

## Connecting the Dots on Oil - Iran, Trump, and the Kochs

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NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/Getty Images[/caption]

I wrote here almost a year ago that [“It’s the fossil fuels, stupid.”](#) We, the people, suffer, of course, from Trump Inc.’s self-serving, kleptocratic impulses, manifest in his executive agencies, with the full complicity of that wholly owned subsidiary of corporate America, the Republicans in Congress, aided and abetted by the reactionary majority on SCOTUS. But if there’s a guiding force behind the greed, the racism, the sheer vileness of the behavior, indeed the treason of these mutants, it’s fossil fuels. More precisely, it’s the money generated by the fossil fuels.

Nothing’s changed. It’s gotten worse. Does anybody think Scott Pruitt would still have his job, given the weight of [the investigations](#) into his blatant corruption (not to mention his manifest amorality), if he didn’t have a guardian devil – or in his case, two: The Koch Brothers. These two avowed enemies of democracy, were sprung from the loins of [Fred Koch](#), a founder of the John Birch Society, who partnered with both Hitler **and** Stalin – quite a feat. His boys, Charlie and Dave, [spent a fair bit of change to put Pruitt in office](#). They expect their money’s worth and are not going to allow mere evidence of thievery to undercut their investment.

Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior, and thus the chief steward of vast tracts of America, onshore and offshore, has been running [a fire sale](#) for the oil, gas, and other mining interests. The Kochs? You bet. For Zinke, it’s just a question of [“How high should I jump?”](#)

[Mike Pence](#), you won’t be surprised to learn, is another of the Koch operatives doing their handiwork.

The oil, gas, and coal boys, led by the Kochs, have their myrmidons well, truly and [deeply embedded in the agencies](#) now. And some [Democrats want answers](#). (Good luck with that.)

And now [the Kochs have their very own Secretary of State](#). Mike Pompeo, as documented in Jane Mayer’s indispensable book, [Dark Money](#), was the “congressman from Koch,” before he

was CIA director and now Secretary of State. The Kochs “once invested an undisclosed amount of money” in an aerospace business Pompeo started, and then backed his congressional campaign, along with their PAC and one of their principal fronts, Americans for Prosperity. (You know how those dirty, hippie environmentalists are **against** prosperity.) His rabbi then installed Mark Chenoweth, one of their own, as Pompeo’s chief of staff. (Chenoweth is now general counsel to yet-another Koch front, the [Washington Legal Foundation](#).)

Pompeo, [a climate denier](#) (natch), is also a dangerous hawk on Iran. As reported [here](#), he said a couple of years ago “Congress must act to change Iranian behavior, and, ultimately, the Iranian regime.” At the CIA, he equated Iran and ISIS and attempted to link Iran with Al Qaeda. ([Remember when Dubya didn’t know the difference between the Shias and the Sunnis?](#)) And who else have you got on board now in the American national security hierarchy? John Bolton. (You got it in one.) [He’s been at it for years](#). Et voilà, Trump tears up the hard-won, [successful agreement on Iran](#). What about [the threat of war](#)? What could be better for two leaders who are dead center in the gunsights of prosecutors: [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) and [Donald Trump](#) (if you hadn’t guessed).

What’s this got to do with oil? It turns out that the Street is extremely sensitive to the drumbeats of war, particularly when it comes to oil. They’ve been [sensing for a few months](#) that as the tension builds against Iran, that the price of oil will rise commensurately. When General McMaster was twittered out and John Bolton brought on board as National Security Adviser, there was even a term for the oil price jump: “[the Bolton premium](#).” A good, old-fashioned full-fledged war with Iran would really be a big boost to oil prices, wouldn’t you guess? The American producers in Texas, Alaska, and North Dakota and – [who else loves you, baby?](#) Russia. Gee, if America and Israel go to war with Iran, would Russia gain some oil market share? Maybe the Saudis too? There certainly is [some foundation](#) for that notion. Okay, let’s be hopeful and say that Trump’s aggression is only economic – for the time being, anyway – but still reinstating the sanctions is going to drive prices up. [Good, again, for the Russians and the Saudis](#).

How do we break the back of the fossil fuel industries, neutralize their malign influence on global politics, and restore democracy? It’s been the same, simple answer for several years now: [decarbonize our economies](#). If we don’t do this for the climate, then we should be doing it for our politics, our **collective** inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – or maybe you prefer [the Four Freedoms](#). Either way, Trump, Putin and the Kochs are against you and your rights, so fight back.