

America on MLK's Birthday: World Leader of Triple Evils - Racism, Militarism and Extreme Materialism

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If you think Dr. Martin Luther King would have mellowed with age, you haven't been keeping track of the "triple evils" that he warned about. "The United States clearly leads the world in all three of Dr. King's categories of evil."

The people of the world think the U.S. is the most significant threat to peace.

When Dr. Martin Luther King died at the age of 39, he was quite clear about who and what was at the root of human suffering. He believed that "racism, militarism and extreme materialism" were the "[giant triplets](#)" of "interrelated" evil that had to be overcome if society was to be transformed. Dr. King said the United States was host to all three resident evils, and that America reigned as "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world, today." Forty-six years later, the United States clearly leads the world in all three of Dr. King's categories of evil. And, we can prove it by the numbers.

It is true that racism is hard to measure, but the effects of racism can be quantified. If a racist government is defined as one that consistently uses its powers in ways that harm a particular racial group, then the U.S. is indisputably the most racist major state in the world. The U.S. prison population is by far the largest on the planet, in sheer numbers and in the proportion of Americans locked up. No other country comes close - which makes the United States the superpower of mass incarceration. America's police and prison custodial forces dwarf the militaries of most countries - which tells us that militarism is now so deeply embedded in U.S. domestic structures that you can't tell where the military ends and the police begin. Nearly half of U.S. prisoners are African American, although Blacks are only one-eighth of the total U.S. population. Since Americans make up fully one-quarter of the world's prison inmates, that means one out of every eight prisoners on the planet is an African American. This could only occur in a thoroughly racist state, whose institutions work overtime to produce the biggest and most racially unbalanced incarceration numbers on Earth. Clearly, America has racism - triple evil number one - covered.

Number two is militarism. The U.S. military budget is almost as large as the military spending of all the world's other nations, combined. Together, the U.S. and its NATO allies account for more than 70 percent of global weapons spending. At last count, the U.S. spent [six times more](#) on war than China, and 11 times more than Russia. In fact, if you count up the U.S. and *all* of its allies, they are probably responsible for about 90 percent of total moneys spent on war. Therefore, today, 46 years after Dr. King's death, the United States is not just the greatest purveyor of violence in the world - it is right at the center of just about the totality of militarized violence in the world, today. Which is why a recent international

poll shows that the people of the world think the U.S. is the most significant [threat to peace](#).

Finally, the third of the triple evils: extreme materialism. By that, Dr. King meant great disparities in wealth and income. According to the Suisse Global Wealth Databook, wealth is so unevenly distributed in the United States, it no longer resembles a First World country. Of all the rich nations, the U.S. is [dead last](#) in terms of material equality.

So, by Dr. Martin Luther King's measurements, America is in bad shape – more bedeviled by the triple evils than back in his day. In fact, things are much, much worse because...it's the silence that kills you.

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