

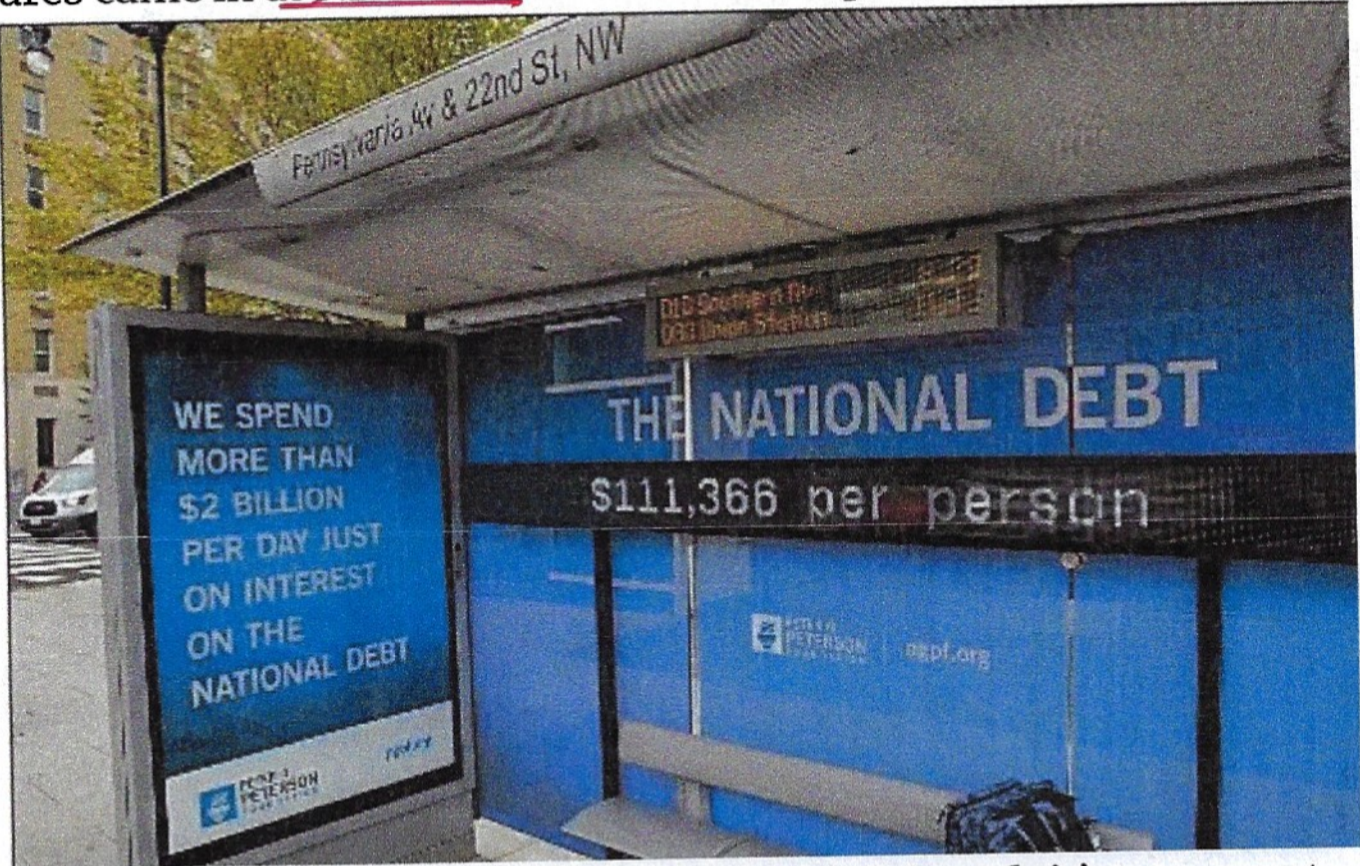
2026-3-12

# Fix what's broken at home to protect us abroad

etc Note

The Denver Gazette · 12 Mar 2026 · B4 · STAR PARKER Star Parker is founder of the Center for Urban Renewal and Education.

In 2024, for the first time in almost a century, the United States spent more financing its national debt than it did, as a percentage of GDP, on national defense. In 2024, interest on our national debt expenditures came in at 3.1% of GDP and defense spending at 2.9%.



This has been the case through this year, although it's too soon to say what the picture will finally be for 2026. But it's very close.

Hoover Institution scholar Niall Ferguson notes that this is an ominous sign. He quotes what he calls Ferguson's Law, after 18th century Scottish political theorist Adam Ferguson.

Ferguson concluded, after doing an extensive study of history that, per Niall Ferguson, "any great power that spends more on debt service than on defense risks ceasing to be a great power."

We're in this situation because of the massive increase in federal spending, and the massive increase in federal borrowing to finance the spending. At the same time, defense spending as percentage of GDP hovers at a historically low point.

President Donald Trump wants to change this situation and is proposing a 50% increase in defense spending for 2027, increasing it from around \$1 trillion now to \$1.5 trillion in 2027. As a percent of GDP, it gets defense spending up from the current 3%, approximately, to 4.5%.

But just for a little more perspective, President Ronald Reagan, under whose watch the Soviet Union collapsed, got defense spending up to almost 7% of GDP.

This was Reagan's idea of "peace through strength."

However, from what I see, the threats and challenges our nation faces today are more formidable than what Reagan confronted.

Note

Then, there was one main adversary — the Soviet Union. Today, we still must contend with a very evil and energetic Russian leader in Putin. In addition, we must deal with China, which in my view is a greater threat than the Soviet Union ever was. The Soviet economy never matched what the Chinese are doing. Plus, China is

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equally aggressive with a clear motive for global domination. And we have, in addition, the potential tinder box of Taiwan, which China views as its own child that ran away from home, but whose independence has practical considerations (it's a major locus of semiconductor manufacturing) as well as ideological considerations (it's free).

With all this in the background, the U.S. today is engaged in real hostilities with Iran and its maniacal regime who hates us and aspires to be a nuclear power.

Per a Wall Street Journal opinion piece, the United States is indeed running short of ammo.

Per the coverage, we are running low on Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missiles and Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles.

Also, we're not producing enough interceptors, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense and Patriot missiles,

Per the WSJ: "The Iranians have fired at least 500 ballistic missiles. The public number for U.S. Thaad production is only 96 per year."

Meanwhile, per Seth G. Jones of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, China is building a war machine far outpacing the U.S. Per Jones, "In 2024 alone, China's largest state-owned shipbuilder built more vessels by tonnage than the entire U.S. shipbuilding industry has since the end of World War II."

So, it's on target that Trump wants a 50% increase — \$500 billion — in defense spending for 2027. But the question remains, when we are running multitrillion dollar deficits, where do we get \$500 billion? Trump says tariffs will raise the funds. However, the Supreme Court just ruled that the authority that the president has been using for tariffs is unconstitutional.

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Perhaps it's time for major reform in domestic entitlement programs so we can pay to defend our nation.