

1. Great slide of Senator Collins and King's campaign donors! Is there a location to find out roughly how much/year they each specifically receive? And do Maine's Representative Pingree and Golden also receive General Dynamics donations?

www.opensecrets.org

is a fantastic resource for looking up campaign finance and lobbying.

2. Can you explain in general what "great power competition" is?

The U.S. war industry and the Pentagon together collaborate on creating pretexts for deploying troops around the world. Hying up bad guys, whether they pose a threat to the U.S. or not, is a key element of this.

The Pentagon hypes bad guys in order to obtain larger budgets and greater legal authorities. The war industry hypes bad guys in order to obtain immense profits.

The latest pretext is "great power competition," the new Cold War. You could call it *Cold War 2.0*. The U.S. government targets China as its #1 foe under great power competition. Russia is the #2 foe.

Just like the original Cold War, great power competition diverts enormous sums of money into war, espionage, and militarization instead of human need (education, healthcare, climate, and infrastructure).

3. Question from book, re FMS: Can you say more about Franklin Church Spinney? And what 127e is?

Spinney basically blew the whistle on Pentagon spending practices in the 1980s.

He has written fairly regularly for CounterPunch. One of his many incisive articles is:

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2014/01/17/defense-spending-putting-toys-before-boys/>

The Pentagon uses many different U.S. legal authorities, which are laid out in the U.S. legal code, in order to spend money on wars and co-opt local troops.

127e is one such legal code.

You can read the legalese here:

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/127e>

127e focuses on funding armed forces allied with U.S. special operations forces.

4. If the remainder of discretionary tax dollars are being spent on other agencies and departments – say Education – which includes funded think tanks and academia to focus on purposes of war – how many US tax dollars are left that *aren't* corrupted by the MIC." Is conversion really possible? Are there any uncorrupted tax dollars to genuinely address climate?

To my knowledge the Department of Education doesn't fund pro-war think tanks or academic institutions that focus on war. Pro-war think tanks are largely funded by the war industry. Some think-tank funding comes from the Department of Defense.

We're now at a point in time where our industrial society has generated so much pollution and environment destruction that it would be wise to begin preparing for societal collapse. There are too many stressors on the system (climate change, sixth mass extinction, pandemic, interconnected just-in-time economies) the capitalist ruling class to address, if so inclined.

Conversion should have been initiated decades ago. Conversion is still possible. Anything is possible if the public wants it badly enough. Conversion (from war industry to an industry that meets the needs of humanity and the natural world) is a moral imperative, but one must be candid about the slim chances of success.