

America's War Economy: Trump Increases 'Defense' Budget 37% Above Obama's.

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

Global Research, January 27, 2018

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

The Washington Post headlined on January 26th, ["Trump plans to ask for \\$716 billion for national defense in 2019 — a major increase"](#), and reported that when President Trump had entered the White House in January 2017, the 'Defense' budget was \$521 billion, but that President Trump will propose in his upcoming State-of-the-Union speech, a 2019 'Defense' budget of \$716 billion, which, if it becomes law, would mean a 37% increase, above Obama's last Pentagon budget (for 2017).

This is in line with President Trump's recently announced strategic change, away from Obama's military budget, which was focused mainly against radical Islamic terrorism, now to target, instead, mainly Russia and China, and, secondarily, Iran and North Korea. [As CBS News summarized on January 20th,](#)

"There is a major change in U.S. military strategy. On Friday [January 19th], more than 16 years after the 9/11 attacks, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said terrorism is no longer the No. 1 priority. ... Maintaining a military advantage over China and Russia is now Defense Secretary Mattis' top priority."

Mattis said, [in introducing Trump's January 18th document, *National Defense Strategy 2018*,](#)

"China is leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. ... Concurrently, Russia seeks veto authority over nations on its periphery in terms of their governmental, economic, and diplomatic decisions, to shatter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and change European and Middle East security and economic structures to its favor. ... Rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran are destabilizing regions through their pursuit of nuclear weapons or sponsorship of terrorism."

Trump's *National Defense Strategy 2018* document says,

"We will continue to prosecute the campaign against terrorists that we are engaged in today, but Great Power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security."

The candidate, Trump, who ran for office criticizing his predecessor, Barack Obama, for not doing enough against "radical Islamic terrorism," is soaring the 'Defense' budget in order to refocus away from that threat, to "Great Power competition," especially against China and

Russia.

Whereas [even many Republicans had attacked candidate Trump during his campaign](#), mainly for being [insufficiently neoconservative \(imperialistic — such as his allegedly not being sufficiently anti-Russia\)](#), President Trump is turning out to be actually more of a neocon than was his predecessor — not less, such as he had promised.

Millions of Americans who voted for Donald Trump because he promised to be less of a neocon than was his predecessor — and far less of one than was Hillary Clinton — are finding out that he might instead be even more of a neocon than she was.

As for the people who voted for Ms. Clinton, they might be pleasantly surprised that as the President, Trump is, at least on this most-basic strategic question, more like was candidate-Clinton, than was candidate-Trump. He doesn't look like she; he doesn't speak like she, but he might be outdoing her, as the President — at least on 'national security' affairs.

Clearly, the Democratic Party won't be in much of a position to criticize the Republican President much on 'Defense', because they won't want to seem to have been insincere in their criticisms of him for not being insufficiently neoconservative. They'll need to satisfy themselves with their Russiagate charges against him — that he colluded with Russia's President Vladimir Putin in order to win the U.S. White House.

Democrats are themselves in a strategically tough position, of leaving themselves vulnerable to accusations that they are, for the most part, similar to Republicans, only more hypocritical. (Trump derisively calls them "politically correct.")

By Trump's reorienting away from the cheaper military strategy of anti-terrorism, toward the really costly weapons, which carry nuclear warheads and entail huge missiles and [trillion-dollar weapons-systems](#), Trump will more than earn his keep for America's largest military contractors, such as Lockheed Martin, which rely solely or mainly upon the U.S. Government and its allies, as their market, rather than upon civilians. The strategic nuclear arsenals are immensely expensive and they were useless against Osama bin Laden and people such as that, but, are essential in order for America to conquer Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. Now is probably a good time to invest in these firms, because President Trump and the Republican Congress are terrific for them. They had overwhelmingly backed Hillary Clinton, but Donald Trump is the person who'll actually be delivering, to them, the gold.

Who can understand the ways of 'democracy'? Trump might get a good chuckle at having fooled almost everyone. Perhaps he feels especially proud in such ways as he'd never publicly admit, maybe even despising his voters. But what choice did they have?

Whether or not this is American '[democracy](#)', it's clearly today's American politics.

*

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Eric Zuesse](#)

About the author:

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of *They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010*, and of *CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity*.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca