

Rt Hon G Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Defence
BY EMAIL: xxxxx@xxxxx

10th February 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

As retired senior officers of the Crown with experience of command on operations, we feel compelled to write to you with a sense of sadness, incredulity and anger having viewed astonishing evidence of the depth and pervasiveness of the racist and intolerant "Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity" ideology being pushed within HM Armed Forces.

We see these facts, as so they are, as the perpetration of monumental self-harming and, as such, a real and present threat to national security that will give aid and comfort to the King's enemies. The sheer scale of what is reported is scarcely believable, and it cannot be ameliorated by small adjustments. It requires root and branch removal and we call upon you to order this, in pursuit of your primary duties to provide for the sure defence of our islands and citizens.

Nothing could be better calculated to destroy the *esprit de corps* of our armed forces than this poisonous farrago of nonsense or to deter from serving the Crown precisely the type of people most motivated and apt to our high calling. Ours is a tolerant country and this obsessive racialising of everything is both disgusting and reprehensible.

As you spelled out in your Lancaster House speech, correctly in our view, we live in 'pre-war' times; and Britain faces an ominous and darkening international scene, with Armed Forces that are underequipped, undermanned and underfunded, as we were back in the 1930's.

Among the lunacy of pushing woke ideas around the use of 'gender neutral' pronouns, or allowing male soldiers to wear make-up or flowing locks on parades to accentuate their feminine side, we pick out the wickedness of a policy to dilute security vetting in order to boost representation of ethnic minorities. With Islamism and other extremism rampant, this is nothing short of dangerous madness.

The cry for 'diversity' has been utterly misunderstood. Within a military culture, what is to be sought above everything else is the delivery of 'Fighting Power' in order to defeat the King's enemies, together with the greatest uniformity of excellence and diversity of opinion. Nothing else matters. The Memorial Gates on Constitution Hill are an object lesson of the unforced unity in all their diversity of Imperial and Commonwealth Armies in defence of freedom.

To remove Christianity from Acts of Remembrance is also a particular insult to our ancestors who fought and died to lead the world in ending slavery and twice in the last century to save our islands from conquest by extreme regimes. No-one should need to be reminded that this is a welcoming, inclusive and basically Christian country. Our civic culture on 11th November is sacred, Christian, tolerant and inclusive on our terms.

The Russians, Iranians and Chinese will be observing our descent into self-hatred and obsessing over diversity and inclusion with glee. These intolerable policies are forcing the British Armed Forces into moral disarmament and it cannot stand.

We call on you as Secretary of State for Defence immediately to cleanse our military culture of these poisonous ideas and to order a complete reset back to our core values of patriotism and unity that for generations made our armed forces the envy of the world. To preserve and deepen military culture, discipline and efficiency, the Ministry of Defence should be exempted from the Public Sector Equality Duty as specified in the Equality Act 2010. We are not civil servants but fighting forces.

Yours. sincerely,

Major General Julian Thompson CB OBE
Lieutenant General Sir Henry Beverly KCB OBE
Brigadier David Chaundler OBE
Major General Tim Cross CBE
Lieutenant General Sir James Dutton KCB CBE
Major General Malcolm Hunt OBE
Colonel Richard Kemp CBE
Rear Admiral Roger Lane-Nott CB
Lieutenant General Sir Hew Pike KCB DSO MBE
Lieutenant General Jonathon Riley DSO MC
Colonel Ewen Southby-Tailyour OBE
Major General Nick Vaux CB DSO