

POLITICS

Pentagon's intelligence arm pausing MLK, Holocaust Remembrance and other observations

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The Pentagon's intelligence arm has issued a memo pausing any activities related to Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Juneteenth, Black History Month, LGBTQ+ Pride Month and Holocaust Remembrance Day, among other "special observances," according to a defense official who confirmed the authenticity of the memo.

The memo listed 11 such observances that employees are no longer supposed to recognize with office activities or events.

The move by the Defense Intelligence Agency is meant to comply with President Trump's executive actions to end federal programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion in the military.

The contents of the memo were first posted on X by independent journalist Ken Klippenstein.

A spokesperson for the Defense Intelligence Agency did not confirm the memo but said in a statement, "The Defense Intelligence Agency is working with the Department of Defense to fully implement all executive orders and administration guidance in a timely manner. As we receive additional guidance, we will continue to update our internal guidance."

Mr. Trump signed an executive order on Inauguration Day calling for the "termination" of all "discriminatory programs, including illegal DEI and diversity, equity, including and accessibility (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the federal government." A week later, on Monday, he signed another executive order specifically targeting DEI employees and activities in the military.

Mr. Trump has emphasized ending recognition of DEI issues and observances as a key part of his agenda, and he suggested Thursday that DEI may bear some blame for the deadly collision between a commercial plane and a Black Hawk helicopter earlier this week, though when asked what evidence he'd seen to support the claim, he responded, "It just could have been. We have a high standard."

Parts of the Pentagon have tried to comply with the executive order ahead of a formal directive from the Defense Department.

Last weekend, the Air Force revised a course in basic military training related to diversity that also included videos of the Tuskegee Airmen and Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs). The brief removal of the videos prompted a backlash when the videos were briefly removed from training to review the course.

Lt. Gen. Brian S. Robinson, Air Education and Training Command commander, said in a statement after the review that the course had been revised to focus "on the documented historic legacy and decorated valor with which these units and Airmen fought for our Nation in World War II and beyond."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in his first week on the job established a "Restoring America's Fighting Force Task Force" to focus on rooting out DEI efforts in the Pentagon. In a memo, he directed the task force to present an initial report in March.

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