

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 7, 2018

The Honorable James Mattis  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis:

It has come to our attention that President Trump has urged the Pentagon to organize a parade in the coming months to showcase U.S. military equipment. We are concerned that such a spectacle would be counterproductive and strongly believe it should not be held.

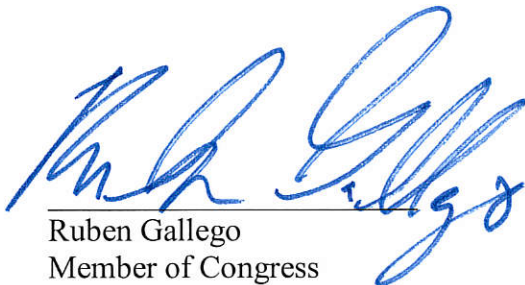
First, a parade of this kind would represent a significant waste of tax dollars. At a time when Congress is wrestling with how best to recapitalize our military and better protect the force after 17 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, resources should be deployed to enhance military readiness and warfighting, not wasted on such a pointless display.


Second, no one in the world doubts the strength of our military or the professionalism of our men and women in uniform. A parade will not alter that perception. Instead, it will likely prompt ridicule from our friends and foes alike. It should go without saying that just because authoritarian regimes like Russia and North Korea hold massive military parades does not mean that we must as well.

Finally, we are concerned that this spectacle will send the wrong message to a global audience. We believe American exceptionalism is rooted in the power of our democratic ideals, not of our military hardware.

Thank you for your service to the Nation. We urge you to impress upon President Trump that holding a military parade in our nation's capital would be a frivolous, unnecessary exercise that could harm America's image. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

  
Ted Lieu  
Member of Congress