

NATO Is a Goldmine for US Weapons' Industries

By [Brian Cloughley](#)

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Countries of the NATO military alliance have been ordered by President Trump to increase their spending on weapons, and the reasons for his insistence they do so are becoming clearer. It's got nothing to do with any defence rationale, because, after all, the Secretary General of the US-NATO military alliance, Jens Stoltenberg, has admitted that "[we don't see any imminent threat against any NATO ally](#)" and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute recorded in its [2018 World Report](#) that "at \$66.3 billion, Russia's military spending in 2017 was 20 per cent lower than in 2016."

Even Radio Free Europe, the [US government's](#) anti-Russia broadcaster, [records that](#) Russia has reduced its defence spending.



There is demonstrably no threat whatever to any NATO country by Russia, but this is considered irrelevant in the context of US arms' sales, which are flourishing and being encouraged to increase and multiply.

On July 12, the second and final day of the recent US-NATO meeting, Reuters reported Trump as [saying that](#) "the United States makes by far the best military equipment in the world: the best jets, the best missiles, the best guns, the best everything." He went on "to list the top US arms makers, Lockheed Martin Corp, Boeing Co and Northrop Grumman Corp by name."

On July 11 the Nasdaq Stock Exchange [listed](#) the stock price of Lockheed Martin at \$305.68. The day after Trump's speech, it increased to \$318.37.

On July 11 the Nasdaq Stock Exchange [listed](#) the stock price of Boeing at \$340.50. The day after Trump's speech, it increased to \$350.79.

On July 11 the New York Stock Exchange [listed](#) the stock price of Northrop Grumman (it doesn't appear on Nasdaq) at \$311.71. The day after Trump's speech, it increased to \$321.73.

General Dynamics, another major US weapons producer, might not be too pleased, however, because its stock price [rose only](#) slightly, from \$191.51 to \$192.74. Nor might Raytheon, the maker of the Patriot missile system which Washington is selling all over the world, because its stock went up by a modest five dollars, from \$194.03 to \$199.75. Perhaps they will be named by Trump the next time he makes a speech telling his country's bemused allies to buy US weapons.

Trump also declared that "We have many wealthy countries with us today [July 12 at the

NATO Conference] but we have some that aren't so wealthy and they did ask me if they could buy the military equipment, and could I help them out, and we will help them out a little bit," which made it clear that poorer countries that want to buy American weapons will probably not have to put cash down for their purchases. So it wasn't altogether surprising that the stock prices of the three arms manufacturers named by Trump all rose by over ten dollars.

To further boost this bonanza, the State Department did its best to make US arms sales even easier by enabling weapons manufacturers to avoid the well-constructed checks and balances that had been in place to ensure that at least a few legal, moral and economic constraints would be observed when various disreputable regimes queued up to buy American weapons.

But these regulations no longer apply, because on July 13 the State Department [announced](#) new measures to "fast-track government approval of proposals from defense and aerospace companies" which action was [warmly welcomed](#) by the President of the US Chamber of Commerce Defence and Aerospace Export Council, Keith Webster, who is "looking forward to continued collaboration with the White House on initiatives that further expand international opportunities for the defense and aerospace industries."

There was yet more boosting by Lt-General Charles Hooper, Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, [who declared](#) at the Farnborough International Air Show on July 18 that "Defense exports are good for our national security, they're good for our foreign policy. And they're good for our economic security." He then proposed that his agency [cut the transportation fee](#) charged to foreign military sales clients, which would be a major stimulant for sales of "the best jets, the best missiles, the best guns" so valued by Mr Trump. Obviously a devoted follower of his President, the General followed the Trump line with dedication by [reminding](#) the media that "as the administration and our leadership has said, economic security is national security." This man just might go places in Trump World.

But he won't go as far as the arms manufacturers, whose future growth and profits are assured under Trump and the Washington Deep State, which is [defined as](#) "military, intelligence and government officials who try to secretly manipulate government policy." US weapons producers have realised, as [said so presciently](#) two thousand years ago by the Roman statesman, Cicero, that "the sinews of war are infinite money," and their contentment will continue to grow in synchrony with their financial dividends.

Voice of America joined the chorus of reportage on July 12 [and observed that](#) "with Thursday's renewed pledge by NATO countries to meet defense spending goals, some of the biggest beneficiaries could be US weapons manufacturers, which annually already export billions of dollars worth of arms across the globe."

Within European NATO, the [biggest spenders](#) on US arms, thus far, are Poland, Romania, Britain and Greece, and the amounts involved are colossal. Poland, whose economy is booming, has [signed an agreement](#) to buy Patriot missile systems for \$4.75 billion, adding to the [purchase of](#) Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles for \$200 million, Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles, [costing](#) \$250 million, and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems for the [same amount](#). Delivery of its 48 F-16 multi-role strike aircraft (\$4.7 billion) [began in 2006](#), and Warsaw has proved a loyal customer ever since. Who knows what exotic new

piece of US hardware will be ordered as a result of Mr Trump's encouragement?

Romania, a country with [only 750 kilometres of motorway](#) (tiny Belgium [has](#) 1,700 km), has been seeking World Bank assistance for its road projects but is unlikely to benefit because it is so gravely [corrupt](#). This has not stopped it [purchasing](#) US artillery rocket systems for \$1.25 billion and [Patriot missiles](#) for a colossal \$3.9 billion, following-on from [construction](#) in May 2016 of a US [Aegis missile](#) station, at Washington's expense. It forms part of the US-NATO encirclement of Russia, and its missiles are to be operational this year.

The message for European NATO is that the US is pulling out all stops to sell weapons, and that although, for example, "about 84% [of the UK's total arms imports](#) come from the United States", there is room for improvement. Slovakia is [buying](#) \$150 millions' worth of helicopters and paying a [satisfying](#) \$2.91 billion for F-16 fighters, but other NATO countries appear to have been less disposed to purchase more of "[the best jets, the best missiles, the best guns](#)" that Mr Trump has on offer.

The mine of NATO gold is there for exploitation, and following Trump's enthusiastic encouragement of his arms' manufacturers it seems that extraction will be effective. The US Military-Industrial Complex stands to gain handsomely from its President's campaign to boost the quantities of weapons in the world.

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