

The People in Charge of the US Military

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Featured image: John Rood (Source: [Lockheed Martin](#))

*Fifty-seven years ago this month **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** presented this warning in his [farewell address](#): “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.” That warning has largely fallen on deaf ears.*

The United States government has in the decades since been participating, both directly and via third parties, in overt and covert military actions across the world, with very little of the violence even arguably justified as necessary to defend America. Yet, no matter the lack of defensive justification, companies and individuals in the military-industrial complex profit from the high military spending and the destruction wrought abroad.

President Donald Trump’s high-level military appointments exemplify the strong bond between the US military and companies that profit from military spending, war, and foreign intervention. As I noted in the [September 2 episode](#) of Five Minutes Five Issues, Trump chose **James Mattis**, who had been a board of directors member of major military contractor General Dynamics to be secretary of defense and chose **Mark Esper**, who over the prior 12 months had earned over 1.5 million dollars lobbying for Raytheon, another prominent military contractor, to be secretary of the Army. Esper’s nomination was since [confirmed](#) by the US Senate.

This week we saw a new example of a high-level employee at a military contractor moving over to the US Department of Defense. On Wednesday, the Senate [confirmed](#) Trump’s nomination of **John Rood** to be under secretary for policy at the Defense Department. **Travis J. Tritten** [reports](#) at the Washington Examiner that Rood’s most recent job before being confirmed for “the Pentagon’s No. 3 position” was “as a Lockheed Martin vice president in charge of growing the defense giant’s international business in about 70 countries.”

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