

Mass Mobilization Against Trump Military Parade

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President [Trump ordered the Pentagon to start planning a military parade](#) on Veteran's Day this November. Trump wants to outdo the military parade he attended in France on Bastille Day. Estimates are it [could cost up to \\$50 million](#). The last military parade was after the Gulf War in 1991.

A coalition of groups is organizing to oppose the parade, [click here to learn more](#).

Military parade in dangerous times

This display of military power and glorification of war comes when the risks of nuclear conflict and wars are rising. It comes when massive tax cuts have been given to the rich while spending on domestic needs are threatened and a [recession is looming](#).

A military parade is a manifestation of many problems – threats of war and ongoing imperialism, the [fading US empire](#) trying to hang on to global hegemony, militarization of our communities and an economy and government that serve the elites' interests while the rest of the population struggles.

The military parade will try to intimidate other nations by displaying the US' weapons, but it will actually demonstrate an insecure fading empire trying to show it still has power. In his state of the union this week, President Putin announced [Russia's new weapons system](#) that seem to make US defenses and weaponry obsolete. If true, this increases the risks of damage to the US if it attacks Russia or its allies.

The Pentagon knows the US is losing its position as the major global power, but rather than accept reality, it is being more aggressive, seeking war and regime change in [North Korea](#), [Iran](#) and [Venezuela](#). The new [National Defense Strategy](#) and [Nuclear Posture Review](#) focus on Russia and China as rivals and create a new arms race. State Department officials have been ordered to [sell more weapons](#).

It is time to de-escalate, not escalate. The [US has killed more than 20 million people in 37 countries](#) since the end of World War II. But, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress voted nearly unanimously to increase military spending by \$40 billion more than requested. It is President Trump who ordered the parade, but US [militarism is a product of both major political parties](#). The military parade will show the United States is marching in the wrong direction.



Uniting against militarism and austerity

When President Trump first mentioned a possible military parade, a number of groups started organizing responses. ANSWER Coalition put out a call for people to come to DC to protest, Roots Action launched a petition opposing the parade, and veteran's groups started organizing an indigenous-led peace march calling for a return to celebrating Armistice Day. This November is the 100th anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I.

When it became more likely that the parade would happen, we heard from people in the United States and around the world asking if protests would be held against it.

Last week, Popular Resistance hosted a conference call to bring anti-war, peace and justice groups together to coordinate actions. There was [great enthusiasm, energy and unity among the groups](#). We agreed to collaborate on actions around Veteran's Day weekend to organize hundreds of thousands of people to come to Washington, DC to oppose the parade (or whatever city the parade is in if it is moved) and to call for solidarity actions around the world.

We hope the parade will be cancelled. If it is, we will still gather to demand:

1. Stop the glorification and normalization of war.
2. Return Veteran's Day to Armistice Day, a day to celebrate peace.
3. End US wars and acts of aggression, including regime change.
4. Cut military spending, invest in human needs and protection of the planet.
5. Stop the militarization of schools and communities.
6. Stop repression against dissent.

Since the call, more groups have started signing on to the effort. Your organization can [sign on here](#).

A website was created, [No Trump Military Parade](#). The growing list of organizations that have signed on is included and you can sign on as an individual. As the organizing advances, the website will include specific information on planned events and a map of

solidarity actions in the United States and around the world, as well as flyers and other materials for outreach.

Time to end the culture of violence

Elliott Swain [argues](#) that militarism at home and abroad are deeply connected. A school shooting by a white man trained to kill by the NRA and Pentagon-supported Jr ROTC program and a school bombing by the US military in Syria have intertwined roots. We must address both or we will fail in ending our culture of violence.

In her [new book](#), "Loaded, A Disarming History of the Second Amendment," Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz describes the deep roots of the culture of violence and gun laws in the United States. She writes, we have "a history of inherently violent settler-colonialism and chattel slavery" that was made possible by militias.

The violence of settler-colonialism continues today. Margaret Kimberley of Black Agenda Report [writes](#),

"All the sound and fury about gun control is useless because this society demands that the slave patrol never disband. There are even arguments made to expand it."

She ties violence in the US to white supremacy and racism.

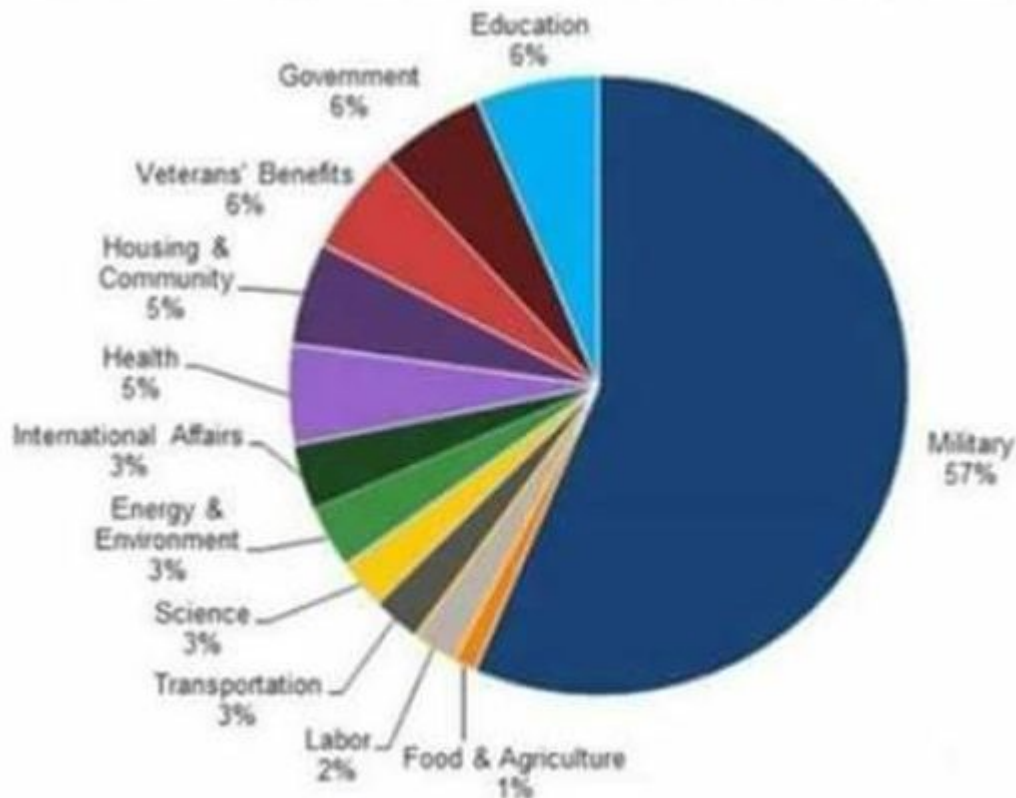
Chris Hedges [explains](#) guns are equated with political power,

"Mass culture and most historians do not acknowledge the patterns of violence that have played out over and over since the founding of the nation. This historical amnesia blinds us to the endemic violence that defines our culture and is encoded in our national myth."

We can take steps to start decolonizing the United States. We discussed that [this week on Clearing the FOG](#) with Sherri Mitchell, who describes in depth what can be done in her new book, "Sacred Instructions."

Militarization infects our communities in many ways. How can we blame people who turn to violence as a solution when that is the knee-jerk response of our nation? If we have a conflict with another country, usually because we want their resources, we make threats, impose sanctions or attack. If a community rises up with legitimate anger against oppressive systems, we send in militarized police and the national guard.

Children are taught from a young age that members of the military are heroes. They are desensitized to violence through video games that target non-whites, television and movies, and are trained to kill through programs like Jr ROTC in their schools. These are all designed to feed them into the insatiable military machine.



This includes economic violence

The statistics on deaths in the United States are staggering. Eric London [lays it out](#):

“Since 2000, there have been 270,000 murders in the US, 600,000 drug overdoses (200,000 involving opioids), 650,000 suicides (130,000 by veterans), and 85,000 workplace deaths. An estimated 700,000 people have died prematurely during this period due to lack of health care. Police killed over 12,000 people from 2000 to 2014, and up to 27,000 immigrants have died attempting to cross the US-Mexico border since 1998. The government has executed roughly 850 prisoners since 2000. Over 2.2 million adults are currently incarcerated in jails and prisons, with another 4.7 million on probation or parole.”

That equals over 2.3 million deaths in the last 17 years, over 140,000 avoidable deaths each year. At the root of these deaths is economic violence that devastates communities in the US and other countries.

Economic violence perpetrated in the US feeds the war machine. Military spending now consumes 57% of federal discretionary spending, leaving only 43% to meet basic needs such as education, housing, transportation and energy.

Harel B. [writes](#) that our national security spending is close to \$1 trillion a year. He estimates that an actual defense budget, rather than an Empire budget, would cost \$100 billion annually. Imagine what could be done with an extra \$900 billion in the US where [40% of the people live on the edge of poverty](#) and the social safety net is shrinking.

Imagine the high standard of living we could all attain if social needs were given a blank check, instead of the military. We don't have to imagine it, other wealthy countries are already living with high quality healthcare systems, excellent public schools and free higher

education.

Next Steps

Organizing to oppose the military parade is an opportunity to unite people against war, militarism and violence. It is an opportunity to unite USians with people around the world who oppose US violence. A military parade will be a major error as it will show the United States to be an insecure nation at a time when people realize US empire is fading. Rather than the US recognizing it needs to join the community of nations in a multi-polar world, it will show the US trying to hang on to global dominance.

A critical step is to grow the anti-war movement in the US. There are many upcoming opportunities:

- [April 14 and 15](#), people across the nation will protest the wars at home and abroad.
- [July 11 and 12](#) there will be international actions to demonstrate the desire for peace during the NATO summit.
- [October 20 and 21](#) is a Women's March on the Pentagon.

And of course, we urge you to join the mass mobilization to stop President Trump's military parade and show the world that people in the US are ready to end wars. Visit [No Trump Military Parade](#), sign on, and share it with people and organizations who oppose war.

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Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese are co-directors of Popular Resistance where this article was originally published.

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