

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EP 282 TRANSCRIPT

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. How are you doing in this hot sweltering day, David?

David Feldman: Good morning. I'm looking forward to this.

Steve Skrovan: Yeah. And we also have the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Hello. Plenty of evidence about global warming today in Washington, D.C.

Steve Skrovan: Yeah. Well we've got a great show again today. I know I say that every week, but we keep topping ourselves. A few weeks ago, we welcomed investigative journalist Andrew Cockburn who made a counterintuitive case that the more we spend on the military, the weaker we actually get. Well on the show today, we're going to expand our discussion of the military budget and spend most of the hour with Professor Michael Klare who has written extensively on foreign affairs and how the pursuit of natural resources fuels most wars. We're also going to talk to Professor Klare about current US military policy as it relates to Iran. Are we in danger of stumbling into a war with Iran? And is that about oil? And as the fruitless so-called War on Terror loses steam, are we turning our war machine toward more conventional targets like China and Russia? These are the topics on the table with Professor Klare for the main part of the show.

In the second part of the show, we're going to dig into the mailbag and answer the questions that have been piling up in there. And as always, we will also cut away for a minute somewhere in between to find out what is happening in the ever-expanding world of corporate crime with our *Corporate Crime Reporter* Russell Mokhiber. But first, let's talk military budget and foreign policy with our featured guest. David?

David Feldman: Professor Michael Klare is the author of 14 books including *Resource Wars: Blood and Oil*, *Rising Powers*, *Shrinking Planet*, and *The Race for What's Left*. He is the Five College Professor [Emeritus] of Peace and World Security and director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College. Professor Klare is also the defense correspondent for *The Nation* magazine. Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Michael Klare.

Michael Klare: It's a pleasure to be with you today.

Ralph Nader: Yes, welcome indeed, Michael. You know, the congressional oversight of the Department of Defense must be an all-time low. Not only haven't they been able to get the Department of Defense to obey a federal law that went into effect in 1992 requiring all departments and agencies to submit auditable data to the Government Accountability Office of the Congress, the accounting arm of the Congress, but just recently, when they had in the Senate, the confirmation hearing for the new Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, who has been a Raytheon lobbyist for a good period of time, nobody, neither Republican or Democrat even asked him about the two wars we're in in Afghanistan and Iraq. The reporter appeared dumbfounded in the *New*

York Times. How could you have a confirmation hearing for the Secretary of Defense and not ask one question? Give us your view of why Congress, both parties, pushing up huge budgets, demanded by Trump for the military, now about 750 billion [dollars], in the coming year with a B, why they are so lackadaisical. They don't do what Senator Proxmire did in the old days and others--have rigorous hearings on the Pentagon waste, fraud, abuse, mis-policies and so forth. How do you explain that?

Michael Klare: Well, Ralph, I think two things are going on simultaneously. One is the deep institutionalization of the military-industrial complex, which, you know, we first heard about that from President Eisenhower when he retired decades ago; he warned us about that. And one of my mentors, Seymour Melman of Columbia University who, some of your listeners may recall wrote about Pentagon capitalism; we've known about this for a while. But this system of collaboration between Congress and industry in the Defense Department, has been around for a while and they've become much more sophisticated over time. They have distributed major defense contracts into virtually every congressional district in the United States. So, if somebody says let's cut back defense spending on a major defense contract, a major weapons contract, that means that jobs will be lost theoretically in every single congressional district. They do this by design, so it's very hard for a member of Congress, whatever their political views, to vote against the major defense bill.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, you know what's amazing, Michael, is they can vote some of that money to rebuild the public works in America. Every community is looking at crumbling roads, highways, bridges, drinking water, sewage systems, schools. You know, that creates more jobs as you know per billion dollars spent than a billion dollars given to Lockheed-Martin for the boondoggle F-35 program. I mean, the Congress is moving from anemic oversight of the Pentagon budget, which is over half of what the entire federal government's operating budget is--over half, listeners--into a total rubberstamp, just a rubberstamp.

Michael Klare: Well like I say, they know what you just said, Ralph, that they get more jobs if they were infrastructure project, but that's theoretical jobs. Right now, they have a thousand jobs or two thousand jobs or whatever at some defense contractor in their district. And the union leaders are tied into the military-industrial complex, and the lobbyists are tied into the military-industrial complex, so if you threaten to close that plant, they're going to have their constituents screaming at them, so it's a very well-oiled machine; that's on one hand. But there's a second part of this, I said, and that is that Congress has bought into the fact that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are over now; they're in the rearview mirror. And we're taking on new enemies--Russia and China and maybe North Korea, and there's near universal enthusiasm for this in Washington, D.C. People are ready to fight Russia and to take on China and there's just infinite amounts of money they're willing to spend on this. There is absolutely no resistance whatsoever in Congress.

Ralph Nader: Tell our listeners, how much is involved in one aspect--that's the upgrade of our nuclear bombs and the B52s and the nuclear submarines, which now have enough firepower as Seymour Melman once calculated, to "blow up the world three hundred times and make the rubble bounce." How much do they want to spend of our tax dollars now--taking away from schools, drinking water systems, public transit, bridges, roads, airports and ports?

Michael Klare: Yes. My colleagues here at the Arms Control Association where I'm speaking to you from, have published a report called *US Nuclear Excess: Understanding the Costs, Risks and Alternatives* and they've added it up and it comes out to \$1.7 trillion when you account for inflation. And that really is just an underestimate if the Pentagon gets everything they want and you build in cost overruns, which you have to assume [is] the case, so we're speaking of a minimum of \$2 trillion dollars over a 30-year period to replace all existing nuclear weapons in the stockpile, which is what the Department of Defense wants.

Ralph Nader: Why do they have to upgrade them? They don't deteriorate like vegetables.

Michael Klare: There are two things going on. I think it's a combination of there is, you know, a degree of just wanting new and better, so they want new and better systems; they always want new and better systems, and the defense contractors want new and better systems. But there's something more sinister at work, Ralph, and that's what troubles me. The existing nuclear architecture is based on the notion of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), as your listeners will be aware. The notion is that it makes no sense to start a nuclear war because the other side will have an invulnerable second-strike capacity. Even if we attack them, they will still have some reservoir of nuclear weapons, maybe on submarines or mobile missiles, that could strike back and still destroy us. So, there's no incentive whatsoever to start a nuclear war. But I get the sense, my colleagues get the sense that there are people within the military establishment who think that we should abandon MAD, Mutual Assured Destruction, and think again about, as was the case in the 1950s, thinking about *winning* a nuclear war. And they have John Bolton at the National Security Council and others who are egging them on—"let's abandon, let's tear up all arms control treaties; let's go hell-bent to acquire more nuclear weapons, more technology, defense systems, ballistic missile interceptors; let's think about launching a nuclear war. So, what if a few cities in the US get destroyed by accident and a few tens of millions of people purchase, well, we'll wipe them out." That's the thinking behind this.

Ralph Nader: Well, do you think that John Bolton, who never was confirmed by the Senate--he wouldn't have been confirmed; the Republicans hate him personally, and he got away with being appointed by Trump his national security adviser; he's sitting there right now in the White House. I consider him clinically insane. He's a Yale Law grad. He has no respect for international law, international treaties. He says we should bomb North Korea, overthrow the regime in Tehran, let Israel annex the West Bank; never talks about law. Here is a lawyer; he's a draft dodger. He liked the Vietnam War; but he wanted his friends to go fight and die there. He's a despicable human being, and he's pulling Trump closer and closer into confrontational war in Iran or around Iran, and he hates what Trump is doing with Kim, hobnobbing with Kim in North Korea. I think it's time to call these people clinically insane, Michael.

Michael Klare: Clinically insane or some other words, psychopathic, maybe, you know, I don't . . . I'm not a psychologist; I don't know what to call them except extremely dangerous and unsafe to living creatures.

Ralph Nader: It's out of that movie, *Dr. Strangelove*. Here's a question I want to ask you. We would never allow China to have a fleet of warships in the Caribbean. Why are we so hung up on our controlling the South China Sea? Whatever happened to spheres of influence where major powers recognize that they're going to have control around their borders? What's going on here with China? I think part of it started with Hillary Clinton's address at the Naval Academy where

she outlined what she called "force projection" against China, moving a lot of our military from the Middle East to the South China Sea and surrounding China with aircraft carriers that she used the word "force projection." Remember that address?

Michael Klare: Yes, certainly. But, Ralph, this has been US policy since 1898 when the US conquered the Spanish fleet in Manila Harbor and took possession of the Philippines and has been US policy ever since. That was the basis of US intervention in World War II in the Pacific is that America's sphere of influence extends to the coastal waters of China. And no member of the American foreign policy elite, Democrat or Republican, has ever challenged that notion in over a century. This is deeply ingrained in the strategic thinking of American policymakers. You don't hear any candidate running for president, any member of Congress, saying that's a cuckoo idea, which it certainly is.

Ralph Nader: Well, lay out what you think the Pentagon, the military-industrial complex, Raytheon, Boeing, Grumman, Lockheed-Martin—you know, enough is never enough for their weapons. They can never tell you--General Dynamics can never say when is there enough nuclear submarines. Outline for our listeners what's called the "triad of defense" that we're projecting all over the globe with the American empire before we get into the latest strategy, which is to push Russia and China into an arms race with us.

Michael Klare: Yes, I'm happy to speak to these issues. We distinguish here between so-called conventional weapons. Of course, no killing instrument should be called conventional, but that's the term, and nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. So, the nuclear triad consists of land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles or ICBMs, plus Submarine Ballistic Missiles. They are called SLBMs, Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles, and we have a third leg of the triad, which are bombs dropped or cruise missiles launched from long-range bombers like the B-2 and the B-52 bomber, which are intended to penetrate Russian or Chinese air space to deliver their weapons. So, there are three legs, each one of which is designed to fully destroy, eliminate, abolish, incinerate Russia and China even if the other two were completely obliterated. So, we have three separate systems for conducting a global nuclear war, thermonuclear war independently of the others. So that's why the price is so high. When you have three separate nuclear-war fighting machines operating independently of each other, that's the nuclear triad.

Ralph Nader: Well on that point, don't you think we could have citizen town meetings around the country where they summon the people who make all this weaponry possible--the senators and representatives--and get something going? Because let me ask you a question maybe most people don't ask you. We're talking to Professor Michael Klare who has written for decades accurate information, studies, books, testimony, articles. He's a military correspondent for *The Nation* magazine on the military strategy, so-called. Where is this going if we don't stop it, if we don't re- direct it, if we don't wage peace, if we don't have treaties, if we stop thinking that we can't generate our economy unless it's a war economy. Where do you think [in]10, 20, 30 years this is going to end up, the worst case scenario, short of war, the economic worst case scenario?

Michael Klare: Yeah. The other side of this, Ralph, is that this has to be put in context is what the Pentagon now calls preparing for "great power conflict" in quotation marks, a "great power competition." It's not enough that they are building up the technology of war, they are also

creating the, let's call it the political, the strategic context for war with Russia or China. Now this was not

the case two or three years ago. From 9/11 on until a year or so ago, they would say that their primary concern was fighting terrorist organizations, militant organizations in the Middle East, so that was a completely different priority. Now they're saying that's in the past; now our focus is on preparing for war with Russia or China. And this is a very different proposition and exceedingly far more dangerous because war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria against militant organizations has terrible consequences. And I'm sure your listeners are well aware of that--drone strikes that killed civilians and so on. But Russia and China are not terrorist organizations in the same sense. They possess modern militaries as well. They possess nuclear weapons. They possess advanced warships and planes. So, any encounter with Russia or China in the years ahead is going to result in major war with a very high likelihood of escalation across the nuclear threshold to a full-blown thermonuclear conflict. And it is this drive to prepare for great power war that worries me more than anything else because there is nobody challenging this notion or whether this is a reasonable strategy to pursue at this time given the dangerous consequences it holds. So, this is what we have to ask our senators, representatives in Congress about why are we hell-bent on preparing for a thermonuclear conflagration that'll destroy us all? Is it so absolutely necessary to assume that war with Russia and China is nearly inevitable when there's the possibility of negotiating with them to resolve our differences in the South China Sea?

Ralph Nader: And by the way, they're not by our shores. They're not in Canada or in Mexico. We're in the Baltic area; we're in the South China Sea. We've got them half surrounded. I mean, the provocations are really striking, but the military-industrial complex, they're trying to reassure the American people that we can have a ballistic defense system so that we can actually win a nuclear war because we can shoot down the incoming ballistic systems. We had Professor Ted Postal from MIT debunking that. Do you agree that \$14 billion program on ballistic-missile defense is technically unworkable.

Michael Klare: Totally, totally unworkable. But that's only one small part of this fighting-a-nuclear-war scheme. You also have to include the tens, soon to be hundreds of billions of dollars being spent on exotic new weapons, artificial intelligence, hypersonic weapons, autonomous weapons systems that could be used to attack Russian and Chinese second-strike weapons capabilities and to destroy their early warning systems and presumably their satellite systems. That's another key part of this war-fighting mentality that's taking over at the Pentagon.

Ralph Nader: Where does cyber warfare fit in here?

Michael Klare: Yes. Cyber is critical because all of the defensive systems on both sides are highly reliant on electronics, on the internet, on cyber, on cyber space to function. So, yup, China, for example, is highly dependent for its early warning systems, for its radars, command and control of its nuclear weapons on cyber space. If you can immobilize their command and control networks, then you can theoretically disarm them and make it possible to attack their nuclear weapons without any warning. Now this is the theory. The problem is that at the very instance that it appears that their cyber systems are under control and it's easy to fake that or for hackers to do that. They may say we're under attack, better launch our nuclear weapons now,

immediately--don't wait for confirmation. So, we're moving to a world in which what's called "launch on warning" will become the norm.

Ralph Nader: The whole thing seems so preposterous, Michael. In other words, look, we're not interested in grabbing land from China and Russia. Russia and China are interested in grabbing land from us or from South American countries. It's like these guys are playing around with multi-trillion dollar Armageddon toys trying to provoke through "forced projection" the Chinese and Russians into putting their scientists and engineers to work and reassuring their own people. After all, it's China that was invaded by the west. It's China that was occupied in the 19th-century, gunboat diplomacy, the British, the French, the US. It's Russia or the Soviet Union that was invaded twice with tens of millions of Russian casualties by western powers, Germany, for example. So, you can understand why they're concerned about the US. In terms of the imbalance of conventional force, tell our listeners the following. How many aircraft carriers do we have compared to China and Russia?

Michael Klare: See, now this is a conversation I happily can talk about the balance of forces on each side, which heavily favors the United States. But I want to give you my own thoughts about why we're in such a dangerous world. It's a combination of the military-industrial complex in these institutional forces that we've been talking about, which favor more and more spending on increasingly exotic and dangerous weapons. On one hand . . .

Ralph Nader: In other words, profits, corporate profits.

Michael Klare: Yes. And on the other hand, you have the three countries we're talking about, Russia, China and the United States, led by, I believe, insecure and the egomaniacal leaders, Donald Trump in the United States, Xi Jinping in China, and of course Vladimir Putin in Russia. Each of these egotistical and insecure leaders, if they, you know, could not win the majority election in their own countries, I suspect, and so are relying on flag-waving in ultra-nationalism and militarism to secure their position in their respective countries. We saw that Donald Trump with his July 4th, you know, fiasco of a parade in Washington. You see that with Vladimir Putin in the seizure of Crimea, which was really to boost his status in Russia amongst his public. And Xi Jinping who's losing support in China, but is increasingly tough on the South China Sea. So, you have a marriage of these political leaders seeking stature through militaristic behavior, which is, you know, if we think back to how World War I began, that's exactly how World War I began was this kind of posturing, and that's what scares the crap out of me.

Ralph Nader: I was going to mention World War I because it is a very good comparison. It all started with the shootout in Sarajevo, the Archduke, and then the Kings and the Kaisers and Czars who knew each other. Actually, they were socializing; they got their egos up and the result was 15 million dead innocents and getting us into World War I, which set the stage, by the way, historians remind us, for World War II. So, to show people what the imbalance of conventional forces are, how many aircraft carriers, which is the main instrument of "force projection" against China, for example, how many aircraft carriers do we have compared to China and Russia?

Michael Klare: You know China has one and it's not fully operational yet. They're building their second. The US has 12. I think one of them is down for repair. And Russia has, you know, at last count, I think it only has one. But Russia's strength is not at sea. Russia's strength is on land, but still even in terms of their land capacity, the Russian military is a mere shadow of what

the Soviets had at their maximum strength. China is also a land power. I can't imagine the US ever contesting China on the Asian mainland. We simply lack the number of troops. But I can't imagine that occurring either, so in terms of modern air power and sea power, the US has an enormous advantage against either of those countries.

Ralph Nader: Well let's talk about Iran. You're very worried about Iran. You've written that it's all about oil, which is never mentioned, the three-letter word, O-I-L. And the Saudis would like to see the regime in Iran toppled. The Israelis, of course, are always goading the US to topple the Iranian ruling powers. Give us your take on what's going on now. By the way, the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and an Air Force B-52 Stratofortress conducted joint exercises in the Arabian Sea on June 1 of 2019. We're over there, the Sixth Fleet. We've always been over there. We got around surrounded by our military in Iraq, our military in Afghanistan, our sea and air power in the Persian Gulf, and of course the Israelis always available to provide intelligence or cyberattacks on the Iranian centrifuges with the US. What do you think is our take here? We got John Bolton and Mike "Pompous" Pompeo, Secretary of State, going around the world basically saying that Iran is going to be the target. And they pulled out of the nuclear accord, Trump did; all the other allies stayed in and we are imposing enormous sanctions on innocent civilians, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals [and] all kinds of civilian equipment is now sanctioned in terms of imports. Well how do you see this, first of all, in terms of international law? International law says sanctions from one country against another has a disproportionate adverse effect on civilians isn't a violation of international law. Let's start with international law, the nuclear accord treaty first.

Michael Klare: Yeah. Well you said a lot of the things I would have mentioned already, Ralph. So the center piece here is what's called the JCPOA, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, takes a little while to get those initials down, that's the agreement that the US, Britain, France, Germany, the EU, China, and Russia signs with Iran in 2015 during Obama's watch, which said that the Iranians would dismantle their nuclear enrichment capability in return for relief from sanctions. And even before the Trump Administration came into power, there was no real relief from sanctions even though the Iranians did absolutely everything that they promised to do in the accord. So, they were already feeling frustrated because the US did not relieve them of the sanctions pressures, the economic sanctions on their oil exports, in particular, which is their main source of currency. Then along comes Trump and he withdraws from the treaty altogether and stiffens sanctions on Iran, so the country is suffering terribly. The Europeans, who believe in the treaty, who want to keep the treaty afloat, have promised the Iranians that they would find workarounds; they'd find some way to maintain economic ties with the Iranians even despite sanctions by the US on their international companies that do business with Iran. And so far, that has failed to materialize, so the Iranians are saying to the Europeans you promised us that you were going to... we continue to abide by the treaty. The US isn't. We continued to abide by the treaty, the agreement. And you promised us you would find some way to work around US pressure. Well, the Europeans haven't done that. So now the Iranians are beginning to take small baby steps outside of their agreement by stepping up their enrichment of uranium. Now they are, under the agreement itself, entirely allowed to do that because the agreement only holds if all parties abide by it and the US is not abiding by the agreement anymore. So, in fact, the Iranians are within their rights to step out of the agreement and to proceed with enrichment. Nonetheless, this puts the Europeans in a hard place because the US is putting pressure on them now to punish the Iranians as well for those little steps that they're taking. So, we're moving closer and closer to

a crisis where, if the Iranians say they're going to increase their enrichment of uranium in the months ahead, and unless the Europeans are able to find some resolution, my guess is that Bolton will push Trump to a step

where, you know, he said . . . Trump has said Iran will not get nuclear weapons. So, we could be at a point where Trump will be coerced by Bolton and Pompeo and Netanyahu into taking military action against Iran. When that happens, we don't know what will happen next, but it's likely to create a metastasizing series of crises throughout the Middle East.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, and not only that, it's like we have such a huge military budget, we got to have an enemy out there. And we're now working to make sure that Russia and China are the big adversaries, but in previous years, they're looking around and they say, oh, it's Iran. Iran has a GDP the size of Connecticut. It has 80 million people. Many of them are very poor. The main currency and exports is oil. Trump's sanctions pushed by Bolton and Pompeo have cut oil exports more than half so it's like strangling the economy. It has effects on food--effects on all kinds of essentials for the civilian economy in Iran. When do you think the American people are going to wake up here and ask other countries that have been hijacked by these arms corporations, these munitions corporations? I don't think they should be called defense companies, and their Toadies in Washington that go in and out from jobs in Raytheon to the Department of Defense or Lockheed-Martin to the Department of Defense. What's the light at the end of the tunnel? We're going to get some enlightenment from Steven and David on this, I hope, but we always like to end interviews, Michael, by saying this is what needs to be done. And I always focus on the great fulcrum of change which happens to be the smallest branch of government, but the most powerful, the US Congress. Now you're working with the Quakers and other peace groups who get almost no national media; they're only waging peace and they're last in the media. The warmongers who want war, get all kinds of mass media. So, with that background, what do you recommend out there where the listeners are, and where members of Congress are about to go on a six-week vacation called the autumn August recess, listeners, and they're going to have meetings with you all. What do you say?

Michael Klare: Yes, that's a good way to end. So now fortunately with the new Congress that was elected in 2018, there are some very thoughtful progressive democratic members of Congress who have weighed in on this issue. And the House of Representatives just voted for their version of what's called the National Defense Authorization Act, the NDAA. And it does include an amendment, this is the House version; it includes an amendment that says that the president cannot go to war with Iran without authorization from Congress. They have to come back to Congress for approval before attacking Iran, so this would be some degree of restraint. Now to be clear, this is the House version. The Senate version of the bill does not contain this amendment and the Republicans control the Senate and they're going to do everything they can to prevent that measure from making it to the final version of the bill in the conference committee. So whatever listeners can do to persuade their members of the Senate and their House representatives to maintain that measure in the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act, that would be very useful. The law, by the way, also contains amendments and here, there is support in the Senate to ban arms sales to Saudi Arabia as a result of its continued genocidal war in Yemen, which is resulting in the lives of enormous numbers of civilians and a vast humanitarian emergency there. So that's another area where listeners could weigh in with their House and Senate representatives to maintain that measure in the final bill.

Ralph Nader: Tell us about Congressman Adam Smith from Washington State.

Michael Klare: Adam Smith is Chair of the House Armed Services Committee and he's been doing a masterful job of trying to use that position to insert into the bill and into defense spending some restraints on the things we've been talking about. For example, trying to reduce spending for the nuclear weapons modernization we've been speaking about, to slow down the acquisition of weapons that would make nuclear war more likely, so I think he's been doing a fabulous job.

Ralph Nader: How can people get information in their hands, you know, it doesn't have to be a ton of stuff, so they can intelligently demand the presence of senators and representatives around key issues this August when they go back home?

Michael Klare: Well that's a good question, so you mentioned the Quakers and their lobbying arm is the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the FCNL, and you can go to their website fcnll.org and sign up for alerts on these issues. They are the best, the most knowledgeable about these votes in Congress and on nuclear weapons issues. And for spending on the nuclear triad, go to the organization I collaborate with, the Arms Control Association at armscontrol.org.

Ralph Nader: It's A-R-M-S, right?

Michael Klare: Yes, [armscontrol](http://armscontrol.org), one word, armscontrol.org.

Ralph Nader: And where are the democratic presidential candidates on any of this? Are any of them taking this on or are they dodging over half of the federal operating budget and the military-industrial complex and forever wars abroad? Are they ducking it?

Michael Klare: I won't say they're ducking it. You know they're all leading with other issues that they consider more important like economic inequality, racism, immigration rights; I could understand that. But some of them are speaking out on these issues. Elizabeth Warren has spoken out and Bernie Sanders, of course, as have others. I don't mean to just single out those two, but I know they have, in particular, spoken out about the risks of excessive military spending.

Ralph Nader: Let's get some enlightenment from Steve and David.

David Feldman: Yeah, I have a question. There are people who believe that war is a constant in nature and those people are in America--Dick Cheney (former Vice President), [John] Bolton (Trump's National Security Advisor), but they also exist in other countries. So what kind of military do we need and who is a legitimate threat to the United States? Is there somebody out there we should be afraid of?

Michael Klare: Well as I said earlier, I do think that Russia and China, like the United States, are led by leaders with authoritarian tendencies who are also insecure and see militarism as a tool for their political legitimacy. I do not think that they want to go to war, any of them, I believe that.

David Feldman: Because of our strengths or just because they don't want to go to war?

Michael Klare: No, I don't think that they want to go to war per se. It's not like Hitler and others who thought war was a good thing. They're aware of the dangers, but they want to engage

in risk-taking behavior, and this is a long . . . there's a long history of this that by showing the flag, muscle flexing, acting tough, there's a lot of sports, masculine sports behavior that this comes from. You have to show the other guy that you're tougher than him.

David Feldman: So, is there a boogeyman out there? Is there somebody who we really have to fear?

Michael Klare: Do we have to fear somebody? We have to fear hackers who might trigger a war. I think we have to fear young men in planes and ships who have command of systems that could ignite a war unintentionally, but it's the whole system that we have to fear. I don't think there's a boogeyman. I think there's a system.

David Feldman: Right, right.

Ralph Nader: By the way, Michael, give that website for the Friends Committee slowly because listeners, they do have very accurate and clear information for voters back home. I mean I'm very impressed with the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Michael Klare: Yeah, the Friends Committee on National Legislation [FCNL]. The Friends are the name that Quakers use to describe themselves and its "F" as in friends, F-C-N-L, Friends Committee on National Legislation. fcnl.org.

Ralph Nader: Well thank you very much, Michael. Thank you for years and years of enlightenment and standing up to the conventional warfare state and documenting it in great detail. You have to go through enormous esoteric materials that very few have the patience or knowledge or interest to access and then translate it into clear articles in *The Nation* and various books that you've written. Thank you very much, Michael Klare. To be continued.

Michael Klare: Well, thank you for your good work.

Ralph Nader: You're welcome, Michael.

Steve Skrovan: We have been speaking with Michael Klare, author of numerous books and articles about war resources and foreign affairs. We will link to his work at ralphnaderradiohour.com. We're going to take a short break. When we come back, we're going to dive into the mailbag and Ralph will give long-awaited answers to your listener questions. But before we do that, let's hear from our *Corporate Crime Reporter* Russell Mokhiber. You are listening to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, back after this.

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, D.C., this is your *Corporate Crime Reporter* "Morning Minute" for Friday, August 2, 2019. I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Textured breast implants made by Allergan had been linked to an unusual cancer and are being recalled in the United States at the request of the Food and Drug Administration, and will also be recalled globally; that's according to a report in the *New York Times*. The FDA decision, based on an increasing number of cases and deaths from the implant-associated cancer, lags far behind action in Europe, where the Allergan devices were effectively banned late last year. Worldwide, 573 cases and 33 deaths from the cancer have been reported, with 481 of the cases clearly attributed to Allergan Biocell implants, the FDA said. For the *Corporate Crime Reporter*, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. Well let's open up the mailbag and take a listener question. David, why don't you take the one from Dale West?

David Feldman: This comes from Dale West. "Ralph, do any of the trade agreements like NAFTA protect Boeing from prosecution? Do these trade agreements restrict US regulators from banning the defective 737 MAX? Can Boeing or the airline sue the US government for grounding these unsafe planes under these treaties?"

Ralph Nader: Dale, the answer to all three questions is no. There's exclusion for this kind of safety situation that the Boeing 737 MAX reflects.

David Feldman: Okay. Well, that was short and sweet. So, Ralph, a lot of our inbox is filled with, actually most of it, is filled with listeners suggesting guests and topics for us. You wanted to address a few of those.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, we can't put everybody's suggestions on the air. There just isn't enough time. But that doesn't excuse us from giving voice to our listeners and their suggestions. And here are a few. Karen Stansbery suggests Philip Ackerman-Leist, author of *A Precautionary Tale*; she bought her copy from Acres Press. It's about a small community fighting to keep their valley free from pesticide drift from huge apple companies. Another listener, David Mazurek writes, "Dear Ralph, I really think you would appreciate the climate activist group, Citizens' Climate Lobby in their grassroots effort to pass fee-and-dividend legislation to curb greenhouse gases. James Hansen would be a great guest to speak about Citizens' Climate Lobby's efforts."

Well we had David Freeman on who, I think, doesn't think the Citizens' Climate Lobby goes fast and far enough. He wants a graded prohibition of fossil-fuel consumption year after year to eliminate them. And he doesn't think that a carbon tax is a tough enough measure and can be easily gamed by the fossil fuel companies. Cher Gilmore says, "I heard your recent interview with Paul Hawken on our local public radio station, KPFK in Los Angeles, where you were discussing his book *Drawdown* and climate change in general; you touched briefly on the carbon-fee plan proposed by Citizens' Climate Lobby, and Paul opined that if a carbon tax could be made to happen, it would be fantastic. He was doubtful though about national solutions because government at the national level is so corrupt." Well once again, there are real supporters of a carbon tax; you're not going to get one that's going to pinch enough through the US Congress. ExxonMobil has been for a carbon tax and you can imagine what suspicions that raises in the minds of people like Dave Freeman who want to go much more rigorously with the prohibition approach on fossil fuels. Michael Romano says, "Would you please consider having as a guest the great underappreciated British filmmaker Peter Watkins? If unfamiliar, please see *The Journey*, a deeply moving 14-hour antinuclear documentary war game. *Punishment Park* and *Privilege* are other films by Peter Watkins [*The War Game*]--don't miss any of them. A true original, he is Peter Watkins. Most of his films are made in true democratic fashion with nonprofessional actors, spontaneous dialogue and full participation from everybody involved. Thank you for all you do. Your podcast supplies endless inspiration for me." I hope we produce a civic perspiration, Michael, and Peter Watkins sounds like a very good candidate to come on our show. Thank you very much for suggesting it. Jeff Kunz says, "Please consider having a spokesperson from PEER on to discuss mercury-laced propellant for satellites. Thank you." We love PEER. This is a group started by foresters working for the National Forest Services spread

to environmental specialists working for the federal government. And they're pushing for all kinds of important changes and protections on the public lands. And they have two or three offices with full-time staff, so thank you very much

for that recommendation. Deirdre Gilbert suggests herself as a guest. I am the National Director of National Medical Malpractice Advocates Association and I'm interested in being on your show. Please let me know if that is possible." Well, you're working on one of the greatest sources of preventable violence in America. Johns Hopkins University study shows a minimum estimate of 5,000 people a week on average die from preventable problems while they're in hospitals. So, keep up the work, Deirdre, and we'll see if you can be on the show someday. Here's one from Marc Abizeid, "You should have an Economist, Michael Hudson, on the show. I just watched him on the *Keiser Report*. He's absolutely brilliant. I suggest you consider having him on as a guest." I've heard of him. We'll look him up. Thank you very much, Marc. Okay this is Peter Catul. His subject, "Rise of the German Green Party." He just saw this headline, grabbed his attention. "I think this would make for a great show topic, he said, especially if you'd be able to compare and contrast with the Green Party of America. Perhaps you could find the guest to interview on the topic. Thank you for all the great work you do. A faithful listener, Peter Catul." Well, the big difference is proportional representation. When the Green Party in Germany got 5% of the vote, it got 5 % of the members of parliament. If we got 10%, 10%. If it got 4%, it got nothing. Here, the Green Party would have to get a majority of the votes or a plurality of the votes to get any member of Congress, which explains why the Green Party is now one of the most dominant parties in Germany. And the Green Party in America has been marginalized and kept off the debates. But Howie Hawkins is going to be the new candidate for president and he's a very seasoned person, a former marine. He's run for local office in Syracuse. He's a grassroots organizer, and I think he's going to give more visibility to the Green Party in 2020.

David Feldman: Do they still consult with you, Ralph?

Ralph Nader: Yeah.

David Feldman: Because I haven't heard of him and this is kind of breaking news.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, it is. He's going to run and he'll get the nomination, yeah.

David Feldman: Um-hum. How old is he? Is he a young guy or . . . ?

Ralph Nader: He's about 65. He's is a Dartmouth grad. He was a marine during the Vietnam War. And he's extremely well-read and very articulate in a very low-key way. I've never seen him raise his voice. He's a Teamster. He makes his living by lifting packages for the post office. He makes his livelihood unloading trucks and lifting packages and delivering them.

David Feldman: Imagine if we had one person in Congress who left that kind of job to go to Congress, one.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, isn't that amazing? Yeah.

David Feldman: Or a farm or something, yeah, just like it was intended.

Ralph Nader: It just shows you the exclusionary nature of the political system, right, because you're excluding tens of millions of people.

David Feldman: Yeah, yeah. Anything else you want to cover there?

Ralph Nader: Yeah, this is interesting. This is from the University of North Carolina Press and she's suggesting that we invite Dr. Norton Hadler to be a guest. "And Dr. Norton Hadler has a pamphlet called *Promoting Worker Health: A New Approach to Employee Benefits for the 21st Century*. Well this is basically a suggestion to provide an alternative to the frozen workers' compensation model which involves, you know, hundreds of thousands of worker injuries a year and this sounds very interesting. The promoter from University of North Carolina Press says, "It's both appealing and potentially revolutionary if successfully adopted. I believe it's altruistic, ethical, and logical premise is what is needed". And this is apparently an endorsement by Ron Goetzel, PhD, *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. Thank you very much, Regina Mahalek, Director of Publicity UNC Press.

David Feldman: Then we'll probably make that happen.

Ralph Nader: Yes, we're going to consider these. Thank you very much, listeners. Still keep going. This is Dale West and he suggests the following guests. "Dr. Jay Friedman, author of "The Complete Guide to Dental Health", with 55 years in dental public health, an advocate for dental care and dental insurance standards, would be most enlightening. His efforts to create dental therapists in the US to engage the underserved and public schools is worth exploring. His critique of the private dental system and Medicaid dental fraud is noteworthy as well." You know, David and Steve, I once went to a dentist for a root canal and it cost like 1,600 bucks at the time. Then I said to the dentist, how can normal working folk people afford this? And he said, "They can't. Their only alternative is to have the tooth pulled." Isn't that an amazing concession?

David Feldman: Well, yes and no. There's an article that came out two months ago in *The Atlantic* or *Harpers* about dentistry. It was an exposé. And I reached out to the author. He didn't get back to me. But he would definitely do this show. Most dental work is unnecessary like a root canal. They've done studies . . . you must have done studies on this, where you go from dentist to dentist and you get a whole range of diagnoses depending on what they think you can afford, including root canals.

Ralph Nader: That's right. There's overdiagnosis in dentistry, the way there is in [the] physician world. And of course, diet has a great deal to do with prevention of caries. The whole point is that dentistry has become so expensive, that is complex dentistry, that basically there's no dental insurance that even comes close to covering it.

David Feldman: Right. The name of the story is "The Truth About Dentistry: it's much less scientific and more prone to gratuitous procedures - than you may think." That's written by Ferris Jabr in the May issue of *The Atlantic*. I'm going to send it to you.

Ralph Nader: I've read about dentists that go too quick to recommending crowns, recommending pulling teeth, recommending artificial tooth, and the difference between these

dentists and the really confident and honest dentists is really extraordinary. That's why you got to learn how to pick a dentist.

David Feldman: I once talked to my dentist about, I assumed that dental health was not good in ancient times because they didn't have modern dentistry. And he says, "Well, it's actually quite the opposite. The anthropological studies and the paleontological studies, when they dig up these

skulls, their teeth are pretty much intact." And I said why is that? He says it's probably because they were chewing on roots and branches and not eating processed food that deteriorates the teeth.

Ralph Nader: And sugar.

David Feldman: And sugar. And so actually, dentistry is probably much less needed back in ancient times than it is now.

Ralph Nader: They found the same thing with indigenous tribes in our contemporary world. There's a dentist actually who went to study the teeth of indigenous tribal people who do not eat processed foods ever. And the minute they start eating packaged processed foods in stores, their teeth's health deteriorates and they get all kinds of cavities.

Steve Skrovan: Well, thank you everybody for your questions and your suggestions. Keep them coming on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website. I want to thank our guest again, Michael Klare. For those of you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material we call the Wrap-Up. A transcript of this show will appear on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website soon after the episode is posted.

David Feldman: Subscribe to us our *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* YouTube channel, and for Ralph Nader's weekly column, it's free, go to nader.org and get it delivered directly into your inbox. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

Steve Skrovan: And Ralph has got two new books out, the fable, *How the Rats Re-Formed the Congress*. To acquire a copy of that, go to ratsreformedcongress.org, and *To the Ramparts: How Bush and Obama Paved the Way for the Trump Presidency, and Why It Isn't Too Late to Reverse Course*. We will link to that also.

David Feldman: The producers of the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran. Our executive producer is Alan Minsky.

Steve Skrovan: Our theme music "Stand up, Rise Up" was written and performed by Kemp Harris. Our proofreader is Elisabeth Solomon.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, everybody. If you want to give the book, *How the Rats Re-Formed the Congress*, to a friend, I'd be happy to autograph it and inscribe it in that fashion.