

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *Everyone agrees Trump's war parade is a terrible idea.*
- *Diplomacy is showing progress in Korea. Team Trump's response? Shut that down and focus on war.*
- *A former George W. Bush administration official warns that Trump is using an old playbook to sell war with Iran.*

'CONFIDENCE IS SILENT, INSECURITIES ARE LOUD'

Donald Trump now wants to go [full authoritarian](#).

The embattled president has reportedly ordered the Pentagon to arrange a military parade in the streets of Washington, DC.

The idea was met with swift and widespread condemnation in expert communities, the media, and from lawmakers on [both sides of the aisle](#).

While Defense Secretary James Mattis would only say that the Pentagon is "[putting together some options](#)" when asked about the parade, DC government officials have been a bit more direct, with the Mayor's office saying Trump will have to pay for it (with costs possibly hovering [around \\$15 million](#)), and one DC Council member [saying](#): "Military parade down the streets of DC to feed an insecure man's fragile ego? That'd be a big no."

MESSAGING POINTS:

- **This is what authoritarian dictators do:** they parade military equipment to claim strength, distract attention, mobilize their base, and terrify their political opponents.
- **It's the height of hypocrisy** that Trump spent his day [tweeting about wasteful spending](#), yet he wants to spend millions on a senseless military parade designed to stroke his fragile ego.
- Instead of ego-pumping parades, **Trump should focus on solutions for DREAMers and TPS recipients, electricity in Puerto Rico, treatment for the opioid epidemic, health**

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care, and jobs.

- The Pentagon is already lush with cash and riddled with waste, fraud, and abuse; the costs incurred from this parade **would be better spent on more pressing issues.**

TO AMPLIFY:

Sen. Joe Kennedy: “I think **confidence is silent and insecurity is loud**. America is the most powerful country in all of human history, we don’t need to show it off.” [\[RETWEET\]](#)

Iraq & Afghan war vet Brandon Friedman: “I say a better way to show appreciation for the military would be **to end our wasteful, 17-year-long war in Afghanistan**. Or to end homelessness among veterans.” [\[RETWEET\]](#)

Major General (ret) Paul Eaton: “Unfortunately, we do not have a commander in chief, right now, as much as **we have a wannabe banana republic strongman**.” [\[RETWEET\]](#)

[Win Without War](#), [Vote Vets](#), [MoveOn](#), [CREDO](#), and [RootsAction](#) are asking their members to sign petitions to stop the parade.

Read our statement [here](#), and share it on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

TRUMP, PENCE ARE UNDERMINING DIPLOMACY & PUSHING US CLOSER TO WAR

South Korean President Moon Jae-in wants to talk to North Korea to help prevent a war that could kill millions of his nation’s people. Donald Trump and Mike Pence do not want South Korea (or the United States for that matter) to talk to North Korea. This is where the [Trump-imposed crisis](#) on the Korean peninsula currently stands: with the United States undermining one of its closest allies.

President Moon wants to capitalize on a recent diplomatic breakthrough with North Korea -- where both sides agreed to march together during today’s Olympic opening ceremonies in PyeongChang and field a joint women’s hockey team. While expectations aren’t high, it is possible that with concerted diplomacy, he could **expand those negotiations to include the nuclear issue**. Yet, Trump and Pence are squelching Moon’s efforts. Pence, [according to the Washington Post](#), “said the Trump administration wants the warming of relations with North Korea to end when the Olympic flame is extinguished.”

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And with regard to the Trump administration fraying the alliance, its disinterest in diplomacy, and its movement toward war, consider these additional data points:

1. The Trump administration is seriously **considering a “limited strike” on North Korea.**
2. Trump has suggested that North Korea acquiring (not using) nuclear tipped ICBMs **would trigger a U.S. military response.**
3. The Trump administration isn't serious about diplomacy. It **hasn't bothered to fill three key posts that cover U.S.-North Korean affairs:** 1. U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, 2. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs, and 3. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. In addition:
 - a. Trump's choice for Ambassador to South Korea was recently **forced to withdraw his nomination** because he [disagreed](#) with with this idea of a limited strike.
 - b. The South Korean embassy in Washington was [reportedly](#) **“blindsided” by Trump's aggressive stance toward North Korea** during his State of the Union speech.
 - c. Trump criticized a bilateral trade deal with South Korea and recently [slapped](#) tariffs on South Korean washing machines.
 - d. On arriving in Seoul, Vice President Pence's team [botched](#) the South Korean Ambassador's name, referring instead to the previous Ambassador who departed Washington three months ago.

Vox is the latest to outline what the consequences of war with North Korea would be (in [video](#) and [print](#) form). Share our tweet [here](#).

FORMER BUSH OFFICIAL WARNS OF MARCH TO WAR WITH IRAN

Retired Army colonel Lawrence Wilkerson served as Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff. When Powell famously went to the United Nations in February 2002, Wilkerson helped his boss sell war with Iraq.

In [a New York Times op-ed this week](#), Wilkerson says that “the Trump administration is using much the same playbook” as Bush used in the run-up to war with Iraq “to create a false impression that war is the only way to address the threats posed by Iran.”

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Wilkerson cited U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley's recent presentation -- which he said reminded him of Powell's in 2002 -- in which she accused Iran (with [flimsy evidence](#)) of violating Security Council resolutions. He continued:

The Trump administration's case for war with Iran ranges much wider than Ms. Haley's work. We should include the president's decertification ultimatum in January that Congress must "fix" the Iran nuclear deal, despite [the reality of Iran's compliance](#); the White House's [pressure on the intelligence community to cook up evidence](#) of Iran's noncompliance; and the administration's [choosing to view](#) the recent protests in Iran as the beginning of regime change. Like the Bush administration before, these seemingly disconnected events serve to create a narrative in which war with Iran is the only viable policy.

"The sole purpose of our actions was to sell the American people on the case for war with Iraq," Wilkerson concluded. "Polls show that we did. Mr. Trump and his team are trying to do it again. If we're not careful, they'll succeed."

Read the full piece [here](#) and share on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

And [watch](#) Wilkerson's discussion of his op-ed on Democracy Now!

BURIED LEDES

Surprise, surprise, a [huge Pentagon agency lost track of nearly a billion dollars](#). Hey! WHY DON'T WE GIVE THE PENTAGON [MORE MONEY](#)?!

In another big surprise, Trump's Pentagon budget proposal "[would face](#) hash headwinds from a **ballooning deficit and debt**, according to the Congressional Budget Office."

Speaking of [throwing more money](#) at the Pentagon, **Sen. Bernie Sanders has had enough**.

Sen. Tim Kaine [wants to see](#) Trump's secret memo **outlining its legal case for strikes on Syria last April**.

Reminder about Syria: American troops are still there and now getting shot at by [Syrian troops](#) and soon, possibly [pro-Turkish forces](#). (Yes, Turkey is still in NATO ... we think.) The U.S. retaliated against the Syrians, in a dangerous escalation that highlights the quandary of leaving American troops on the ground in Syria with unclear objectives.

Sexual assault is still rampant in the U.S. military; more than [40 service members](#) were assaulted **PER DAY** on average in 2016.

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[Because of climate change](#), a summer **training ground for skiers and snowboarders** has to **close**.

Former White House aide Rob Porter isn't just [a jerk](#), he was [likely](#) a **big national security threat**.

And finally, the 2017 Nobel peace laureate [says](#) Trump's new aggressive nuclear policy **"increases the danger of nuclear war."** That seems to be a [popular opinion these days](#).