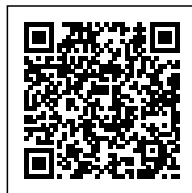




## OPINION: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR - BEN SHAPIRO

Posted on January 16, 2025 by Ben Shapiro



This week, President-elect Donald Trump's nominees began their Senate confirmation hearings. After four years of the administrative malaise of the Biden administration, the nominees proved to be a breath of fresh air. They completely reject the failed philosophies of the Biden years -- and the contrast is absolutely stunning.

Secretary of Defense nominee Pete Hegseth explained that it was time to "bring the warrior culture back to the Department of Defense." His laser focus would be on "warfighting, lethality, meritocracy, standards and readiness." To do that, Hegseth pledged to eviscerate so-called diversity, equity and inclusion standards, explaining, "The strength of our military is our unity -- our shared purpose -- not our differences."

For that absolutely anodyne perspective, Democrats raked Hegseth over the coals. Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., angrily intoned, "Our military is more diverse than it has ever been, but more importantly, it is more lethal than it has ever been. This is not a coincidence." Of course, diversity has literally nothing to do with lethality; the notion that an army formed from members of different ethnicities but without common purpose would somehow overcome an army with unified purpose but without racial diversity is absolutely asinine. But such nostrums have governed our military policy for decades. That's how we end up with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley disclaiming on the evils of "white rage."

Reed went on to criticize Hegseth for his negative appraisal of the restrictive rules of engagement often promulgated by the Defense Department. "As someone who's led men in combat directly and had to make very difficult decisions, I thought very deeply about the balance between legality and lethality, ensuring that the men and women on the front lines have the opportunity to destroy with and close the enemy and that lawyers aren't the ones getting in the way," Hegseth replied. Hegseth understands that all too often, the rules of war are turned against the humane parties to any conflict while those who abuse those rules are treated to their benefits.

Meanwhile, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., was having a meltdown of her own. Enraged at past Hegseth comments suggesting his opposition to women serving in frontline positions, she ranted, "You said in your statement you don't want politics in the DOD. Everything you've said in these public statements is politics. 'I don't want women, I don't want moms.' What's wrong with a mom, by the way? Once you have babies, you therefore are no longer able to be lethal?" Of course, as Hegseth made clear, what he was saying was that **any** factor that stands in the way of military efficacy ought to be put aside. But for the left, the purpose of the military is to promote social policy rather than to win wars.

Hegseth will be approved this week. And he should be. For too long, the American military has been run by generals focused on winning

the internal political warfare within Defense rather than winning actual wars. For too long, members of the American military have served at the whim of those who are willing to risk their blood to preserve utopian fantasies about the antiseptic possibilities of warfighting.

That era is over.

If only it had ended long ago.

