

Eagle Forum Report

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Restoring Sanity

A LEAN AND MEAN FIGHTING MACHINE

by Wilson Beaver, Senior Policy Advisor, Allison Center for National Security, and Anna Gustafson of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation.

The Department of Defense has recently faced accusations of overspending, underspending, and even simple misspending — criticisms which are all well founded.

The Pentagon must break free from outdated bureaucracy and inefficient spending. DoD needs to refocus and reinvest existing funds to build a more lethal fighting force.

So far, Elon Musk's DOGE has swept through government agencies like USAID, brushing off cobwebs and uncovering skeletons as it goes. Now, DOGE is set to enter a much bigger agency whose shortfalls demand reform.

The DoD consistently mismanages its budget, a fact that's led it to fail *all* of its last seven audits.

To address these issues, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth recently announced that he would work with DOGE to conduct a DoD-wide budget review. Already, this initiative has revealed \$80 million in wasteful spending, including \$1.9 million in "DEI transformation and training" and \$3.5 million in "Defense HR Support for DEI." Hegseth recently announced he'd be implementing a DoD budget "cut" of 8%, or about \$50 billion.

While the Pentagon is notoriously resistant to change, additional

pressure from DOGE and the administration could finally force the reforms needed to modernize the American military, refocus on warfighting capabilities, and rid the Pentagon of absurd budget line items.

DOGE's mission isn't just to slash budgets; it's also to restore efficiency. Specifically, DOGE's role is to ensure the federal government makes the most effective use possible of American taxpayer dollars.

This shift is essential at a time when our arsenal is severely depleted and outdated and we lack the ships and planes to deter China from launching an attack in the Indo-Pacific. To fix this, Secretary Hegseth should prioritize reinvesting funding cuts into procurement and, specifically, into the construction of new ships, planes, and munitions.

Hegseth should also divert dollars from personnel — a category that accounts for almost a quarter of the DoD's budget.

Already, he and Musk have announced plans to reduce the civilian workforce by between 5% to 8%, a cut that will save the DoD between \$9 and \$14.5 billion. So far, he's implemented this plan via a hiring freeze and the firing of probational employees and recent hires.

Many have sought to villainize the Pentagon's budget purge. Yet those in national security should recognize the need to cut defense budget waste, especially given recent developments on the international stage.

China continues to rapidly modernize its military to challenge U.S. dominance, while Russia persists in its aggression in Eastern Europe. North Korea still pursues its ever-growing nuclear ambitions (and strengthens its support for Russia), while Iran maintains its destabilizing influence in the Middle East.

These various actors all share one common feature: a vicious antipathy toward the United States.

The burden falls on the Pentagon and the DoD to protect the American people. DOGE represents a historic opportunity for the DoD to further this mission by rethinking how it organizes, supports, and employs its people. The goal isn't to cut corners — it's to reinvest in the capacity and capability of America's warfighting force.

America cannot afford inefficiency. The Pentagon must embrace DOGE's mission to break free from outdated bureaucracy and inefficient spending. Only then will the DoD be able to enhance American warfighting capability and ensure our security and prosperity.

This piece originally appeared in RealClear Defense. 

DEI MUST DIE

by Victor Davis Hanson, the Martin & Illie Anderson Senior Fellow in Residence in Classics and Military History at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, a professor of Classics Emeritus at California State University, Fresno, and a nationally syndicated columnist for Tribune Media Services.

What are the problems with DEI that have not just lost its support but put fear into the public that, like the Russian commissar system of old, it has the potential to undermine the very sinews of a sophisticated, complex society?

1. DEI is an ideology or a protocol that supersedes disinterested evaluation. In that regard, ironically, it is akin to the era of Jim Crow, when talented individuals were irrationally barred from consideration due to their mere skin color. Like any system that prioritizes identity over merit — whether Marist-Leninist credentials in the old Soviet Union or tribal bias in the contemporary Middle East — a complex society that embraces tribalism inevitably begins to become dysfunctional.
2. DEI does not end at hiring. Rather, once a candidate senses he is employed on the basis of his race, sex, or sexual orientation, then it is natural he must assume such preferences are tenured throughout his career. Thus, he will always be judged by the same criterion that led to his hiring. In other words, DEI is a lifetime contractual agreement, an insurance policy of sorts once DEI credentials are established as preeminent over all others.
3. The advocates of DEI rarely confess that meritocratic criteria have been superseded by considerations of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Instead, to the degree that they

claim such criteria are not at odds with meritocracy, they argue that the methods of assessing talent and performance are themselves flawed. Tests then are unsound and systemically biased and therefore largely irrelevant. Few DEI advocates make the argument that diversity is so important that it justifies lowering the traditional standards of competence.

4. Once DEI tribal protocols are established, they are calcified and unchanged. That is when supposed DEI demographics are overrepresented in particular fields such as the postal service or professional sports, then such “disproportionality” is justified on “reparatory” grounds or ironically on merit. If other non-DEI groups, by DEI’s own standards, are deprived of “equity” and “inclusion” or “underrepresented,” it is irrelevant. DEI is, again, a lifetime concession, regardless of changes in status, income, or privilege.
5. DEI is also ossified in the sense that it makes no allowance for class. Asian Americans, when convenient, can be counted as DEI hires even though, in terms of per capita income, most Asian groups do better than so-called whites. Under DEI, the children of elites like Barack Obama or Hakim Jeffries will always be in need of reparatory consideration but not so the children of those in East Palestine, Ohio.
6. Because DEI is an ideology, a faith-based creed, it does not rely on logic and is thus exempt from charges of irrationality, inconsistency, and hypocrisy. The belief system feels no obligation to defend itself from rational arguments. For example, are not racially separate graduations or safe spaces contrary to the corpus

of civil rights legislation of the 1960s? There is no such thing as DEI irony: the system contrived to supposedly remedy the de jure racism of some 60-70 years ago itself hinges on de jure racial fixations as the remedy — now, tomorrow, forever.

7. As in all monolithic dogmas such as Sovietism or Maoism, skeptics, critics, and apostates cannot be tolerated. So, in the case of DEI, logical criticism is preemptively aborted by boilerplate charges of racism, sexism, and homophobia. And the mere accusation is synonymous with conviction, thereby establishing DEI deterrence, under which no one dares to risk cancellation, de-platforming, ostracism, or career suicide by questioning the faith.
8. DEI is also incoherent. It is essentially a reversion to tribalism in which solidarity is predicated on shared race, sex, or sexual orientation, not through individual background, particular economic status, or one’s unique character. No DEI czar knows why in the pre-Obama era, East Asians did not qualify for DEI status, though they seem to now, or when and how the transgendered were suddenly not statistically still traditionally .01 percent of the population but, in some campus surveys, magically became 10-20 percent of polled undergraduates. No one understands what percentage of one’s DNA qualifies for DEI status, only that any system of the past that fixated on ascertaining racial essentialism, such as the one-drop rule of the old South or the multiplicity of racial categories in the former South Africa, or the yellow-star evil of the Third Reich, largely

(Continued on page 3)

imploded, in part by the weight of its own absurd amorality.

9. DEI never explains the exact individual bereavement that justifies preferentiality. All claims are instead collective. And they are encased in the amber of slavery, Jim Crow, or homophobia or sexism of decades past. Social progress does not exist; the malady is eternal. The candidate for DEI consideration never must ascertain how, when, or where he was subject to serious discrimination or bias. And that may explain all

the needed prefix adjectives that have sprouted up to prove these -isms and -ologies exist when they otherwise cannot be detected, such as “systemic,” “implicit,” “insidious,” or “structural” racism rather than just “racism.”

10. DEI never envisions its demise or what follows from it, much less whether there are superior ways to achieve equality of opportunity rather than mandated results. The beneficiaries of DEI seldom ponder its efficacy, much less whether resources would be

better allotted to K-12 education during the critical years of development. And they certainly show little concern about those often poorer and more underprivileged who lack the prescribed race, gender, or orientation for special DEI considerations.

In sum, because of these inconsistencies, Donald Trump may well be able to end DEI with a wave of an executive order — simply because its foundations were always built of sand and thus any bold push would knock over the entire shaky edifice. 

APOCALYPSE NOT YET

by Mark J. Perry, is a former professor of economics and finance in the School of Management at University of Michigan–Flint, and scholar at The American Enterprise Institute.

On the 55th anniversary of Earth Day, it is a good time to ask the question: How accurate were the predictions made around the time of the first Earth Day in 1970? The answer: “The prophets of doom were not simply wrong, but spectacularly wrong,” according to Ronald Bailey. Here are 18 examples of predictions when the “green holy day” (aka Earth Day) started:

1. Harvard biologist George Wald estimated that “civilization will end within 15 or 30 years unless immediate action is taken against problems facing mankind.”
2. “We are in an environmental crisis which threatens the survival of this nation, and of the world as a suitable place of human habitation,” wrote Washington University biologist Barry Commoner in the Earth Day issue of the scholarly journal *Environment*.
3. The day after the first Earth Day, the *New York Times* editorial page warned, “Man must stop pollution and conserve his resources, not merely to enhance existence but to

save the race from intolerable deterioration and possible extinction.”

4. “Population will inevitably and completely outstrip whatever small increases in food supplies we make,” Paul Ehrlich confidently declared in the April 1970 issue of *Mademoiselle*. “The death rate will increase until at least 100-200 million people per year will be starving to death during the next ten years.”
5. “Most of the people who are going to die in the greatest cataclysm in the history of man have already been born,” wrote Paul Ehrlich in a 1969 essay titled “Eco-Catastrophe! “By...[1975] some experts feel that food shortages will have escalated the present level of world hunger and starvation into famines of unbelievable proportions. Other experts, more optimistic, think the ultimate food-population collision will not occur until the decade of the 1980s.”
6. Ehrlich sketched out his most alarmist scenario for the 1970 Earth Day issue of *The Progress-*

sive, assuring readers that between 1980 and 1989, some 4 billion people, including 65 million Americans, would perish in the “Great Die-Off.”

7. “It is already too late to avoid mass starvation,” declared Denis Hayes, the chief organizer for Earth Day, in the Spring 1970 issue of *The Living Wilderness*.
8. Peter Gunter, a North Texas State University professor, wrote in 1970, “Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in India; these will spread by 1990 to include all of India, Pakistan, China and the Near East, Africa. By the year 2000, or conceivably sooner, South and Central America will exist under famine conditions....By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, will be in famine.”
9. In January 1970, *Life* reported, “Scientists have solid experimental and theoretical evidence to support...the following predictions: In a decade, urban dwell-

(Continued on page 4)

ers will have to wear gas masks to survive air pollution...by 1985 air pollution will have reduced the amount of sunlight reaching earth by one half...."

10. Ecologist Kenneth Watt told *Time* that, "At the present rate of nitrogen buildup, it's only a matter of time before light will be filtered out of the atmosphere and none of our land will be usable."
11. Barry Commoner predicted that decaying organic pollutants would use up all of the oxygen in America's rivers, causing freshwater fish to suffocate.
12. Paul Ehrlich chimed in, predicting in 1970 that "air pollution... is certainly going to take hundreds of thousands of lives in the next few years alone." Ehrlich sketched a scenario in which 200,000 Americans would die in 1973 during "smog disasters" in New York and Los Angeles.
13. Paul Ehrlich warned in the May 1970 issue of *Audubon* that DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons "may have substantially reduced the life expectancy of people born since 1945." Ehrlich warned that Americans born since 1946 had a life expectancy of only 49 years, and he predicted that, if current patterns continued, this expectancy would lower to 42 years by 1980.
14. Ecologist Kenneth Watt declared, "By the year 2000, if present trends continue, we will be using up crude oil at such a rate...that there won't be any more crude oil. You'll drive up to the pump and say, 'Fill 'er up, buddy,' and he'll say, 'I am very sorry, there isn't any.'"
15. Harrison Brown, a scientist at the National Academy of Sciences, published a chart in *Scientific American* that looked at metal reserves and estimated the humanity would totally run out of copper shortly af-

ter 2000. Lead, zinc, tin, gold, and silver would be gone before 1990.

16. Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-WI) wrote in *Look*, "Dr. S. Dillon Ripley, secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, believes that in 25 years, somewhere between 75 and 80 percent of all the species of living animals will be extinct."
17. In 1975, Paul Ehrlich predicted that "since more than nine-tenths of the original tropical rainforests will be removed in most areas within the next 30 years or so, it is expected that half of the organisms in these areas will vanish with it."
18. Kenneth Watt warned about a pending Ice Age in a speech. "The world has been chilling sharply for about twenty years," he declared. "If present trends continue, the world will be about four degrees colder for the global mean temperature in 1990, but eleven degrees colder in the year 2000. This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Keep those spectacularly wrong predictions from the first Earth Day 1970 in mind when reading the current claims from the Earth Day website:

Global sea levels are rising at an alarmingly fast rate — 6.7 inches in the last century alone and going higher. Surface temperatures are setting new heat records about each year. The ice sheets continue to decline, glaciers are in retreat globally, and our oceans are more acidic than ever.

The majority of scientists are in agreement that human contributions to the greenhouse effect are the root cause. Essentially, gases in the atmosphere — such as methane and CO₂ — trap heat and block it from escaping our planet.

So what happens next? More droughts and heat waves, which can have devastating effects on the poorest countries and communities. Hurricanes will intensify and occur more

frequently. Sea levels could rise up to four feet by 2100 — and that's a conservative estimate among experts.

An Inconvenient Truth

There has been a "decarbonization" of the United States over the last decade or so, even as CO₂ emissions from energy consumption have been rising throughout most of the rest of the world. Energy-related carbon emissions in the U.S. have been falling since the 2007 peak, and were at their lowest level last year.

What's more, the environmentalists and the "Earth Day" movement had very little to do with this amazing "greening" of America. Rather, it's mostly because of hydraulic fracturing and the increasing substitution of natural gas for coal as a fuel source for electric power.

Finally, Ronald Bailey asked in 2000: What will Earth look like in 2030? Bailey predicted a much cleaner, and much richer future world, with less hunger and malnutrition, less poverty, and longer life expectancy, and with lower mineral and metal prices. His final prediction about Earth Day 2030: "There will be a disproportionately influential group of doomsters predicting that the future — and the present — never looked so bleak."

In other words, the hype, hysteria and spectacularly wrong apocalyptic predictions will continue, promoted by the virtue signaling "environmental grievance hustlers."

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