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From producing [reports](#) and [analysis](#) for U.S. policy-makers, to enlisting representatives to write [op-eds](#) in corporate media, to providing talking heads for corporate media to interview and [give quotes](#), think tanks play a fundamental role in shaping both U.S. foreign policy and public perception around that foreign policy. Leaders at top think tanks like the Atlantic Council and Hudson Institute have even been called upon [to set focus priorities](#) for the House Intelligence Committee. However, one look at the funding sources of the most influential think tanks reveals whose interests they really serve: that of the U.S. military and its defense contractors.

This ecosystem of overlapping networks of government institutions, think tanks, and defense contractors is where U.S. foreign policy is derived, and a revolving door exists among these three sectors. For example, before Biden-appointed head of the Pentagon Lloyd Austin took his current position, he sat on the Board of Directors at Raytheon. Before Austin's appointment, current defense policy advisor Michèle Flournoy was also in the running for the position. Flournoy sat on the board of Booz Allen Hamilton, another major Pentagon defense contractor. These same defense contractors also work together with think tanks like the Center for Strategic and International Studies to organize [conferences](#) attended by national security officials. On top of all this, since the end of the Cold War, intelligence analysis by the CIA and NSA has increasingly been [acted out](#) [contr](#) to these same defense companies like BAE Systems and Lockheed Martin, among others — a major conflict of interest. In other words, these corporations are in the position to produce intelligence reports which raise the alarm on U.S. "enemy" nations so they can sell more military equipment!

And of course these are the same defense companies that donate hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to think tanks. Given all this, is it any wonder the U.S. government is simultaneously flooding billions of dollars of weaponry into an unwinnable proxy war in Ukraine while escalating a Cold War into a potential military confrontation with China?

The funding to these policy institutes steers the U.S. foreign policy agenda. To give you a scope of how these contributions determine national security priorities, listed below are six of some of the most influential foreign policy think tanks, along with how much in contributions they've received from "defense" companies in the last year.

All funding information for these policy institutes was gathered from the most recent annual report that was available online. Also note that this list is compiled from those that make this information publicly available — many think tanks, such as the hawkish American Enterprise Institute, do not release donation sources publicly.

1 – Center for Strategic and International Studies

According to their [2020 annual report](#)

\$500,000+: Northrop Grumman Corporation

\$200,000-\$499,999: General Atomics (energy and defense corporation that manufactures Predator drones for the CIA), Lockheed Martin, SAIC (provides information technology services to U.S. military)

\$100,000-\$199,999: Bechtel, Boeing, Cummins (provides engines and generators for military equipment), General Dynamics, Hitachi (provides defense technology), Hanwha Group (South Korean aerospace and defense company), Huntington Ingalls Industries, Inc. (largest military shipbuilding company in the United States), Mitsubishi Corporation, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (provides intelligence and information technology services to U.S. military), Qualcomm, Inc. (semiconductor company that produces microchips for the U.S. military), Raytheon, Samsung (provides security technology to the U.S. military), SK Group (defense technology company)

\$65,000-\$99,999: Hyundai Motor (produces weapons systems), Oracle

\$35,000-\$64,999: BAE Systems

2 – Center for a New American Security

From [fiscal year 2021-2022](#)

\$500,000+: Northrop Grumman Corporation

\$250,000-\$499,999: Lockheed Martin

\$100,000-\$249,000: Huntington Ingalls Industries, Neal Blue (Chairman and CEO of General Atomics), Qualcomm, Inc., Raytheon, Boeing

\$50,000-\$99,000: BAE Systems, Booz Allen Hamilton, Intel Corporation (provides aerospace and defense technology), Elbit Systems of America (aerospace and defense company), General Dynamics, Palantir Technologies

3 – Hudson Institute

According to their [2021 annual report](#)

\$100,000+: General Atomics, Linden Blue (co-owner and Vice Chairman of General Atomics), Neal Blue, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman

\$50,000-\$99,000: BAE Systems, Boeing, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

4 – Atlantic Council

According to their [2021 annual report](#)

\$250,000-\$499,000: Airbus, Neal Blue, SAAB (provides defense equipment)

\$100,000-\$249,000: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon

\$50,000-\$99,000: SAIC

5 – International Institute for Strategic Studies

Based in London. From [fiscal year 2021-2022](#)

£100,000+: Airbus, BAE Systems, Boeing, General Atomics, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Rolls Royce (provides military airplane engines)

£25,000-£99,999: Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems, Northrop Grumman Corporation

6 – Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Note: ASPI has been one of the primary purveyors of the “Uyghur genocide” narrative

From their [2021-2022 annual report](#)

\$186,800: Thales Australia (aerospace and defense corporation)

\$100,181: Boeing Australia

\$75,927: Lockheed Martin

\$20,000: Omni Executive (aerospace and defense corporation)

\$27,272: SAAB Australia