



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 7, 2021

White House Making Diversity, Not Competence, Top Priority in Physical Sciences

China already produces 10 times as many scientists as the United States does despite having just about four times our population. Of course, quantity doesn't speak to quality. But our woke federal overlords want to degrade the latter, too, as the White House is now waging a war on merit in the physical sciences.

As Manhattan Institute fellow Heather Mac Donald [warns](#) in her new essay "Diversity Over Discovery," the Biden administration's

candidate to head the Department of Energy's Office of Science, the largest funder of the physical sciences in the U.S., is a soil geologist at the University of California, Merced. She has no background in physics, the science of energy, or the energy sector. She has never held a position as a scientific administrator. The typical head of DOE's Office of Science in the past has had managerial authority in the nation's major physics labs and has been a physicist himself, *Science* [reports](#). The new nominee's only managerial experience consists of serving since 2020 as an interim associate dean of UC Merced's graduate division.



designer491/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The woman does have different qualifications, though: "Asmeret Asefaw Berhe is ... a black female who has won 'accolades for her work to promote diversity in science,' as Science puts it," Mac Donald explains. "Berhe would be the first black woman to head the \$7 billion [DOE] office, and that is reason enough, according to the diversity mantra, why she should oversee X-ray synchrotrons, the development of nuclear weapons, and ongoing research on nuclear fusion."

Yet her "nomination requires Senate confirmation," Mac Donald continues; "if Berhe will not commit to hiring and grantmaking on the basis of scientific expertise alone, irrespective of race and sex, senators should vote her appointment down."

Berhe has yet an additional "qualification," however: Aside from the fact that most Americans would



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 7, 2021

have trouble pronouncing her name, she's an immigrant, having been born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea, in North Africa. She didn't come to the United States until after college.

In other words, Berhe's Senate confirmation is a foregone conclusion. Far be it from our esteemed senators, after all, to risk being branded "racist" by voting down a woman who checks off so many identity-politics boxes.

This diversity-over-quality mentality in science is nothing new, however. Back in the 1990s, the Bill Clinton administration [wanted to apply](#) Title IX "proportionality" mandates to college STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs because "not enough women" enter those disciplines.

Of course, we already know what happens when merit is subordinated to ideology because there's historical record of such, and it's not pretty. As commentator and ex-Ivy League academic Thomas Lifson [reminds us](#), taking a trip down Bad Memory Lane:

More and more, the present-day United States is starting to resemble China during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the decade or so between 1966 and 1976. China's universities closed down as Red Guards — radical youths acting as mobs like BLM and Antifa — persecuted intellectuals, those with "bad class origins" (the Chinese equivalent of white supremacists as an object of resentment and vilification). Anyone who stood in the way of them implementing Mao's vision of a new order for China, one totally divorced from the corrupt past, with its "feudal" reliance on Confucianism, had to be swept away.

The results were disastrous, with famine, economic collapse, and the loss of a priceless heritage with libraries ransacked, temples burned. At the time, the debate was cast as "Red versus Expert," meaning that those who were fully "red" and devoted to implementing Mao's thought were to be favored over those who merely mastered the jobs in which they were supposed to be toiling. It is a perfect analogue to prioritizing diversity over merit, especially so when the "bad" class background of one's parents and family, something over which no one has any say, became a determinant of one's redness.

Another good example is the Finn-Soviet conflict called the "Winter War" in 1939-40. The USSR had trouble subduing small Finland not just because the Finns were marvelous soldiers, but because Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin had replaced competent Red Army officers with loyal Marxist apparatchiks. Dark ideology blinds with its darkness.

Yet while the USSR is gone and contemporary China is hard-nosed and far more meritocratic, our toxic ideologues' blindness is tainting everything. Mac Donald provides another troubling example:

The Biden administration's war on merit is being waged at an unprecedented rate. The White House is not submitting its judicial nominees to the American Bar Association for evaluation because the ABA may not be sufficiently attuned to the benefits of judicial "diversity," the administration has explained. The ABA has been on the diversity bandwagon for years, however, and has become a thoroughly woke institution. If the Biden team thinks that its "diverse" judicial nominees could not even pass ABA muster, then it must anticipate bending traditional notions of legal competence beyond all recognition. (Republican presidents since George W. Bush have refrained from seeking ABA evaluations in light of the group's regularly demonstrated bias against originalist judges.)



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 7, 2021

This is wholly unsurprising. How else could you slip illegal diversity schemes — and some are illegal — that amount to discrimination rebranded as “equity” past the judiciary without further “diversifying” the judiciary? (Hey, anti-constitutional thought *is* a type of “diversity.”)

Also not surprising, however, is this fanatical devotion to subordinating merit to ideology — believers always, after all, make their “religious” dogmas preeminent.

This isn’t to impugn religion. Rather, the point is that aside from the other motivations governing these diversity schemes, there’s the fact that people will tend to believe in something, something that gives their lives meaning. This becomes, essentially, their “religion.”

If it’s not true religion, it will be a false one. And once the emotional attachments to these false beliefs become strong enough, the ideologue will be immune to reason and will, worshipping at his altar, bring the ship he helms to destruction before abandoning his god.

Unfortunately, the ship in question now is the U.S.S. America. So what’s for sure is that, somewhere, a Chinese imperialist is laughing.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

Subscribe