

"DIVERSITY"

OVER

DIPLOMACY

HOW WOKENESS IS WEAKENING THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT



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# INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of State exists to represent the interests of our country abroad. Its primary tool is diplomacy, by which it builds international relationships to protect America's national security. Those relationships are crucial in today's interconnected world, which makes the State Department among the most valuable of our governmental institutions.

But what happens when our leaders subordinate an institution's duties and subvert its relationships to promote partisan goals and divisive social values? It becomes a problem, not part of the solution. That is where we find ourselves now, thanks to the "Great Awakening" of the federal government that began under President Barack Obama and has reached new heights under President Joe Biden.

The crusade to infuse Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) into the operations of the State Department has undermined the department's effectiveness. It has distracted from our duty to protect and promote our national interests. So long as it continues, our diplomats will lose ground to our adversaries.

That would be bad at any time, but it is especially dangerous today. America is in a global conflict with the Chinese Communist Party that will define the 21st century. If we are to succeed, the State Department must work diligently to maintain and improve our position on the world stage. Enforcing controversial partisan mandates on other nations will only undermine this critical objective.

# WOKENESS ABROAD

The State Department's stated mission is: "To protect and promote U.S. security, prosperity, and democratic values and shape an international environment in which all Americans can thrive." [1] Nowhere does it mention the advancement of partisan, divisive ideology. Yet that is increasingly how the department spends its time and resources:

- In 2022, the State Department funded "drag theater performances" in Ecuador to "enhance national security by informing and influencing foreign publics." [2]
- In January 2023, in the midst of an ongoing immigration crisis on our southern border, the State Department celebrated a joint declaration by the U.S., Mexico, and Canada on equity and racial justice. [3]
- The State Department funded a LGBT activist group supporting prostitution in Colombia in the name of national security. [4]
- In August 2022, the State Department funded a film festival featuring incest and pedophilia in Portugal. [5]
- The Biden-appointed U.S. ambassador to France has removed paintings of American Founding-era figures and replaced them with pictures of a transgender activist, a violent protestor, socialist leaders, and communists in the name of diversity. [6]
- In 2022, Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued a memo that could be construed to classify Sweden, Finland, and the United Kingdom as human rights abusers for their association with "conversion therapy" treatment for gender dysphoria. [7]
- The lead diplomat for Afghanistan, Karen Decker, has spent her time tweeting from Qatar about "Black Girl Magic," Beyoncé, and Lizzo instead of focusing on U.S. policy towards the country in the aftermath of President Biden's disastrous withdrawal. [8]
- In 2022, the State Department announced a grant to "promote social acceptance of LGBTQI+ persons" in Botswana, [9] a nation with increasingly deep ties to China.

- According to an anonymous State Department source, a department-funded Democratic political consultant met with Vietnamese officials in November 2022 to discuss strategies for changing “Confucian-based gender roles” in Vietnamese society, instead of discussing strategies to counter Beijing.
- In the spring of 2022, U.S. diplomats reprimanded the Solomon Islands for their stance on same-sex marriage at the same time that Beijing was solidifying a mutual security pact with the Solomon Islands.[10]
- In March 2023, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which works closely with the State Department, announced a grant to ensure disabled people in Tajikistan are included “in the development of climate change response and mitigation policies.”[11]

These examples are by no means exhaustive of the State Department’s woke activities. Such activities are top priority, as evidenced by the fact that the department released an interagency strategy to promote LGBT rights abroad well before the publication of the U.S. national security strategy.[12]

Meanwhile, our adversaries have exploited America’s woke lecturing and abdication of global leadership to build international relationships at our expense in virtually every region:

- China’s state-owned banks have distributed 117 loans totaling \$138 billion throughout South America. In return, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela “provide[d] the Chinese favorable access to each country’s natural resources” and “purchased Chinese defense equipment, cooperated in military exercises, and engaged in educational exchanges and training for military personnel.”[13]
- China has enlisted Africa to endorse its “community of common human destiny” global governance framework.[14] China has also distributed \$160 billion to African government and state-owned enterprises.[15] And China and Russia have conducted joint naval exercises with South Africa[16] and Egypt.
- China recently brokered a deal for resumed diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran.[17] Russia has been involved in promoting normalization between Saudi Arabia and Syria.[18]
- Shortly after the U.S. rebuked the Solomon Islands for their traditional views on marriage, the Solomon Islands signed a mutual security agreement with China. Their prime minister later declined to participate in a commemoration of the Battle of Guadalcanal and temporarily barred American naval vessels from docking at his nation’s ports.[19]

# **WEAKNESS AT HOME**

## ***DISTRACTING FROM THREATS***

Within the U.S., wokeness has distracted State Department leaders from their duty to protect and promote America's national security. According to a 2019 Government Accountability Office report, the top emerging threat is the Chinese Communist Party, not the lack of diversity in U.S. government staff.[20] In fact, diversity has been increasing in the State Department since 2002.[21]

So why did the Biden Administration create internal Offices of Diversity and Inclusion at both the State Department and USAID? Why did State and USAID request \$83.3 million from Congress for their FY2024 budget,[22] a full 26.9 percent increase from their 2023 budget[23] request for diversity recruiting initiatives? Surely such resources would be better spent countering Beijing, yet to date there has been no institution-wide messaging in the State Department on China.

The department's new Equity Council is particularly problematic. This mysterious body is designed to "infuse" DEIA into State's "foreign affairs mission and diplomatic engagements," but it has no clear authority or congressional oversight, and there is seemingly zero consideration as to how its mandates could affect international relations.

According to anonymous State Department sources, State has published thousands of internal messages and notices during the past decade about diversity and inclusion. Over the same time period, State has released only a handful of messages and notices defining or promoting departmental policy on America's primary security objective: countering China.

## ***DEMANDING COMPLIANCE***

Furthermore, the State Department now judges its employees by their loyalty to woke ideology. According to an anonymous source, State's internal website declares that leadership will "reward good behavior that advances DEIA core values" with more pay and better assignments. In fact, the department will no longer promote employees who do not advance DEIA "in words and actions." [24]



This is a stark departure from judgment by Merit System Principles such as integrity, conduct, and competence, the official standard for diplomats as codified in law 5 USC §2301.[25] More than that, it is an unjust imposition of partisan values on American citizens who signed up to serve their country, not the progressive movement.

## ***DIPLOMACY DONE RIGHT***

Under the Biden Administration, the State Department (and USAID) has lost its way. Fortunately, we have all the tools we need to get back on track. State should begin by returning to its stated goals and mission: to promote national security while advancing prosperity and democratic values.

This report highlights what appears to be the widespread abandonment of the basics of foreign engagement. According to the State Department: “[D]iplomats need to understand how their counterparts think and express their unique and differing beliefs, needs, fears, and intentions. To be successful, diplomats must listen carefully to what their counterparts say and find points of agreement that may overcome those disagreements.”[26]

Coupling U.S. grants with diversity acceptance mandates, labeling Western democracies as human rights abusers, criticizing staunch allies for traditional moral values—even if promoting wokeness were part of the State Department’s mission, these didactic and alienating methods would be counterproductive. That DEIA is merely an ideological infusion of the Obama and Biden Administrations makes them even more so.

# CONCLUSION

America's diplomats pride themselves on representing U.S. national interests regardless of party or president. Unfortunately, it now appears our leaders want to undermine public servants' good intentions and turn them into a blunt tool of the progressive agenda.

Until the State Department reprioritizes national security and recommits itself to its stated mission—to protect and promote U.S. security, prosperity, and democratic values—our diplomats will continue to lose focus, cohesion, and morale. And our adversaries will continue to overtake us on the world stage.



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