

Trump Adds to Washington's 'Swamp'

Exclusive: President Trump's vow to "drain the swamp" was just one more empty promise as he adds to the muck with military contractors in key Pentagon jobs and other industry lobbyists at regulatory posts, says Jonathan Marshall.

By Jonathan Marshall

In the Famous-Last-Words department, this Dec. 12, 2016 headline from Reuters surely ranks among the worst: "Trump attack on Lockheed Martin foreshadows war on defense industry." When it comes to military contractors, President Trump surely prefers to make love, not war.

Not only does he seek a \$51 billion increase in the base military budget, Trump is putting top defense industry insiders in charge of spending more than \$300 billion a year in contract awards to private corporations.

Those insiders include former General Dynamics board member James Mattis, now Secretary of Defense; former Boeing Senior Vice President Patrick Shanahan, now Deputy Secretary of Defense; Raytheon's former top lobbyist, Mark Esper, now Secretary of the Army; and former Textron CEO Ellen Lord, now Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, a post that supervises all Pentagon weapons procurement.

Oh, yes, let's not forget Lockheed Martin Corporation, subject of the Reuters headlines and the nation's biggest military contractor, with annual sales of nearly \$50 billion. Trump chose its former consultant, Heather Wilson, to become Secretary of the Air Force.

Lockheed Martin paid Wilson, a former Republican congresswoman from New Mexico, nearly a quarter million dollars for advice on winning an extension of its contract to run Sandia National Laboratories. Following that campaign, the company had to pay the feds \$4.7 million to settle charges that it improperly used government money to lobby senior U.S. officials.

Now Wilson is overseeing the biggest weapons program in U.S. history – the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a notoriously trouble-plagued jet with a total estimated program cost of *more than \$1 trillion*. Who makes it? Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin also makes the equally notorious Littoral Combat Ship for the U.S. Navy.

More Military-Industrial Complex

Last month, the Trump administration sent to the Senate its nomination for the Pentagon's third-highest position, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. He's

John Rood, senior vice president of Lockheed Martin International. Rood oversees the company's weapons sales in some 70 other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, which signed a gigantic arms deal with President Trump in May.

That \$110 billion deal sent defense stocks soaring to all-time highs. Lockheed Martin's CEO, citing prospective new weapons sales worth \$28 billion, said she hoped the deal would "strengthen the cause of peace in the region."

In his previous job as Vice President for Government Affairs for Lockheed Martin, Rood directed its lobbying activities in Washington. Last year the company spent more than \$13.9 million on lobbying and mobilized \$5 million in campaign contributions, making it one of the very top corporate political spenders.

Lockheed lobbies through the media as well as in Congress. In May, a *Washington Post* column authored by Stephen Rademaker, a lobbyist with the Lockheed-funded Podesta Group, insisted that the best way to confront North Korea was by deploying the THAAD and Aegis Ashore missile defense systems, as well as "long-range strike aircraft" – all, not coincidentally, built by Lockheed Martin. Adam Johnson, a writer for Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), pointed out that the newspaper noted Rademaker's connection to Podesta Group, but not its role as a major lobbyist for the military contractor.

Rood would also have had a hand in the company's contributions to many "independent" think-tanks, such as the Atlantic Council, Center for a New American Security, Center for Security Policy, Heritage Foundation, Lexington Institute (founded by a Lockheed lobbyist), and others that promote greater military spending and often recommend specific weapons systems built by Lockheed Martin.

One example is the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a major hawkish think tank based in Washington, D. C. It has "push[ed] the THAAD missile system or its underlying value proposition in US media" at least 30 times, according to Johnson and his colleagues at FAIR. CSIS, which has long been notably secretive about its funding, admits that Lockheed Martin ranks with Boeing, General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman among its top-10 corporate funders.

A *New York Times* exposé last year also cited the Center's role in pushing for government permission to export drones, another weapons system that Lockheed Martin helps build.

Trump Goes to the Extreme

Trump is certainly not the first president to appoint defense industry

executives to senior Pentagon posts, but he's taken the practice to extreme lengths. He's also extended the same practice to almost every other cabinet department.

Thus he appointed a top lobbyist for the American Petroleum Institute, the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, the American Chemistry Council, and the National Association of Manufacturers to head the Environmental Protection Agency's clean air enforcement office; a coal industry consultant to head the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation and Enforcement; and a top pharmaceutical executive to head Health and Human Services.

And after his frequent campaign blasts against Goldman Sachs, Trump has appointed its alumni to top White House, Treasury, economic policy, national security, and Wall Street regulatory jobs. Goldman CEO Lloyd Blankfein said he was proud of this record but admitted he was "a little apprehensive . . . for fear of how it might look."

With their stock prices up more than 30 percent in the year since last November's election, neither Goldman Sachs nor Lockheed Martin seems to worry too much about appearances. Nor do Raytheon, General Dynamics, and all the other contractors profiting from the military spending boom that Trump is promoting. But if you smell something funny coming out of Washington, it's because someone forgot to drain the swamp.

Jonathan Marshall is author of many articles on military procurement and contractors, including "US Arms Makers Invest in a New Cold War," "Feeding the Military-Industrial Complex," and "New Navy Ship Leaking Tax Dollars."
