



Donald Trump's Superficial Patriotism at the Twilight of U.S. Empire

Michael Krieger | Posted Thursday Feb 8, 2018 at 2:12 pm



Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions — everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses.

– Juvenal

Despite the title, I don't want this post to be all about Donald Trump. The truth of the matter is all politicians love superficial patriotism. It's why they all claim to care deeply about the troops, yet allow veterans to wait weeks or months to see a doctor after sending them to fight pointless imperial overseas wars based on fabrications. All these disingenuous politicians are total frauds, but they tend to sell the same destructive policies in different ways. As such, it's important to understand how they manipulate and divide us.

First and foremost, standing for the National Anthem, saluting the flag or cheering a military parade is not "supporting the troops." If you think such trivial and superficial acts represent anything beyond lazy surface level virtue signaling you're a huge part of the problem. Your thoughtlessness and fake patriotism is exactly why our young kids are being sent off to die and murder other young kids halfway across the world to pad the coffers of plutocrats and the egos of empire obsessed sociopaths in D.C. Not only are such acts not patriotism, your phony gestures help grease the wheels of global death and destruction.

Having a strong military for national defense is a necessary thing, but the purpose of such a force should always and in all circumstances be **defense**. A major problem arises when you have a global empire coupled with the strongest military on earth. Such a situation results in an overwhelming temptation to use this power for offensive aggression, and that's exactly what our so-called "elites" have used the U.S. military for throughout the 21st century. The attacks of September 11, 2001 merely provided an excuse for the most twisted people in Washington D.C. to live out their most deranged power fantasies. George W. Bush got the ball rolling, Barack Obama stuck to the script, albeit with a more slick sales pitch, and Donald Trump's set to take us to the inevitable end, which is imperial collapse.

In many ways, Donald Trump is the ideal President to usher in the end of U.S. empire. While the more gullible slice of his support base credulously believed he'd "Make America Great Again," his more jaded and realistic voters merely hoped he'd just burn the whole thing down, metaphorically speaking. He needed a combination of these two groups to win, so it's very important to not think of his voters as a monolithic entity. Many of them don't even like Trump, they just wanted to throw a grenade into this corrupt system and knew he was the best of the two candidates to do it. In many ways, they were correct.

They weren't correct because Trump meant anything he said on the campaign trail. He clearly didn't. It's obvious Trump loves Wall Street, after all, the first thing he did was surround himself with former Goldman Sachs partners. On foreign policy, he's embraced some of the most barbaric and despotic regimes on earth, such as Saudi Arabia, with the enthusiasm of a little boy with a grade school crush, and appears disturbingly eager to start a war with Iran. That said, Trump's Presidency's may still lead to the effect desired by many of his more cynical voters.

For example, things really are coming apart at the seams, largely due to the transparently hysterical and demented reaction of neocons and neoliberals to his election. This faux "resistance" movement is such an obvious superficial sham it's caused everyone with a somewhat functioning brain to recognize that **most of the dominant aspects of this culture are shams**. This realization is becoming harder and harder to deny, especially for younger generations. Which brings me to the next issue. Trump's military parade.

By now, I'm sure you've all heard about Trump's desire for a grand military parade. This longing was apparently inspired by a trip to that paragon of global military might, France, where he witnessed such a dazzling performance it committed him to bring such a spectacle back home.

We [leaned](#) that:

Surrounded by the military's highest-ranking officials, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Trump's seemingly abstract desire for a parade was suddenly heard as a presidential directive, the officials said.

***"The marching orders were: I want a parade like the one in France,"** said a military official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the planning discussions are supposed to remain confidential. "This is being worked at the highest levels of the military."*

The inspiration for Trump's push is last year's Bastille Day celebration in Paris, which the president attended as a guest of French President Emmanuel Macron. Trump was awestruck by the tableau of uniformed French troops marching down Avenue des Champs-Élysées with military tanks, armored vehicles, gun trucks and carriers — complete with fighter jets flying over the Arc de Triomphe and painting the sky with streaks of blue, white and red smoke for the colors of the French flag.

Aboard Air Force One en route home from Paris in July, aides said Trump told them that he was dazzled by the French display and that he wanted one at home.

It was still on his mind two months later when he met with Macron on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

"It was one of the greatest parades I've ever seen," Trump told reporters. "It was two hours on the button, and it was military might, and I think a tremendous thing for France and for the spirit of France."

Seated next to Macron, Trump added: "We're going to have to try to top it."

If you think this sounds like the thought process of a two-year old, you're right, but there's more to it. For all his flaws, Trump is actually a very talented manipulator and salesman. This is why I was one of the first people to say we needed to take Trump

seriously [back in 2015](#) when most others were mocking him. He understands the ancient concept of “bread and circuses” as well as anyone, and he knows there’s no bigger slobbering circus than a big military parade.

Superficial patriotism is the most attractive form of patriotism for any politician. It encourages spectacle without substance. Bluster without tangible success. Chest-thumping without sacrifice. Any big military parade in the U.S. will be a definitive sign of desperate insecurity and evidence that the American empire is expiring.

Hate to break it to you, but the rest of the world will see a U.S. military parade and immediately think, oh, the U.S. is even weaker than we thought. Meanwhile, the same social media Trump celebrities we already knew had fascist tendencies will enthusiastically cheer such a spectacle and attempt to divide the public over it. Please don’t fall for such nonsense.

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In Liberty,
Michael Krieger