three points to make today. First, the United States Armed Forces are the best in the world because we reflect and represent the greatest country in the world. Diversity is the military's strength because diversity is America's strength.

Second, the military makes significant social changes primarily when Congress demands it. When President Truman ordered the military to desegregate in 1948, it did not really happen until the 1970s, when Congress demanded it. The military reacts to Congress, not the other way around.

Third, the military's half-century commitment to equal opportunity and diversity has created a more lethal, effective, and cohesive force. In 1971, the military was falling apart. Race relations were at its nadir, and drug use at its peak. Over the next 20 years, DoD instituted and internalized a culture of diversity that transformed the military. Diversity has worked for over 50 years.

For the last half of my career, I taught history at West Point and studied the history of our Army. In fact, I brought, for both the Chair and Ranking, the West Point History of the Civil War, that we wrote while I was there.

In 1948, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981, integrating the U.S. military. It could not go through Congress because segregationists blocked civil rights legislation.

Without laws, the military slow-rolled integration. The last segregated military unit disbanded in 1954. In 1963, ten states still had zero Black National Guardsmen. As late as 1969, Mississippi had one Black National Guardsman—not 1 percent, one.

In the 1960s, the Army had 3 percent Black officers, and the Navy and the Marine Corps 0.2 percent. Black service members could not rent houses outside some bases. The children of Black service members still went to segregated schools as late as 1969.

By the early 1970s, the effect of the Vietnam War, drug use, and racial prejudice had created a broken military. The, quote/unquote, “race problem” threatened our ability to defend the Nation. In 1971, senior civilian leaders created the Defense Race Relations Institute. They mandated race relations training for the entire force.

Recruiting for the all-volunteer force forced the military to integrate and to try to solve the race problem. It worked, imperfectly. Less than 20 years after the defeat in Vietnam, the U.S. military shined again. In 1991, during Desert Storm, we destroyed the fourth-largest army in the world in days, and that army had 31 percent African American NCOs.

The success of equal opportunity policy saved us after the defeat in Vietnam, created the all-volunteer force, and led us to victory. I know. I commanded a diverse cavalry troop in the 82d Airborne Division during the Gulf War.

By law, women were not allowed to serve in tank, infantry, and cavalry regiments for most of my career. It is just un-American and ineffective. When the Army deploys, it fights on land, and eight billion people reside on land, 51 percent of whom are women. We must have women in the force at all ranks.

At West Point, I taught a cadet who was unable to follow her dream to be an infantryman. While she was a Rhodes Scholar, the combat exclusion ended. She rebranched infantry, graduated from Ranger School, and commanded an infantry company. She was the toughest, brightest cadet I met in 20 years.

When I commanded a battalion, we suffered under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” a policy that forced service members to lie. A friend deployed to Iraq. Her partner and their children could not access military facilities—no commissary, no health care, no childcare. Now, because Congress ended “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” we have another proud military family.

In both my experience and my study of history, diversity policies, equal opportunity policies are neither progressive nor political. They are proven national defense strategies that have made our military more effective and our country safer for over 50 years.

Thank you again for allowing me to join you today in the People’s House.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes. We are going to start with Mr. Thibeau.

As you mentioned, the Department of Defense is requesting another \$114 million for DEI initiatives. This is in addition to \$90 million already dedicated. We mentioned that these DEI professionals were making well into six figures.

Is this bureaucracy necessary? Could you comment on it? What do they do?

Mr. THIBEAU. It is a good question what they do, Mr. Chairman. The problem I have is the policies that result from such a bureaucracy. And there is, like you alluded to in your opening remarks, a lot of well-intentioned training, perhaps some of which is necessary. But what is not necessary are race-and sex-based quotas that are prevalent in at least two branches of the military. And if it is a bureaucracy that serves to fulfill those policies that I think do more than simply educate people about bias or promotion equal opportunity but, in fact, promote a system of race-and sex-based discrimination, that is problematic, and they should not be receiving any money. But we should be thinking about those policies that are more than just the promotion of diversity but are actually an alteration to the personnel program in the military.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Have you seen people promoted—and if Mr. Lohmeier wants to jump in here, he can as well—have you seen people promoted or let into the military academies who are not the most meritorious because of this DEI ideology?

Mr. THIBEAU. So, you know, I would never impugn someone's promotion or their selection. I take, you know, a person that wears a uniform with the integrity that it comes with. But what is problematic is when West Point, for example, has racial goals for every admissions class, and admissions leaders are evaluated whether or not they meet race-based goals. I do not know what the difference is between a goal and a quota, and to me, we should do more to perhaps promote cohesive teams without implementing a personnel system that, again, alters the nature of how merit defines personnel policy.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Does this ideology create a mindset in which people view themselves as members of a subgroup or identify based upon where their grandparents or great-grandparents were born?

Mr. THIBEAU. Perhaps. You know, when I was in the Army just a few years ago, we got training on our conduct, and how it was unacceptable to harass someone, to harm someone. And it seems there are some examples where there is now training on what you believe and how you have—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Could you get in trouble by solely pushing an ideology based on merit? Would that be a check against you, you think, in the military today?

Mr. THIBEAU. You know—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Lohmeier wrote a book on it.

Mr. THIBEAU. Yes. I think he would be better suited to speak on this. But I have heard from a number of, you know, friends and folks who want to speak out, that there is a pervasive concern about speaking out for the genuine integrity of merit as the foundation for military.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I recently talked to somebody who wanted to leave the military because of this ideology.

We will move on to Mr. Lohmeier. Do you feel promotional decisions are being made primarily on diversity as opposed to pure merit in today's military?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I do not think that promotion decisions are being made writ large based on solely diversity, for the purposes of diversity. I think that we have got tremendous leaders in the military overall. I think that we still care a great deal about merit,

and that these policies that we are here to discuss today, however, do muddy the waters, and we do establish quotas.

And I want to provide one example that Will just commented on that I experienced while I was in command in the Space Force. I had young people, underrepresented groups—that means non-White—coming to me and expressing their dismay, and what was the word that the ranking member used?—disappointment that they could no longer tell themselves. I do not know what their political affiliation was. I do not know what their religious worldview was. I do know what their ethnicity was, and they came to me expressing their disappointment that, “Hey, look, my entire career I have been promoted based on my skill, my ability to execute a mission, and I am not sure, moving forward, whether or not I will be able to tell if I was promoted based on the way I look, my accidentals.” And I can provide a lot of examples of that kind of thing going on.

I can also tell you that we have had a failed pilot training experiment. As recently as last year, the American pilot training class—it was in 2021, actually—in which we chose those selected for that pilot training class in Texas based on their gender and their ethnicity so that we could make the pilot training class look more like the United States of America. That did not turn out well, and so we should look into that as well.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Could we say what did not turn out well?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Well, performance suffered, and that is the point. As an instructor pilot in the T-38, I trained young men and women from our allied partners and from foreign militaries. Like the general here, I served with foreign militaries. I did an exchange to the People’s Liberation Army Air Force Academy in Kaohsiung, China, when we still did that. And I will tell you, we do have the best military on the Earth. It is because there is a naturally occurring diversity, in the Defense Department especially, that we allow in a merit-based selection system, promotion system, and so forth, so that the best can be placed in these various positions that we hope they will use to execute a mission in defense of our country.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. OK, Mr. Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to our witnesses also for being here.

General Seidule, thank you for joining us today. I appreciated your testimony especially, and I want to thank you for the decades of service, of course, to our Nation. I want to start by just getting a few facts out of the way quickly.

I am sure anyone who saw the movie “Oppenheimer,” which was my favorite movie of the year, is familiar with the Red Scare, and obviously you, as a historian, also are familiar with the Army McCarthy hearings, which seem to be replayed over and over again in this House. I am disappointed that some of my colleagues seem to also want to replay those hearings and those scare tactics.

But since you are here, I just want to ask you very clearly, is the military being destroyed by Marxist ideology?

Gen. SEIDULE. No, it is not, and I do not really even understand how you can say it is Marxist. At least, I studied Marxism, and I do not understand how it relates at all.

Mr. GARCIA. I agree with you, sir. In your experience as a professor also at West Point, and in your 36 years of service in uniform, did you see any evidence of leftist indoctrination?

Gen. SEIDULE. No.

Mr. GARCIA. How about of critical race theory?

Gen. SEIDULE. No.

Mr. GARCIA. Have you ever seen ANTIFA infiltrating our military?

Gen. SEIDULE. No.

Mr. GARCIA. Well, thank you, General, and I am sure we can all feel a bit better knowing that there is no large communist menace or ANTIFA or others plotting to overthrow the U.S. military, which we know remains the strongest in the world, and we all, I think, in a bipartisan way, agree that we have the best military in the world and that we are very proud of.

Now General, in all seriousness, can you explain why policies that promote a military that reflects the diversity of our country and allows everyone to serve, no matter who they love, one that protects female soldiers from harassment, and actually promotes and improves our national security, how does that improve our actual military?

Gen. SEIDULE. Thank you, Congressman. I really believe that when we look at a period before we had this, which is the 1960s, and see how terrible the military was, and the military imploded without that. And if we have an Army—that is the one I am familiar with—that has, right now, over 20 percent African American and yet have almost no leadership in that role, then we are going to have problems.

We do not have a quota system. I was on the Admissions Committee at West Point. We do not have quotas there. But we do want to make sure that we look like our client. Our client is the American people, and we want to make sure we reflect that.

I have found that diversity policies make us a stronger nation and a stronger country, and I am unfamiliar with anything that maybe diversity policy somehow is going to melt our brains in some way when we take them. That has not been my experience.

Mr. GARCIA. And I would agree. I mean, it is clear that a more diverse military is good for our national security and is good as a reflection of the whole country. And I think the question is, do we want a military that actually reflects the entire country?

Yes, as an LGBTQ American myself, I also understand very clearly that it was not that long ago that an openly gay person, a person from my community, could not contribute their talents in the military. But it has been changes to policy and implementation that have made our military more reflective of who we are as a society. And so, I appreciate your comments.

General, can you remind us about some of the challenges our military has had to overcome as it relates to segregation and as it relates to racial tensions within ranks?

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes. Remember, we were a segregated Army really until the 1970s. We had very few cadets at West Point. We had only 23 naval midshipmen in 1970—that is 0.5 percent. We continued to have very low levels of general officers in the Army and in all services into the 1990s and beyond. So, we have always had a

problem making sure that the Army leadership, or the military leadership, reflects the enlisted ranks. And when we do not do that, we have problems, and we saw that in the 1960s and the 1970s. It is the same thing with other underrepresented minorities.

But remember, it is this body that changed it. It ended "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." It brought women to West Point. It ended the combat exclusion. Congress is the one that did that. Congress is the one that really changes the military.

Mr. GARCIA. And General, would you agree that it has been, like you said, it has been laws, it has been the intervention by Congress, it has been policy changes, that have actually had to be forced sometimes on the military, to actually improve diversity amongst its ranks?

Gen. SEIDULE. It has only been that, usually. We did not integrate when there was an executive order. It was only when Congress did, in the 1973 Equal Opportunity Act, that really started that and put equal opportunity people in every battalion in the Army.

Mr. GARCIA. And so, I think it is pretty clear that in order to achieve a military that reflects the rest of the country, Congress needs to push and create action, and I appreciate all of the efforts that have happened in the past to actually create a military that reflects the country. And this idea that we should go backward or that we should not embrace diversity to me is totally insane and crazy.

Finally, what actually poses a bigger military threat to national security, policies to promote cohesion and tolerance and diversity within our military or a historic disruption to officer promotions caused by Senator Tuberville's publicity stunt?

Gen. SEIDULE. Senator Tuberville, I think Senator Sullivan probably said it best on the Floor. Why punish people who have seriously sacrificed for America? Why punish patriotic military members over a policy dispute they had nothing to do with and cannot fix? This is a huge readiness challenge and a huge morale challenge. And yet, amazingly, not one member of those general officers ever made a public complaint about it. It shows the professionalism of our general officer corps that no one made a complaint despite the disruption and cruelty of that policy by Senator Tuberville.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, sir, and again I reiterate that that is the hearing we should be having is on that enormous disruption that happened in the Senate and how the House can help rectify that.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Ms. Foxx.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lt. Col. Lohmeier, thank you for your service and for being here today.

In 2021, the United States Military Academy, West Point, taught cadets critical race theory through a seminar titled "Understanding Whiteness and White Rage." At an Armed Services Committee hearing earlier this year, or last year, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, was questioned about teaching critical race theory at the service academies. General Milley defended the practice, saying he thought it was important for those in uniform to be, quote, "open-minded and openly read,"

end quote. He went on to state, quote, “I want to understand White rage, and I am White,” end quote.

In your experience as a squadron commander with U.S. Space Force would learning about Whiteness and White rage help promote unit cohesion or a team-centered culture?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. The answer is anyone who is focused on warfighting does not naturally think to talk about these things in the military workplace. We are focused on a particular mission in defense of the country, to deter conflict, and to win our Nation’s wars.

I do want to make one additional point, if I may, that the General has just explained that he never saw critical race theory in his time at West Point or in his lengthy, honorable military career. In doing research for my book that got me fired, I found that West Point cadets, who had recently graduated—these are impressive people, Black, White, clearly leftist in their political worldview—had promoted a 40-page policy proposal, is what it was called, that I consider communist’s creed, anti-American, race-baiting, accusing leaders at West Point of failing the American people, criticizing West Point as an institution for racism, criticizing them for failing the Army, and that they would continue to fail the Army. What I found in that document is that this General’s work is quoted throughout the entire 40 pages.

So, you cannot say that you have never been exposed to critical race theory when a bunch of left-wing, Marxist-leaning students attack the West Point Military Academy, relying on your work. And so, I would be curious to find out if they consulted with him in the production of that 40-page policy proposal to topple statues at West Point, to rename buildings. When that kind of invitation came to me, as a commander, to rename streets and buildings, everyone at the base was allowed to populate the Excel spreadsheet that came to use as a tasker from the Pentagon.

And I saw George Washington’s name on that list because ideology that poisons the mind does not disambiguate between racists, evil men, and good men, and patriots. What they did is they said he is a founder, he is White, I hate him, and we would like to remove his name from buildings and streets. This is the kind of thing that ideology does to the military. It divides people. And the best evidence we have seen so far—excuse me, 10 more seconds—is the recent testimony from university presidents who tried to excuse and contextualize genocidal rhetoric. And what CRT, diversity, equity, and inclusion mandates, and Marxist ideology do to a university president, or to the Chinese PLA, they will do to an American service member. And I have seen it firsthand.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you. I think it would be wise for the Committee to followup on the report that you are talking about, so I hope we will be able to do that.

According to the Department of Defense website, its mission is to, quote, “provide the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our Nation’s security,” end quote. Do you think that teaching our future military leaders about Whiteness and White rage will better prepare them to deter war and defend our nation?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. No, I do not.

Ms. FOXX. And do you believe promoting divisive concepts—you have, I think, indicated this—like critical race theory have an impact on military recruitment and retention?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Well, I have got some polling data here that if we have time I can cite. But this is one of the prevalent themes that shows up among active-duty service members who have been polled about their concerns about the direction the military is headed, why they are choosing to leave the service, and young Americans, why they are choosing not to join. They sometimes call it wokeness—that is colloquial—but they specifically, if they know what they are talking about, refer to critical race theory, and if you know what you are talking about you know that it is rooted in Marxist ideology.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record any document that Mr. Lohmeier has such as that survey, in the minutes of this hearing.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Agreed.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Yes, I can—I am sorry. You did not ask me to speak.

Ms. FOXX. Well, I am just going to ask one more question. Are there specific recommendations you have for maintaining a strong and cohesive military culture while addressing concerns about ideological influences?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Yes, ma'am. I think every American citizen, veteran or having never served, looks to the Congress to use the power of the purse to hold their military accountable. But we also need brave men and women in uniform to respectfully give feedback, use their voice, and stand on their principle. We do not all have to agree, but we do have to agree that the mission of the United States military is paramount, and merit-based selection and promotion is the only effective principle to keep a strong military.

I do not care what people's view are on diversity, equity, and inclusion. I really do not. But we cannot use our individual political or social or cultural worldview to shape military selection processes, of all institutions. The long-trusted U.S. military must remain a merit-based system. Otherwise, you will lose that system.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Mr. Goldman.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to see if we can find some common ground here. Mr. Thibeaue, I heard you say a little earlier that you support diversity as at least one variable to focus on to either admit students in the service academies, or officers evolving, officer promotion. Is that right?

Mr. THIBEAU. What I said, Mr. Goldman, is that I am willing to accept and support diversity as a byproduct of good military policy. It is not something we should—it is certainly not something we should avoid, but it is not something that the military should cater policies to promote. That—

Mr. GOLDMAN. So, do you think that diversity of backgrounds is beneficial to the military?

Mr. THIBEAU. As it relates to a person's ability to do a job in the military, yes. If a capability does not exist in the military and we need someone with a more diverse background to do that job, then

yes, it is important. But what I do not think that means is that a person's skin color is relevant to those jobs.

You know, in the House Armed Services Committee—

Mr. GOLDMAN. I hear you, and I want to just followup on that because I think there are some contextual things that we need to talk about here because you and Mr. Lohmeier are talking about merit-based, merit-based, and focusing on that. But, you know, when you look at the history of discrimination in the military, what you have to consider is that everybody does not start from the same place. So, Mr. Seidule's family growing up with a general in the military has advantages in terms of entering the military that someone whose family does not have would not have. You agree with that, right?

Mr. THIBEAU. Yes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. So, if the military was segregated, if non-Whites and women were not allowed, if the LGBTQ community, because of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", were not allowed, you therefore understand how those people from those different groups are not starting at the same place in terms of evaluating, quote, "merit-based," right?

Mr. THIBEAU. But Congressman, I think that is a false binary. The choice is not between discriminate against non-Whites and, you know, chose anyone but the best—

Mr. GOLDMAN. I am not talking about discriminating. I mean, there are only a certain number of people that can be admitted to a class, that can be promoted. And if you are basically saying that you cannot consider anything else other than what you call pure merit—and there is no definition for pure merit—you are necessarily perpetuation discrimination that has occurred for generations.

And when you start to see things such as government reviews, the Air Force independent review that said 40 percent, in 2020 and 2021, 40 percent of Black and African American service members indicated a lack of trust in their chain of command to address racism, bias, and unequal opportunities, you are necessarily not acknowledging, not addressing what is a fundamental problem not only for retention but also for promotion. And if women are leaving the service 28 percent more because of sexist culture, family planning, or sexual assault, that has to be addressed.

I do not believe you are sitting here and saying that it is OK. You mentioned something about you support training on harassment. But if there is implicit or explicit racism or discrimination you would agree that has no place in the military, right?

Mr. THIBEAU. Of course.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. There needs to be training because a lot of people do not know what that means, and they often do not know that what they are saying is actually discriminatory. So, there needs to actually be training so that everyone, from every walk of life in this country, can have an opportunity to participate, to represent our country, to be in the military. And the problem that we run into when we try to say purely race-neutral, merit-based—and, you know, again, once again we are obviously talking about a disproportionate number of White people, primarily, who are in positions of authority, who are elevating people, who are admitting peo-

ple—if they are not trying to address some of the historical wrongs to give people who have not had that access to the military, to this opportunity, give them that opportunity, then we are just going to perpetuate the historical discrimination forever.

So, I am not saying merit does not matter. I think it absolutely matters. And I certainly understand Mr. Lohmeier's point that we do not want to put people who are unprepared in bad situations. But to simply say that diversity should have no impact whatsoever on our military will continue to perpetuate a discrimination that is unfortunately embedded in our military's history.

And with that I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Next, we have Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, God bless you for your service. I really, really appreciate your sacrifices on behalf of this Nation.

As often as is the case, my position here, up on this dais, my 5 minutes, most of it will be spent correcting, in my opinion, the record of the things that have been said previous as opposed to the questions I might have asked each of you. So, I am going to go through a couple of things here, and maybe it is not only correction, but it is clarification of the record, as I would like to say it.

Mr. Seidule—is that how you say your name?

Gen. SEIDULE. Sid-u-lee.

Mr. PERRY. Sorry about that. My apologies.

Gen. SEIDULE. My mother got it wrong for years.

Mr. PERRY. I am sure. The nametag was probably difficult. I just want to make the remark and the point that the segregationists that blocked integration were decidedly in one political party. And I think it is important to note that because they will be up here acting like they never did that, and it is important for the historical record. As a fan of history, you can appreciate that there are consequences that America cannot forget, and should not forget.

Regarding diversity, I hear that all the time, diversity is our strength, diversity is our strength. And, Mr. Thibeau, you just answered a bunch of questions about that, and it is a strength when we have different viewpoints about how to solve a problem. But if we are all in a rowboat, there are four of us in a rowboat and we all have a different idea of where we are going and a different oar, diversity is not going to be much of a strength, right? We are all going to be rowing in four different directions.

So, diversity is a strength if we are all pointing in the same direction. Otherwise, it is not a strength. And I do not know how that can be refuted, but if somebody wants to, they are welcome to do that.

Regarding the comment that there was a defeat in Vietnam, I want to make sure—because I grew up during that time, as you did, I imagine, sir, just gauging from seeing you here—it was not a military defeat. It was people like Walter Cronkite and other leftists and political activists in the United States of America that imposed that defeat.

And it is important to me. I revered my uncle when he came home from Vietnam in his uniform as a guy who served and the sacrifices he made, and it colored my decision to join the military. And it is important, again, for the record, to remind Americans

that the military did not lose that war. That was a politically lost war, and I do not want that to be attributed or ascribed to the military.

Regarding the McCarthy hearings, I want to remind everybody in the room that while I disagreed with his tactics, as most Americans did, if they read Whittaker Chambers' book, "Witness," and if they go through the Venona transcripts, almost every single person he named was a communist sympathizer, organizer, and involved in the subversion of the U.S. Government. Let us not forget that.

Regarding those folks that were held up by Senator Tuberville, and the fact that they did not complain. Well, good for them, because when we wear the uniform, yours is not to question why, yours is just to do and die. And we do not talk about political things because it is against the regulation. So, they were not doing anything grandiose. They were doing their duty, as they should. And Tuberville was doing his duty, as he should. The policies in the military regarding the subject at hand are wrong, and thank God somebody was willing to fight for them.

There is a specific definition for merit. I would ask my colleague. He can go look up any search engine and see it. I joined the military, and I loved my time in the military. It defined me, and I defined it. And it was based on merit. And I did not have a leg up. I knew my uncle, who served in Vietnam. But when I raised my hand, as an E-1, no one knew anybody I knew, and it did not matter. And I loved the fact that even coming from a broken home, with no connections, and no clue about anything, I could work my tail off and make something of myself.

And even though I did not have my commander's recommendation to go to Officer Candidate School, I got into Officer Candidate School, and I became the president of my class. And even though I did not have a recommendation to go to flight school, where you are measured within a tenth of a point, I graduated second in my class, alongside soldiers and service members from the Air Force Academy, and West Point, of which I was not allowed to go to because I was not good enough. And I was not good enough. But the point is, I worked my tail off because it was based on merit, and I could make something of myself.

And while I complained to myself—I did not complain to anybody else when I did not, when I tried to get an inter-service transfer from the Army to the Air Force because instead of flying Cobras, I wanted to fly F-16s, and a friend of mine, a friend of mine, he got to go. He was a Black man. But when I applied to the same unit I was told, "Sorry. You do not fit the position." You know what I did? I got after my job as a Cobra pilot. I got after my job, and I went on with my life. I did not cry my eyes about it.

There are a bunch of people that are up on this dais today that are going to complain to you and tell you about your life in the military, who have never served, and do not have a damn clue about any of this. Mr. Lohmeier in particular, Mr. Thibeau in particular, God bless you for your viewpoints and your willingness to sacrifice what you have for the things that you believe in, because you are correct. Our military is being destroyed right now, and we all know it. We all know it.

And while I wish, and I hope that it still remains the best military in the world, I am not sure that that is the case anymore, and we better damn well come to that realization and get after that.

Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Good points. Mr. Frost.

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out what my colleague just said. You know, as it relates to members of the United States military whose promotions were being held up because of a Senator who had problems, from an ideological point of view, with bodily autonomy, the message to them was ours is not to reason why but to do or die. But then to a gentleman here, who did complain and fight, wrote a book about his issues, the message was completely different, which I think just shows the hypocrisy in this room right now from the other side of the aisle.

I am from the state of Florida. This war on wokeism is not new to me, and it is a shame that Republicans on this Committee have not caught on to my Governor DeSantis' failing Presidential campaign that is based on this war on woke. And this misplacement on wokeism in the military endangers America's national security by ignoring the real threats. Some of the real threats to our national security are low military recruitment and retention rates, which is what I want to focus on today.

Look, service members are not leaving the military because of DEI training or because a military base was renamed or because someone accessed an abortion. But what I do hear from my constituents is this. I have had folks write about problems with housing allowance being too low in the military, people messaging me saying medications are too expensive, folks worrying that service members will not be able to get pay if Republicans in Congress shut down the government. These are the real things that resonate with the American people because these are the issues that this Committee needs to be addressing.

General, you testified that the Army became more diverse and welcoming to soldiers of color over your time in service. How has that inclusion helped retain talented service members?

Gen. SEIDULE. Thank you, Congressman. We have a greater pool to draw from. We did not used to be able to draw from people of color or women, or if we had LGBTQ they were kicked out, which I know many that were kicked out. We have a broader thing.

We need every person to be able to serve, and we cannot do that if we are trying to kick people out or not allowing people to serve and not making it welcoming. We are a better Army because of our diversity.

Mr. FROST. I 100 percent agree with you. I mean, we know at West Point that Black students had highlighted during their time the art memorializing the traitor Confederate General Robert E. Lee that hung on the wall and the fact that the only Black person hanging on the walls was someone who was a slave. And I think that things like that hurt our military readiness and national security when it makes our service members uncomfortable.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion strengthens our national military. It does not work against it.

General, you have also testified about your own story of service, quote, “I did not choose the Army because of patriotism. I signed up for the money,” end quote. And I do not bring that up as a disparaging thing because we know that this is something that is true for many of our service members, especially when I speak with folks who like myself in my community that are looking at joining the military. You joined to help afford college, your college, and ended up staying for more than four decades. So, thank you so much for your service.

We know that many soldiers enlist for financial reasons but then choose not to reenlist because it is unaffordable for them. Have you observed any trends around how economic struggles can stunt a soldier’s career?

Gen. SEIDULE. Thank you, Congressman. Yes, I particularly think that is true because our soldiers now deploy, or actually rotate, so often to Eastern Europe, to South Korea, and to the Middle East without additional money for that. And so, if you are doing two 9-month rotations to one of those two places, plus National Training Center or other things, it is incredibly difficult, particularly for the family at home, because they have no great childcare options.

Mr. FROST. Yes. Yes. And I would love to host a hearing about that instead, to see how we can handle those struggles.

Since at least the 1940s, Congress has given the United States military money to create signing and reenlistment bonuses to incentivize service members to join and stay in the service. General, do you think the military should be collecting data on why and when bonuses are helpful, so we can better understand the financial hardships of our service members?

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes. We have been doing bonuses at least since I have been in, and they work. Because just like I was a poor kid coming from rural Georgia, I had no way of getting through college without it. Those financial incentives matter in an all-volunteer force.

Mr. FROST. A second thing that this Committee should be hosting hearings on to figure out how we can better our national security and military readiness and preparedness.

Look—and I know we have Mr. Lohmeier and folks who have had uncomfortable or maybe negative interpretations or experiences with DEI, and I would never take away someone’s experience from them. But what I do want to call out is there is a difference between seeing something that you see value in, in diversity, equity, and inclusion, or diversity in our military, and saying, “We ought to fix these problems. I think there are some problems with it. I think we ought to fix them,” versus saying, “We should just completely get rid of it.”

I mean, in 1954, when we began to desegregate schools in this country, we knew it would be uncomfortable. We knew there would be problems. But we did it because it was the right thing to do.

This hearing is entitled “The Risk of Progressive Ideologies in the U.S. Military.” DEI is not a progressive ideology. It is just the right thing to do. If we want to talk about progressive ideology in the military we can talk about affordable housing and food, we can talk about tuition assistance, we can talk about universal health

care that the military provides, progress ideologies in the military, but not DEI.

Thank you so much, and I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank our panelists for being here today. I joined the Army in 1988, and again boot camp in 1989 as a Private, one-station unit training. I wanted to be an MP. That ended up working out for me. But one of the initial lessons that you learn very quickly when you step off of that bus and you have to face these guys that are carved from granite and wrapped in leather, tapping that brown round against your forehead, is you are no longer you. You now belong to the United States Army.

To discuss diversity as if it was ever some sort of an effective mechanism by which a deadly force could be established to fight and win wars across the world, to liberate the oppressed for generations, is insane. We do not care about anything other than the deadly effectiveness of our Army. It requires discrimination, because developing deadly skills in a force of men requires us to recognize distinction, to discriminate between those who can become lethal weapons and those who cannot. Nobody cares about the color of your skin, your cultural background, your ethnicity, who your mama or your daddy was.

Your ass now belongs to the Army, and we are going to make a soldier out of you, or we are going to remove you from this unit, and you go do something else. No problem. The world needs insurance salesmen and everybody else. But if you are going to be a soldier, we are going to carve you into what it is to be a soldier.

I do not understand why my colleagues cannot see the difference between civilian life and military life. Nobody is firing live rounds at us up here. That is not part of our designated job description. But it damn sure is a job description for our soldiers. And we cannot fill our ranks in the United States Army right now. You know why? I think you do know why. Because conservative families across America that have a deep lineage of military service are not encouraging their sons and daughters to join the Army because it is crap that our sons and daughters are having to deal with now in the Army, that my colleagues are applauding, like yay. You know, we need to diversify. Diversified? They were called uniform for a reason. We must be uniformly deadly and effective, rapidly deployed. But we care not what the color of the skin is to the soldier next to us or whether or not he is gay or straight. That has zero to do with the performance of our Army.

And yet we are indeed attempting to indoctrinate those very civilian considerations into our military. That is why you cannot fill the ranks because traditional American families know that that is a wrong formula.

Ranger Thibeau—Rangers lead the way.

Mr. THIBEAU. All the way, sir.

Mr. HIGGINS. I am going to ask you, the opening line of your statement, you rightly draw upon a distinction regarding considering between those who join our military and those who choose just other courses of life. You said, and I quote, "Training the United States Army is meant to melt away the effects of civilian

life and to forge Americans into soldiers, ready to devote their lives to the mass application of violence on behalf of American interests.” Can you speak to the uniqueness of what it is to be a soldier as opposed to being a civilian in America?

Mr. THIBEAU. To be a soldier is to live a life where you take for granted the fact that you would die for the person next to you and that you would enter an arena where that death is possible, on purpose, and that you would be prepared, as a team and as a person, to do whatever it took not to survive but to win, and even if that requires immense suffering, sacrifice, and an inconvenience every day for you and your family.

Mr. HIGGINS. Did you ever, for 1 day, at any time, consider the diversity of the Ranger next to you?

Mr. THIBEAU. No.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you very much. Mr. Thibeu, Mr. Lohmeier, General, thank you all for your service.

Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Ms. Porter.

Ms. PORTER. Was that my recognition, “OK, Ms. Porter”? All right.

Mr. Lohmeier, do you agree with President Trump’s Executive Order 9981?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Well, you will have to explain——

Ms. PORTER. I am so sorry.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] You will have to explain what you mean. I do not know executive orders by numbers.

Ms. PORTER. Let me start again. Do you agree with President Truman’s order that integrated the armed services despite the fact that separate but equal was still the law of the land at the time?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Let me say that this is an important point. The Congressman to your left has said he wanted to find common ground. There is a lot of what the General has said today that I do not disagree with whatsoever, but it seems to me irrelevant to the discussion of progressivism as an ideology in the military workplace.

Let me point out one example, in answer to your question, of what I am opposed to—reintroduction of [indistinguishable]——

Ms. PORTER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Lohmeier.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Which is a direct——

Ms. PORTER. Reclaiming my time.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Consequence——

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, it is my time.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Of DEI initiatives. We have got——

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I would like to reclaim my time.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Because of DEI, and I am happy to talk to that.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Lohmeier, I am going to try again. Do you agree—I appreciate that you have opinions, and you are entitled to have them, but I would like you to try to answer the question I am asking with respect, sir. Do you agree with President Truman’s Executive Order 9981 that integrated the armed services despite the fact that separate but equal was still the law of the land at the time?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I agree that the military has led the way in integration—

Ms. PORTER. OK. Thank you.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Which has been the strength of the United States military. But we are undoing it all with diversity—

Ms. PORTER. OK. Reclaiming my time.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Equity, and inclusion.

Ms. PORTER. That decision was progressive at the time. In other words, the military went to a place of integration and efforts to have Black and White soldiers working alongside each other. It was not always perfect, it was not always easy, but it was literally the definition of progress and progressive. It went beyond existing law.

General, did Truman's actions to integrate the military under EO 9981 lead directly to any readiness deficits? You are a military historian.

Gen. SEIDULE. No. In fact, the first thing that it did, Congresswoman, was integrate Arlington National Cemetery.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Lohmeier, you were an active duty—and thank you for your service—Air Force officer in 2010. Is that correct?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Yes.

Ms. PORTER. OK. Were there any big problems in military readiness in 2010?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. As a young flyer I never paid attention to what you folks were doing. I never paid attention to reports on readiness lethality. I simply focused on the mission. It was learning how to fly an aircraft. And at that time, it was training our allied partners and foreign military pilots how to fly jets.

Ms. PORTER. Well, I am glad, Mr. Lohmeier, that you were able to focus on your military duties, and it seems to me that your own testimony here is a really good example of the fact that the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" did not cause a disruption in your ability or the military readiness of the Air Force to do its job.

General, is there any empirical evidence that gay Americans serving opening has hurt military readiness?

Gen. SEIDULE. No.

Ms. PORTER. So historically, when the military has been progressive, has gone beyond where other policies may be, has tried to encourage diversity or welcome people to be diverse and to learn about each other, there has been no harm to force readiness.

General, could one consider President Truman's executive action a diversity initiative? General Truman's why am I having so much trouble with this? General, could one consider President Truman's executive action a diversity initiative?

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes.

Ms. PORTER. How about the 2010 repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell?"

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes.

Ms. PORTER. So, in your view should the military roll back those diversity policies?

Gen. SEIDULE. Absolutely not.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Thibeaudeau, do you think that the military should roll back those initiatives?

Mr. THIBEAU. No, Congresswoman, I do not, because the integration of the armed forces in 1948 was a recognition that the military is different from society, and so it should march to the beat of a different drum. And that is why I think it was such a good policy, because it ensured that we had the best. Things changed in 1960, when the military became a beacon for affirmative action and quotas, but I agree with you that it was good policy in 1948.

Ms. PORTER. OK. And would you repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”?

Mr. THIBEAU. No, because it is a means by which the military attracts the best talent. But what I would object to is if the military had a quota for LGBT Americans on the books.

Ms. PORTER. Do they?

Mr. THIBEAU. Not that I know of, but they do for Black, White, Hispanic Americans, and I think those are—

Ms. PORTER. General, is that correct? I am not aware. My brother served. He went to the United States Naval Academy. He served 5 years. He served on a nuclear submarine. I do not recall him ever enforcing, being part of, as an officer, any type of quota system.

Gen. SEIDULE. There are no quota systems, Congresswoman.

Ms. PORTER. Hm. I do not recall that being U.S. military policy. I do not remember ever passing a law, since we are in Congress and we make the rules, I do not remember ever passing a law with regard to that.

Our military is more effective when it is diverse, and you cannot have an effective, diverse team without teaching people how to work effectively together. That is what these initiatives should focus on.

I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Mr. Gosar.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Chairman Grothman, and thank you, gentlemen, for all your service. I appreciate it.

The U.S. armed forces are under attack, not by a foreign adversary but from within their own ranks. Woke policies have infiltrated the U.S. military and caused failing recruitment and retention rates, low morale, and quite frankly, pose a national security threat.

Our service members are heroes and must endure considerable challenges in their sacrifice to our Nation. Their focus should not be compromised by politically motivated critical race theory, LGBTQ training, and DEI and pro-abortion policies. Perhaps recruitment and retention efforts have failed not because of the military’s lack of diversity, but rather because service members are afraid of retaliation for speaking out against progressive policies.

Just a few months ago we heard from General Mark Milley, who said that service academies should teach about White rage, while simultaneously claiming the military is not woke. Lloyd Austin, in an unprecedented move in October 2022, required the DoD to pay for the travel of service members seeking to end the life of their unborn children. Our service men and women deserve more from their leaders.

Now, let me ask you, both Mr. ThibEAU and Mr. Lohmeier, is war fair?

Mr. THIBEAU. No.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Lohmeier?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Can you repeat that? Did you say is war fair?
Mr. GOSAR. Fair.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. No.

Mr. GOSAR. So, in the comparison of education versus war, that is not an equal application, is it?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. No, Congressman.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Thibeau?

Mr. THIBEAU. They are different, different institutions, different experiences.

Mr. GOSAR. Very different. So, for example, an improvised IED does not know the color of your skin, does not know if you are gay, whatever. Right?

Mr. THIBEAU. That is right.

Mr. GOSAR. Does the enemy care what color you are?

Mr. THIBEAU. No, Congressman.

Mr. GOSAR. Hm, that is really interesting.

So, the DoD funds and relies on data from a group called START, the national consortium that is the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. START came out with a figure in one of these reports that depicts a type of alleged extremist in the military. I think they were bringing it up on the screen here, please.

Shockingly, the vast majority are considered right-wing extremists. Categories of extremists include militia, which is specifically mentioned in the Constitution, including the Second Amendment, numerous times; male supremacists; and anti-abortion.

My question for you, Mr. Thibeau, do you think service members are leaving the military because they may be considered extremists for simply opposing abortion, owning a gun, or for a belief in a traditional family?

Mr. THIBEAU. I do not think so, Congressman. The Inspector General report on extremism came out I think a few weeks ago, on a Friday afternoon, without much fanfare, where they said that there is no difference in the extremism in the military compared to society, and there was nothing to find.

The American Principles Project surveyed veterans, hundreds of recently separated veterans, and the biggest reason why people left, and also why they would not join, is because of a distrust of politicized military leadership, which I think speaks to the point and the value of this hearing.

Mr. GOSAR. Gotcha. So, another question. Belief in a militia is extreme. The word is mentioned five times in the Constitution. And the Second Amendment says a "well-regulated militia is necessary for the security of a free state." Does that mean the Constitution is an extreme document, according to this military-funded group?

Mr. THIBEAU. Yes, there seems to be a discrepancy or some cognitive dissonance there. But, you know, I do not know how words are assigned to different meanings, but I think most service members are well-intentioned and good Americans, and both sides should do well to remember that.

Mr. GOSAR. Gotcha. Mr. Lohmeier, thank you again for your service. Many of the talented men and women of the Air Force reside in my district at the Luke Air Force Base out in Arizona. Has the COVID jab mandate negatively affected the military's readiness?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. There are a number of ways, it seems, it has impacted negatively our readiness. I am not the expert on that issue, however. It is not what I wrote a book about. In fact, the mandates were rolling out at the time I separated from active duty. But I have got good friends and colleagues who would be perfect to testify about that issue.

Mr. GOSAR. So, sadly, the DoD has refused to reinstate the thousands of service members kicked out of the military for rejecting the experimental COVID shot. Would reinstatement of these service members help improve the military's readiness?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Well, it is possible that it could, Congressman. The question is probably better stated whether or not any of those forced out for their decision or for the discrimination that led to their forcing out would even have any interest in coming back in.

There are groups actively working at the moment to try and take action on behalf of those who either were injured or killed, their family members, or were forced out for their religious convictions or for violating their conscience, to take what they considered to be an illegal, immoral, or an unethical order. And that has ripple effects today in the service.

Again, I am not the expert on that, but I am friends with many who are, who would be happy to testify about it.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I want to say thank you very much, all three of you, for your service. We appreciate it. You are heroes in my book and in our district, so thank you very much.

I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thanks. Mr. Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I also want to thank all of our witnesses for their excellent testimony today and also for their service to the country and also Members of this Committee who served in uniform as well as in this body.

So, Mr. Seidule, or General Seidule, I want to look at three attacks on politicization or diversity changes and the thing that I guess people are calling woke. I want to start with women in the military, and, of course, women were systemically excluded from the military for a long time, and there was a huge struggle about that. And finally, women were able to enter the armed forces on relatively equal status. I do not know if my friend, Mr. Higgins, would consider this part of the traditional American soldiers or not. But women have served for a long time in different capacities and now have equality.

But I am assuming that women in the military want the same rights that women across the country do, and after Donald Trump's gerrymandered Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and women's right to choose, which was in the law for more than half a century, women across the country have rejected that and have stood up for their full reproductive freedom, including in Kansas, Wisconsin, Michigan, California, Vermont, you name it. Everywhere it has been on the ballot, the vast majorities of women and men have supported women's right to choose.

So, I assume—now, I do not have a study on it, but I assume women in the military feel the same way, and that they would want to maintain their right to choose their own reproductive

health care. Now, Senator Tuberville interfered with hundreds and hundreds of military promotions for many, many months in order to stop women in the military from having their complete, full access to reproductive choice and to health care.

Now, who do you think is politicizing the military? Is it Senator Tuberville, with his anti-choice agenda, where he wants to dictate to all of the women of the military what their access will be to health care, or is it those women themselves. Are they the ones that are somehow perpetrating a woke agenda by saying that they want to have equal choice? And don't we depend on women in the military these days? Last I saw it was something like 18 or 20 percent, you know, even in the Army.

So, please answer that if you would.

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes. I would say that Senator Tuberville created political pawns out of those general officers. We have a non-political Army. We are one of the few countries in the history of the world that has never had a military coup d'tat, and it is partly because we are non-political. And yet Senator Tuberville created political pawns for a policy he disagreed with. I could not disagree more with him for doing that and hurting our force and those general and flag officers.

Mr. RASKIN. The military also depends on lots of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans. That is just a reality. You might love it. You might hate it. You might be ambivalent about it. You might just accept it. But in any event, that is the reality, as I understand it. And in any event, the Army decided that it wanted to rename military bases that had been named, not after U.S. generals, but after Confederate generals who joined the Confederacy in rebellion against the Union. Like Fort Benning was renamed after a pro-Union, pro-American general. Fort Gordon was renamed as Fort Eisenhower. Fort Hill renamed as Fort Walker. And yet I take it this is part of the big anti-woke arraignment and indictment of the military that we have renamed military bases after pro-Union, pro-American soldiers, generals, people who have been loyal and faithful to the Union as opposed to those who have opposed the Union and took up arms against the Union in traitorous insurrection.

Now, who is politicizing this question? Is it the people who go along with the Army's decision to say that is who our bases should be named after, pro-Americans, or the people who are wanting to stick to the old Confederate battle names? And I like you to address that, and also Mr. Lohmeier. I think you have taken the position against changing the names.

Gen. SEIDULE. Remember that the names were changed, Congressman, because this body voted overwhelmingly, overrode the veto of President Trump, to create the Naming Commission, of which I served as vice chair. It was my proudest moment to rename those after true American heroes and not those who chose treason to preserve slavery.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you. And do you agree with that, Mr. Lohmeier?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I will say that it is my view that Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has politicized the military. As soon as the Supreme Court decision was made, he issued a policy memo-

random blaming the Supreme Court's decision to reverse *Roe v. Wade* on the recruitment—

Mr. RASKIN. But I am asking about the naming.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. But you brought that up.

Mr. RASKIN. I am asking about the naming—

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I am getting there.

Mr. RASKIN [continuing]. Of our military bases.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I am getting there.

Mr. RASKIN. If you do not want to address it, just say you do not want to answer it.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Yes, I walked—

Mr. RASKIN. You take the—

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing]. I walked Black Lives Matter Plaza yesterday with a Chinese American—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, I did not ask you about that.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. No, I am answering your question. Excuse me.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Yes.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. And she advocated—

Mr. RASKIN. Is it OK, Mr. Chairman, if we go over here, because—

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] For leaving those signs up.

Mr. RASKIN. The witness wants to filibuster a little bit.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. No. I would like to answer more than yes-or-no questions.

Mr. GROTHMAN. We can let him answer the question.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, let him answer, because I was not quite done yet, but now he is occupying my time. If you want him to answer, that is fine. So, yes, about the renaming of the bases after pro-Union, pro-American generals.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Thank you, Mr. Raskin. I would like to answer that question in more than just a yes-or-no format.

Mr. RASKIN. OK.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I walked the Black Lives Matter Plaza yesterday with Xi Van Fleet, a Chinese Maoist, cultural revolution survivor, and I had an interesting conversation with her in which she advocated—I had never thought about this before—and, by the way, I do not address this topic in my book. I wrote about Marxist critical race theory. She said, “I would recommend that once we defeat wokeism, we leave all of the Black Lives Matters paint on the ground and the signs naming the streets.” I asked her why. She said, “Because it is a reminder that once here, on the north side of the White House, we had a woke revolution, a Marxist revolution take place,” and I agree with that. It is a reminder that there has been such divisive conflict in this enemy before that people were willing to use violent force to hurt one another.

I have no problem with the General's efforts—

Mr. RASKIN. If I understand you correctly, and I am trying to torture out an answer, what you are saying is that we should have Army bases named after Confederate generals or Nazi generals, people we have defeated at war. Is that right?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. No, I am not willing to let you put words in my mouth.

Mr. GROTHMAN. We are about 2 minutes over here, so we are just going to let Mr. Lohmeier finish, and that is it.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. So, my point is this is not an issue in which I have actively been involved—

Mr. RASKIN. Hm.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] The renaming of bases. I wrote a book about Marxist DEI, Marxist critical race theory. That is my expertise. I have no personal issue with the fact that this gentleman to my left, who honorably served this country, has been a part of a commission to do that. I have personal opinions about why it is wrong-headed in part of an ideological push. But this is not my—

Mr. RASKIN. So, you would not have renamed them, in other words.

Mr. GROTHMAN. We are 2 1/2 minutes over.

Mr. RASKIN. Point of order.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. That is not something I ever focus on.

Mr. RASKIN. All right. I think I have got my answer, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the witnesses being here today.

So, Mr. Lohmeier, when we look at some of the things that have been said by the gentleman to your left—and I do not think I can pronounce your name, and I want to pronounce it right.

Gen. SEIDULE. Sid-u-lee.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Seidule. Yes, thank you. And I read your testimony. I am interested to know your reaction to his positions with regard to the diversification of the military and DEI. Thank you.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Sure. One point that the General made with which I disagree is that diversity is our strength. I do not think there is any evidence for that, but definitions matter. Words matter, and we are losing touch with this. I would reject the notion that diversity is our strength, based on DEI definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

OK. I am going to get away from that because if we are trying to find unity of understanding let me say this. Skill and performance matter in the military, if you would like to deter conflict and win our Nation's wars, period. As a commander in the military I had a Black colonel fly across the country to promote me to lieutenant colonel, because I loved the hell out of the guy and respected his views on the Federalist Papers, which he was teaching me after work hours, and because he was the best leader I have ever worked with.

The best airman that I had working for me, incidentally, was a transgender airman.

So, do not bullshit me and say that you think you know what you are talking about. You have never served. You do not understand how this works. We care about performance in the military, period. You do not know what you are talking about. Most of the people in this room do not know what they are talking about. We need lethality in the military, period.

All of the stuff you guys talk about, the men and women in uniform do not think about. They go play Call of Duty at night after

they learn their mission and execute that mission, period. They do not know what you are talking about. They do not know what you are voting on. They do not care about your sexual preference. They do not care what you look like, and they do not care what the person next to them look like, period.

I am a citizen of this country and I can dislike you and criticize you all I want here, but our men and women in uniform cannot. And so I speak on their behalf when I say lethality matters, merit-based selection and promotions matter, and your ideology does not matter one bit. And we need to identify principles which will preserve our union and preserve the unity of the United States military. If we do not, we will lose that union.

And it is my contest—whatever Truman did decades ago, you ask your average military service member when Truman was the President of the United States, they cannot even tell you. But my point is they are focused on what has happened since the George Floyd riots. There are things that have happened in the last 3 years in our military that we are up here to testify about, not the things that happened 60 years ago. We are great today because of what we have done for the last half century in the fighting of the cold war.

Mr. BIGGS. And Mr. Lohmeier, what has happened in the last 3 years that has caused lethality to deteriorate in the military?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. There has been an over-politicization of the military workplace and the forcing of trainings that are anti-American, that criticize our founders, that allege that White supremacy is a problem within the military ranks, which has never been proven. And all of that rhetoric that occurred once Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin took office led to a bunch of moaning and bitching and complaining behind closed doors of our service members.

And I heard it as a commander, and so I wrote a formal written IG complaint about it that was dismissed by senior leaders because they were afraid of the political and racial climate that we have created in this country, and so they were afraid to hold one another accountable for their politics, senior leaders. So, they are not held accountable for their political worldview, but young people will be held accountable.

I am living evidence and a living example of the fact that the diversity initiatives are discriminatory. I was kicked out for saying I would like to depoliticize the workplace, not for advocating for Republican candidates, not for criticizing Democrat candidates. I never publicly advocated for anyone politically, but I was forced out because of viewpoint discrimination. Diversity initiatives are discriminatory, and inclusion initiatives are exclusive of my viewpoint. And so, I am living evidence that the politicization in the military workplace in the past several years is discriminatory, and it discriminates specifically against conservatism and Christianity, period.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman, I want to submit for the record something called “Declaration of Military Accountability: An Open letter to the American People from Signatories of the Declaration of Military Accountability” into the record.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes. So entered.

Mr. BIGGS. And then I apologize. I actually had questions for Mr. Thibeaue and Mr. Seidule as well, but we have run out of time, and I do not think I am going to get that additional 2 1/2 minutes that the Ranking Member got, so I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Seidule, first of all thank you all for your service to our country. I really do appreciate it. I have been a Member of this Committee for about 22 years, and while I have not served in the military I have led most of them but done about 20 trips to Afghanistan, over 20 trips to Iraq, to try to understand, because I have not served. But I thought if I spent enough time on the ground that I might learn. I might understand what it is our service men and women are dealing with.

One of my last trips to Afghanistan, before the withdrawal, I visited a place called Camp Leatherneck, and had a chance to participate in a citizenship ceremony. And what they did was, they have a couple of programs where non-citizens of the United States can serve in the military, and it improves their chances—it does not guarantee, but it improves their chances of becoming citizens. It is somewhat of a progressive idea, I think, because here you are taking—at that particular ceremony there were over 100 men and women, of all colors, and faiths I am sure, but they all took the oath. They all had the American flag on their shoulder. They had been chasing the Taliban up and down that province, you know, in combat.

So, it just struck me, you know, when you think about the quote, you know, Jack Kennedy's quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." It seemed like this group, anyway, this group of young men and women in uniform, they wanted to be U.S. citizens for all the right reasons, all the right reasons. And I actually think that having spent time with a couple of those rifle platoons that experience—and some of them, they were in mixed units so, you know, there was not just all one group, but a lot of native-born American citizen soldiers serving right beside them—there seemed to be high levels of comradery in a really dangerous environment. So they were pretty tight, as far as I could see.

General Seidule, even though that is somewhat of a progressive idea, is that something that you think promotes strength in the military, or is that a progressive idea that you think might deteriorate in the long term, because they were non-citizens up to that point.

Gen. SEIDULE. Immigrants in our military has been one of our great strengths, one of our great superpowers. We spoke over 100 languages in World War I. We have had immigrants fight in every war we have ever had, and it is one of the things that we do better than any other army or military in the world. I hope that we can get more of them in because they serve their nation greatly and become great Americans.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Lohmeier.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Thank you. On its face I do not disagree with that. It does not necessarily mean that they will perform in any

given job they are put in. That is true for any American and that is true of anyone that joins in uniform. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes. Mr. Thibeaup?

Mr. THIBEAU. Mr. Lynch, I wholeheartedly accept these brave Americans who have served, you know, coming into the military as immigrants. I would make a distinction between some policies that are suggested bringing illegal immigrants into service. But they are good members of the military because they are good members of the military, not because of the color of their skin or because they are immigrants.

Mr. LYNCH. Right. I should have added, there is a requirement. I had talked to the officers in charge, and there is a requirement that they have sort of a clean bill of health, that they cannot, you know, join the military to escape justice or anything like that.

But that is all I have got, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back. Thank you.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you much. Mr. Sessions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. This hearing today is being conducted by the National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs to examine how progressive ideologies affect military readiness. There was no conclusion that was drawn. We are asking you. And I want to thank each of you for your service to our country. I find all three of you exceptionally, not only prepared and well-read, but able to defend your positions.

I, as a boy, was and am an Eagle Scout, and have stayed very active in scouting. We have a saying that says something like, "Leave your campsite better than the way you found it."

Each of you have served in the military, and our—and I am a conservative Republican from Texas; you can figure that out by my voice. But we are concerned about the things that we have heard today, including lethality, the number of people who come and go in the military, the reason why this Administration has taken the position it has, up to and including one of my nephews, who is an Army Ranger, who was not willing to accept the COVID shot because of his age and the medical feedback.

Can you please tell me, are we leaving our campsite better than the way we found it? Any of you.

Mr. THIBEAU. Mr. Sessions, what we know in the last 2 years is that every branch of the military except the Marine Corps has missed their recruiting goals by a lot, for the first time in the all-volunteer force since Vietnam.

There is more and more evidence that it is due to the insep of a political crisis, a politization of the military, and the confidence that that gives every American to join a military that is dedicated to American interests and not partisan objectives. And I think that is an indication that things are, in fact, getting worse. And maybe we still are the best military in the world, but let us not wait until we are not to change things.

Mr. SESSIONS. Well, that is right. That is that "leave your campsite better than you found it." Sir? Commander? General?

Gen. SEIDULE. Congressman, I am so proud to serve for 36 years in the Army. I would not have stayed if it had not been that way. I have served with armies throughout the world, and it is not even close how much better equipped, better led, better manned, with

better political leadership we are than any other army in the world.

So, I would tell you that over the last, my career, that the Army is in better shape now than it has ever been, and it is because of the people that serve and the leaders that are there.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, sir, but that is not the question. The question is are we leaving our campsite better for the future? If we are not meeting our goals of retention, of having people stay in, if we are having to pay extravagant amounts of money for people to talk them into staying. The question was not about your service. The question is your knowledge of the service, are we leaving our campsite better than the way we found it?

Gen. SEIDULE. Congressman, I would say that in 2022, the Army recruited 45,000. In 2023, it was 55,000. We still have people in the pipeline coming in. So, the taskforce of Army recruiting did a great job of fixing many of those problems, and it looks like it is on the upswing rather than the downswing.

Mr. SESSIONS. OK. Thank you. I did ask for your professional expertise and you gave me a solid answer. Commander?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Thank you, Congressman. I recently read that pilot bonuses in our Air Force are up to \$600,000.

Mr. SESSIONS. Me too. Me too.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. And that is more than double what it was when I was flying F-15s 10 years ago. And the question I have is—and I talk to pilots about this—why is it that they would choose, despite such an increase in the incentive bonus to leave, to go fly with the airlines, separate, either separate or go into retirement or separate early, without the retirement. And I have heard responses like, “Well, we heard the Air Force spokesperson say we would like to reduce the number of White pilots from 85 percent to 67.5 percent.” So my question is, is that not a quota?

Mr. SESSIONS. It would be. Thank you very much, gentlemen. Mr. Chairman, I would like to add to the record here, “Air Force Goes on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Hiring Spree, Top pays up to \$183,500.” I would like to enter that into the record.

Mr. GROTHMAN. So ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. And I appreciate all three of you for your service. May God be with you, and thank you for keeping us one nation, under God.

I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Ms. Mace.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses this morning for your service to our country and for being here and spending some time with us today.

Every time a colleague of mine on the other side of the aisle does not want to have an ideological discussion or a discussion of real policy that makes real differences in the lives of the men and women in our country, whether they are serving our Nation or otherwise, they just invoke the word “Trump.” It is just Trump, Trump, Trump. That is all they can talk about. And quite frankly, I find it tiring and nauseating, because we have a real opportunity here to make a difference in the lives of every American, and especially for those that are literally putting their lives on the line to serve our country.

And, you know, I am one of the only Republicans up here on the Hill who has talked about *Roe v. Wade*, who has talked about finding common ground, who has talked about moderating on abortion, and finding out where both sides can find agreement. And there is so much that we can find agreement on, but I have yet to find one Democrat who is willing to work with me on the issue of abortion and finding common ground.

And the minute you ask them what their limits are on abortion, they will not answer the question. They flee the room. They get the heck out of the way because they do not want to answer the question. Because the left often has absolutely no limits on abortion—that is a travesty here today too—should not really be the point of the conversation because, unfortunately, the policies of this Administration, you know, the results speak for themselves. Recruiting is down. Retention is down. Morale is down. Well, demonizing the military and our veterans is up.

I remember when I was graduating from the Citadel, a long time ago—it was 25 years ago—my own father’s concerns about the military. We did not have the word “woke” back then, but he saw what was changing. He spent 28 years in the United States Army. He is the most-decorated living graduate the Citadel has ever seen in its history. And I remember the conversations we would have and how much the military had changed, and in 25 years it is way off-base now, with some of the policies we are seeing, particularly with this Administration.

And so, you know, the United States military has long been held to the American public as the most respected and trusted institutions of our country, and rightfully so. It is revered, and the standing exists because they have remained above the fray of partisan politics. The politics has now gotten into our military, and we have seen the demonization of our active-duty military and our veterans.

And so, I find this conversation deeply disappointing because, as was mentioned earlier, I believe by Mr. Lohmeier, about lethality, and why qualifications actually matter. Because when you are in the trenches, when you are in war, it does not matter what you look like.

So, my first question is going to go to Mr. Lohmeier. Talking about lethality, you have been in the trenches. You have been in war. You have been in combat theater. Does the color of your skin matter when you are in the trenches, when you are in combat?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. The answer is no, it does not matter, and we have sometimes joked in veteran circles that the last thing that our active-duty troops currently wearing the uniform say when they are getting deployed downrange to the desert or to Eastern Europe is, “Geez, I wish I had another diversity, equity, and inclusion training before hitting the road.”

Ms. MACE. Does gender matter when you are in war, when you are in combat, when you are in battle?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I would say no again, but it also depends on strength, and it depends on your profession, and I have no problem saying that. That is why we have standards in place.

Ms. MACE. Does sexual orientation matter if you are wearing a uniform?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. I would say no, it does not incidentally matter, but if it becomes a matter of activist political orientation then it could influence the military workplace.

Ms. MACE. I do not think anyone believes having people from diverse backgrounds in the military is a bad thing. I have not heard any of that today. I think everybody in the country would welcome diversity, no matter what industry they are in.

Can you explain specifically how what we are seeing in terms of DEI program SIG that goes far beyond that? Mr. Lohmeier?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. You mentioned the issue that Trump's name is invoked as a talking point, and easy go-to talking point.

Ms. MACE. To not talk about the issue and policy.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Right. And I will use that to answer your question, Congresswoman. You know, I had a base commander who, in the lead-up to an election, threatened forfeiture of pay for all of the members of his base if he caught a whiff of Trump support in the lead-up to the election. In my view, that is court-martialable. It is illegal. It is a violation of the Hatch Act. And it was a direct, express outcome of his ideological world view. He was a friendly guy. He was loved and respected by a lot of people. But he created a climate of fear, and his top issues were—and by the way, Heritage Foundation and Congressman Waltz just recently did a report of the National Independent Panel of Military Service and Readiness, and I have got feedback right here from people in the uniform, active military members, trust in the military is declining for the overpoliticization in the military workplace, transgender policies, withdrawal from Afghanistan debacle, reduction in physical fitness standards to even the playing field for diversity's sake.

So, all of the things that we have heard today are not necessarily the issues of progressivism that are hurting the military. They are, in fact, what our military members are saying are the issues, for which they are losing their trust in their senior leaders. So, when they hear a Mark Milley say, "Well, I want to learn about White rage," you at least get half of the force shutting off and losing trust in their military leadership. Now, he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs when he said it. When the Secretary of Defense says things, or issues a policy memorandum saying that it was a Supreme Court decision that is hurting our recruiting and readiness, when they, themselves, have been speaking up for 2 years saying, no, no, no, that is not the reason we do not want to stay in the service, then there is a divide that takes place. And it is that divide that I think we have been invited here to talk about.

And so that is my answer to that question. I think that is at the heart of the matter is that ideology divides. It has always divided. And none of the panel members up here seem to have any issue with the idea of naturally occurring diversity, which has been a beautiful and lovely part, both of nature and of the blessing of the United States of America. We are naturally a diverse group of people, and it is because we have the freedom to think and speak clearly and share those views, and ideology also shuts that down too. And it is an enforced equality of thought, of expression. It is discriminatory.

Ms. MACE. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Representative LaTurner.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Since stepping into the Oval Office, President Biden and his Administration have pushed their political agenda on our men and women in uniform. This is completely unacceptable. When top defense officials allow politically driven priorities to affect military readiness, the DoD is failing at its job and making us vulnerable on a global stage. Our service members sacrifice so much to protect and defend our country. They deserve better than to be treated as a social engineering experiment by the left.

Over the past couple of years, concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion have pervaded our country's institutions, even causing presidents of what were previously this country's most esteemed universities to believe that they have the political cover to defend calls for genocide. Curriculums centered on critical race theory and DEI concepts teach students more about their differences than their similarities and shared values, which runs counter to the core ethos of our armed forces.

The Department of Defense's mission statement, and No. 1 objective, must always be to provide combat-credible military forces needed to deter war and protect the Nation's security.

The most pressing problem today for force readiness is the ongoing struggle with recruitment, and pushing partisan politics on our armed forces is one way to ensure we continue moving the wrong direction on this issue. We must ensure that our military leadership is more focused on the threat from our greatest adversaries than enforcing a politically correct, divisive ideology that is counterproductive to maintaining a cohesive military unit. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this Committee to hold the Administration accountable, particularly on issues that jeopardize our national security.

Mr. Thibeau, in 2021, a professor of political science at the U.S. Air Force Academy published an op-ed in *The Washington Post* defending the teaching of critical race theory and arguing that it is productive for members of the military to, quote, "understand a fuller version of American history." Why do you disagree with that sentiment, or what would you say in response to it?

Mr. THIBEAU. I do not know the specific case, Congressman, but my issue is when training in the military focuses on what someone believes or who they might be because of their assumed background based on the color of their skin, that engenders really complicated and divisive assumptions in a unit that needs to survive based on cohesion. And so if I receive a training that says, oh, you are a White man, which means you have blind spots on race or sex, that means a soldier or an airman joins a unit with the presumption of distrust already built into their DNA.

But I would say, you know, it should not be surprising that the Air Force Academy is teaching that when they decide their admissions classes based on race-based percentiles. It is not called a quota, but, in effect, those are quotas that are as harmful as any training the Air Force promotes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you. Mr. Lohmeier, along with your testimony you submitted dozens upon dozens of quotes from men and women who had retired from the military. Those quotes are critical

of the current woke culture of the military, and many former military service members cite DEI efforts and wokeism in the military as part of their motivation to get out.

Why do you believe that DEI policies have been a cause for reduced recruitment over the past couple of years?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Yes, the quotes that I submitted in Exhibit 1, for the record, there were approximately 1,000 unsolicited quotations and feedback from our service members that are in that document, and the professor at the Air Force Academy that you are referring to is Lynne Chandler Garcia, who essentially bragged about teaching critical race theory.

And this is my area of expertise, and the reason it is so divisive is because it was literally—this is not just figure of speech—literally created by Marxist ideologues with the specific purpose of dividing people into groups for the purpose of fomenting cultural revolution, period. Period. Full stop. I will back that up 100 percent all day. I studied it for years. I studied it at DoD strategy schools. I studied Marxist cultural revolutions around the world, and it looks and smells the same everywhere you go.

And so it was not surprising to me to see the same base commander who was threatening forfeiture of pay if he caught a whiff of Trump support that he said, “No one will stand in the way of the Black Lives Matter movement at my base.”

What is interesting and sad about it is that it was OK to show a support, ideologically, for the movement, but not to criticize the same movement without being accused of political partisanship. And this is how this goes. It is politically partisan if you disagree with the party line. It is not politically partisan if you tow the party line. That is why it is divisive.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you for your answer, and I want to thank all three of you for being here and for your service.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Fallon.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all the witnesses for taking your time.

I am a veteran myself, and I apologize, Air Force for 4 years. I found it interesting because when you live something directly, it was 30 years ago, and dare I say now that we are in 2024, Mr. Chairman, almost 35 years ago. And one of the first things they did, when we in-processed, as I was a young second lieutenant, 22 years old, was they told us about how the military works, and there is zero tolerance for isms. There will be sexism in the military. There will not be racism in the military. Now, of course, when you have an organization of, at the time, almost two million, you are going to have your outliers. But it was the extreme exception and absolutely not the rule.

And they told us that if you participate in any of these things you will be separated from the military because you are not someone that can function in a cohesive unit, in a branch of the service. And I absolutely loved that because contrary to so many people that foment division in this chamber, that is how my parents raised us. That is the majesty of living in the 20th and now 21st century in America. Racism is a diminishing phenomenon every day. Does it exist? Of course, but it is diminishing every day.

So, I found it interesting when I got this job in January 2021, that there was a focus in the new Administration on White extremism, political extremism, particularly White supremacy, that kind of movement, in the military.

So, I have—is it Mr. Sid-u-lee?

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes, sir. You are great.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Great name and a challenging one.

Gen. SEIDULE. It is challenging for everyone.

Mr. FALLON. It is a little scary. Do you believe that White extremism is an issue and problem, let us say a pervasive problem, in the military today?

Gen. SEIDULE. It has been several years since I have been, you know, I really do not know, Congressman.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Well, this Administration clearly did, because they had a standdown where the entire military, obviously in stages, stood down for, I think it was 4 hours of training on the dangers of White extremism. And I found that interesting because then—I just like to live in data in the real world, so I asked the different branches of the service, the commanding officers, the four-star generals, how many people in that last Fiscal Year were separated due to White extremist activity?

And in the United States Army, with, at the time, 1.1 million active, Reserve, and National Guardsmen, 1.1 million, that number was 9, 9. So not quite 1 in a million but damn near close. In the United States Marine Corps, reservists and active duty, I think it was 222,000 at the time, that number was 4, 4 out of almost a quarter of a million. And the Navy and Air Force were, begrudgingly, finally, came forward and said, “Yes, our numbers would be commensurate with those numbers,” so single digits. And then when you factor in the man hours lost when you stand down for 4 hours and talk about an issue that is not a pervasive issue, you are talking hundreds of millions of dollars to satisfy a political objective with the United States military.

And then, you know, we talk about diversity is our strength, and this and that. I think merits are a strength, and I think, as obviously an unabashed conservative, that success, talent, ability, and skill comes in all shapes, sizes, and shades. That is what I have seen in my experience. There are geniuses, and their pigmentation is completely immaterial to what is on their mind and their education and their drive, and their talent and ability. So, merit should be first, because I think that we would agree, we have a great panel here, Col. Lohmeier, would you agree that the Chinese military is a grave threat to not only this country but really freedom and liberty in the world?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Yes, I agree with that, both as a foreign adversary and also as an information facilitator domestically here in this country.

Mr. FALLON. And Mr. Thibeau?

Mr. THIBEAU. Yes, sir.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Seidule?

Gen. SEIDULE. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. So, we are all in agreement. I think most Members of Congress would agree. There are 435 in this chamber, prob-

ably get to about 433. There are always a couple of outliers, as we know.

But what I find interesting about that is, is the Chinese military diverse, ethnically? No, because diversity has nothing to do with military strength. It is about merit. And I think that in this country we are the most diverse major country in the world, and I think that is wonderful and beautiful. But we need to focus more on merit and the best, because we hear this so much here, these standards of well, we need diversity, equity, inclusion, and things of that nature, which again, merit, that will all sort itself out.

Because if anybody in this room needed lifesaving brain surgery tomorrow, you know what your criteria would be? The best. You would not give a rat's ass what nationality this person was, what ethnicity, what gender, what religion, what god they worship, none of it. Who is the best surgeon in the world to preserve my life so I can live it for my family, my kids, and my country.

I want to thank the witnesses again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this great topic, and I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Good point. Mr. Waltz.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Seidule—See-dule?

Gen. SEIDULE. Whatever you want, Congressman. I am good. Thank you.

Mr. WALTZ. See-jule?

Gen. SEIDULE. Sid-u-lee.

Mr. WALTZ. Sid-u-lee. All right. We will start with you. I think you would well know that I was just reviewing Joint Pub 3.0, Joint Operations, a Foundation of Joint Operations in the Military, and nowhere in there does it call for diversity of command. It does call for unity of command, and it talks a lot about unit morale and the need for unity within our military units.

You testified earlier that you have not seen Marxism, critical race theory, you do not know where it is in the military, or where it is at West Point. Is that an accurate characterization?

Gen. SEIDULE. I had not heard of it. When I was at West Point, teaching there for two decades, I had not heard of it until it became a national issue.

Mr. WALTZ. When did you leave West Point?

Gen. SEIDULE. I stopped teaching there in 2019.

Mr. WALTZ. OK. So you are unaware, then, that Critical Race Theory 101 is part of the West Point curriculum.

Gen. SEIDULE. Critical? I—

Mr. WALTZ. According to, and I would like to enter into the record—

Gen. SEIDULE [continuing]. I am not quite sure what—you are saying that there is a Department of Critical Race Theory?

Mr. WALTZ. No. It is part of the syllabus, excuse me.

Gen. SEIDULE. A part of the syllabus for what, Congressman?

Mr. WALTZ. For one of the classes at West Point.

Gen. SEIDULE. Well, no, I think that is absolutely true that for one class, for one elective, it certainly could be.

Mr. WALTZ. Do you agree with the lecture, “Understanding Your Whiteness and White Rage” taught by Dr. Carol Anderson of Emory University, that that should be taught at West Point?

Gen. SEIDULE. I am not familiar with that lecture.

Mr. WALTZ. Do—

Gen. SEIDULE. But the thing is that—

Mr. WALTZ. Essentially, the theme is that White people are enraged, not 100 years ago, not 40 years, which you are talking about, in the 1960s and 1970s, but today, White cadets, White people are enraged by Black advancement.

Gen. SEIDULE. Congressman, the great thing about education is you can get a variety of different perspectives.

Mr. WALTZ. Sure.

Gen. SEIDULE. It is not training, which is what some of my colleagues have talked about. I am talking about education. You want to hear the broadest representation of every viewpoint, to understand—

Mr. WALTZ. Do you understand—I know, but this is the very clever approach of the left, to conflate history with current-day training. So, would you agree that critical race theory is a foundation for DEI?

Gen. SEIDULE. No, I would not. I do not know that to be true. DEI, it goes back to equal opportunity, in the early part of the 1970s. It a part of equal opportunity. I would say—

Mr. WALTZ. What is the difference in equity and equality? Equal opportunity, which is—so right now the Director of National Intelligence, how infused this ideology has become across our national security apparatus, the Director of National Intelligence has an Office for Equal Opportunity, which, for the record, I fully agree with. I want every American—race, religion, socioeconomic background—to have an equal opportunity to serve.

They also have an Office of DEI, including equity. What is the difference in equity and equality?

Gen. SEIDULE. Well, I would say that when this started, as a historian, it started as Defense Race Relation Institute, and then became the Defense Equal Opportunity.

Mr. WALTZ. What is the difference in equity and equity, equal opportunity to serve, and equity, which is an equal outcome for all.

Gen. SEIDULE. I would again say that the equal opportunity, which at least at West Point, when I was there and started the DEI program—

Mr. WALTZ. I am all for equal opportunity.

Gen. SEIDULE [continuing]. But the equal opportunity program falls under the DEI at West Point.

Mr. WALTZ. What is equity?

Gen. SEIDULE. I do not know what—Congressman, if you are—

Mr. WALTZ. You are the expert today, the Democratic witness. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is part of—there is a DEI Office in the Pentagon, a Chief DEI Officer.

Gen. SEIDULE. There is DEI in many—

Mr. WALTZ. You do not know what equity—you cannot testify to what equity means? Well, I will tell you since you do not know.

Gen. SEIDULE. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. WALTZ. It is equal outcomes for all, which is a hallmark of Marxism. DEI is Marxist-based, as is critical race theory.

But let us progress, since, I mean, apparently the expert does not know what equity is in DEI. I have here, I would like to enter for

the record, a class composition with racial goals for West Point. You just testified, you are under oath, you were in the Admissions Office.

Gen. SEIDULE. I was not in the Admissions Office. I was on the Admissions Committee for 1 year, and I know that there were no quotas, is what I said, Congressman.

Mr. WALTZ. So, we are going to parse over quota and goals. This is from the superintendent, and here are the goals, and it has African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, women, with percentages. We have red here for when they miss those goals. That is—

Gen. SEIDULE. As I said, Congressman, there are no quotas—when I was on the Admissions Committee there were no quotas.

Mr. WALTZ. Let us also enter into the record—

Gen. SEIDULE. There was also, Congressman, the ability to have athletes on there. So, there are many other goals on there, as I am sure you have seen, on what are the others. And if you could go read all of those goals it would tell you how deep that is. And, in fact—

Mr. WALTZ. Here is the problem.

Gen. SEIDULE [continuing]. One of the largest number of people that are recruited at West Point are athletes, 25 percent.

Mr. WALTZ. Here is the problem. When you have any elite institution, when you say, and your directive is to advance one group based on the skin color, you have to take those slots from another group, based on their skin color.

Gen. SEIDULE. And Congressman—

Mr. WALTZ. This is zero sum.

Gen. SEIDULE [continuing]. But the largest of those groups is the athletes.

Mr. WALTZ. It is a zero sum. The athletes get broken down by their skin color, in this chart. In this chart.

Gen. SEIDULE. Twenty-five percent of those.

Mr. WALTZ. In this chart that you just said does not exist. But let us continue. This is my time. Here—just to go how system-wide, Mr. Chairman, here is a memorandum from the Secretary of the Air Force, with White, Black, Asian, American Indian. I mean, I think my wife, who is an Army veteran, who is Arab, she does not have a place, I guess, in this chart. My son, who is now multiracial, I do not know if he would have a—he probably looks White to most people—I do not know that he would have a place.

But here you have current percentages and a mandate to increase those percentages. You have to then take those slots, whether they are pilot slots or whatever, from someone else, based on ethnicity. This is signed by the now-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, C.Q. Brown, signed by the Secretary of the Air Force, with a mandate—I am sorry—

Mr. GROTHMAN. You are over your time.

Mr. WALTZ. Oh, I am sorry—with a mandate you are directed to develop—Mr. Chairman, would you mind yielding—

Chairman COMER. Can I yield him some of my time? I will yield him all of my time. I will yield him all of my time.

Mr. WALTZ. Mr. Chairman, if it is OK—

Mr. GROTHMAN. It is OK.

Mr. WALTZ. I just want to get this on the record because I think we have had some very misleading testimony today. With a mandate, you were directed to develop a DEI plan within 30 days and report back annually, based on percentages. This is illegal, it is wrong, and it is divisive.

Finally, I just want to ask, as a matter, here are some of the key proponents of CRT, which basically says to be less White is to be less racially oppressive. To be White, no member of society is innocent. What these authors say is that if you are White, you are incapable of not being racist. That, in and of itself, is racist, sir. And by the way, these were lecturers at the Air Force Academy. That is divisive, it is wrong, and it destructive.

And finally—Mr. Chairman, thank you for your indulgence—we have data that shows, as Mr. Lohmeier has testified to, 62 percent of active-duty military members are seeing a politicized military, 65 percent will recommend their child not join, and now we are in a recruiting crisis. This is why these hearings are so necessary.

And you are right, Mr. Seidule, in that Congress drives change. This Congress has banned critical race theory in the military in this defense bill. We have eliminated the hiring of divisive DEI bureaucrats. We are going to drive this change to get our military back to a meritocracy with equal opportunity for all. You cannot fight racism with more racism, and you have to have data.

Final question, Mr. Chairman, do you, General Seidule, have any data that shows that a more or less diverse submarine bomber brigade is more lethal or less lethal, the submarine group.

Gen. SEIDULE. Congressman, I know that a submarine's lethality comes with its nuclear weapons. We have the most—

Mr. WALTZ. No. I am talking about the crew. You have to have people to operate it.

Gen. SEIDULE. Right. And I would go back to my area of expertise, which is in the early 1970s, when we did not have that lethality then, and—

Mr. WALTZ. But today—

Gen. SEIDULE [continuing]. And the reason that we did not have that lethality then is because we did not have policies that allowed us to have that.

Mr. WALTZ. We are now 50 years beyond that.

Gen. SEIDULE. And the reason that we were so good, is we have had those policies.

Mr. WALTZ. Do you have any data that shows—

Gen. SEIDULE. Those policies have made us as successful as we are right now.

Mr. WALTZ [continuing]. Do you have any data that shows, by percentage, a more or less, let us say bomber crew, let us say brigade, whether it is 50 percent Black, 10 percent Black, 30 percent Jewish, any of these societal factors, data that drives readiness?

Gen. SEIDULE. I would say that the only way we can have an equal force that is ready and able is to recruit that force, and if we cannot recruit that force from the entire country and have leadership that reflects that, then we are not going to be a successful military. But we are a successful military, in part because some of these policies allow us to recruit and retain the greatest Americans in the country.

Mr. WALTZ. I will take that for the record that there is no actual data. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Thank you much. I guess we have a couple of minutes for Mr. Comer left.

Chairman COMER. I have 2 more minutes, if you want to go ahead.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Go ahead. Go ahead. You are the expert. Go ahead.

Mr. WALTZ. Let us go with, just for the record, with General Burt here and how politicization is infusing our military. This is General Burt from your service, Mr. Lohmeier, and I would like you to comment on this, who stated publicly, at a forum, that she would—she is compelled to consider different candidates who are perhaps less qualified if they disagree with state law. Can you talk about the implications of civilian oversight of the military, if we have a three-star general, active duty, in front of a large crowd, live-streamed, talking about sending less-qualified people to certain states because of their state laws? And should the military now be able to opine—for example, this is the Pandora's Box that is being opened, that if maybe I do not like the Second Amendment laws or the gun restriction laws in a certain location, that I should now be able to self-select with the military to go to a different place?

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. Thank you, Congressman. One of the points that General Seidule—

Gen. SEIDULE. Nailed it.

Lt. Col. LOHMEIER. [continuing] Made earlier was that he was unaware of the many hundreds of senior military leaders ever saying anything aught of Senator Tuberville's hold on confirmations. And I suppose, generally speaking, that is fair enough. But during that same time period is when General DeAnna Burt made the comments you are referring to. And it was overtly political, and I will tell you, from my own experience, while in the Space Force, is that the entire time I was there, this is one of the respected leaders in the Space Force, to whom people looked, trusted as a warfighter because she was talented as a warfighter, but the moment you make a statement like that you lose trust, confidence of the vast majority of people under your command.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Thanks much. Mr. Comer has waived his, or gave all his time to Mr. Waltz, so the time has come—but here we have—first got to get my official—in closing, I want to thank our witnesses for their testimony, and I yield to Ranking Member Garcia for his closing remarks.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to just end this hearing with some of the comments I made earlier, and just again share that I am dismayed and disappointed that we are choosing to spend our time this way. I do thank our witnesses, but I want to do a quick, brief summary of what we have already heard.

One, a Member chose to use his time to argue that members of right-wing militias should serve in our armed services. That is pretty outrageous. A witness, Mr. Lohmeier, called the slogan "Black Lives Matter" a monument to Marxism, which is also pretty outrageous. The same witness claimed that he speaks for all serv-

ice members, and I just want to note for the record, having talked to many service members before my time in Congress, and today, I can say with certainty that he does not speak for all service members, particularly on issues of diversity and inclusion.

We had a comparison of also that slogan to military bases, named after people who took up arms to destroy our Nation, to preserve slavery was discussed. Members decided to relitigate the Vietnam War, which was interesting. We heard anti-vax propaganda, which continues to cost lives in this country. We heard cherry-picked anecdotes from a right-wing ideologue who personally and baselessly attacked Members of this Committee, speaking to one of our witnesses. The idea that our work today upholds the national security is, in my opinion, a joke and crazy.

And General, I do want to thank you once again for your clear and insightful testimony.

Here are some of the facts. We need to harness the talents of every American, especially in a difficult recruiting environment. That means we need a climate that welcomes people of all backgrounds, that actively combats bigotry and extremism, and then makes all service members ensure that they are protected and supported.

I just want to say, finally, that the arguments being made by two of our witnesses and some of the Majority, as a reminder those arguments have already lost. We are in a diverse military today. Those are arguments of the past. No matter how many times you come forward, write a book, give testimony, or try to move us backward, you have failed. The Army is diverse, our military is diverse, and the United States will continue to be a place that welcomes diversity, inclusion, and that diversity is here to stay.

And with that I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. I would like to thank everyone for being here for today's Committee. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Perry for pointing out that our military did not lose the war in Vietnam, just a minor point. It was lost when Congress stopped giving aid to South Vietnam. But our military did a tremendous job.

To me, this is a very important Committee and a very important hearing, because our military has way too many people who are way too much focused on race. And when they talk about diversity they are not talking about who is musically inclined or who is tall or who came from North Dakota. They are talking about race.

The new head of the Joint Chiefs has said that their goal should be 42 percent White officers, which means, in other words, that if you are the most qualified person but you are a White guy, you are going to have a tough time, a tougher row to hoe.

DEI is a Marxist ideology, and the reason it is Marxist is they want to destroy America and they want to divide America. And one way to divide America is to have everybody not identify as, say, Mr. Lohmeier himself. They want them to identify on—I do not even know what your ethnic background is—Mr. Lohmeier, comma, Hispanic American, or Mr. Lohmeier, comma, Native American. And the Marxists realize that once we get that in America, where everybody thinks every election or every promotion is a battle be-

tween ethnic groups, we have destroyed America, and that is where we are going.

I wish I would have brought up earlier, like I said, the new head of the Joint Chiefs says a goal should be 42 percent White officers. In other words, he is outright saying that we are going to discriminate against you because you are a White guy. He is outright saying that the person who gets the promotion is not necessarily going to be the best person for the job. And, inevitably, it is going to create divisions within the military because it causes people to say, "I should be promoted because of my background."

Furthermore, this diversity thing, I suppose in some ways diversity is OK. But in other ways, I do not see what it has to do with anything. OK, if we have two people applying for the Air Force Academy, who both grew up in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, lived on the same block, both played on the football team, both played saxophone in the school band, but one of them has a Hispanic grandfather, well, all of a sudden in order to increase diversity that is the guy that has got to be promoted first, with the idea that if they have diverse backgrounds it would bring something different to the military because one guy happened to have a grandfather who was born in Mexico 100 years ago is preposterous. But that is the ideology that is being pushed today and will inevitably destroy the military and will inevitably destroy America.

So, I would like to thank you three folks for being here. I do not believe that forever—I sure hope Mr. Garcia is not right—forever we are in a position in which we define people by where their great-grandparents come from and believe that if my—this is not true—but if my grandfather was from Mexico, I do not speak Spanish, I have never been to Mexico in my life, but somehow, therefore, I have a unique viewpoint that I have to be promoted against other people in the military. That is ridiculous and it is scary, and it is absurd, and I wish more people would say it, and I wish they would call out people on what exactly they mean by diversity, how because I have an ancestor born in Thailand or something, it makes me a better sergeant. That is just absurd, but that is the ridiculous ideology that is taking over America.

OK. Now, with that and without objection, all Members have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses.

If there are no further business, without objection—I cannot believe that people think it matters where my ancestors come from when we promote somebody, but—OK, without objection, this Subcommittee stands adjourned.

Thank you all for being here.

[Whereupon, at 12:22 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

