

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EP 309 TRANSCRIPT

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan. David Feldman is on assignment this week with that seeker of truth and justice, Triumph, the Insult Comic Dog. They're in DC covering the impeachment trial, I guess. We'll expect a full report when he gets back, but we do have the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Hello, Steve. Hello, everybody.

Steve Skrovan: We're going to do something a little bit different here. We're going to actually, before we set all the topics on the table, we're going to start with a listener question we got. This came through our inbox from Chris W., Ralph, and he says, "Ralph, first thank you for your lifetime of public service. I was heartened to hear comments you made on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* to the effect that, still to this day, you are actively meeting with congressional representatives on Capitol Hill."

"What I'd like to know is who are your peers in the public arena? What other public organizations and consumer advocates are also working diligently for the public? What are the organizations, and who are the individuals, such as yourself, that the public at large can support--organizations and people that we don't hear about/don't know about, but whose cause would benefit from more public spotlight?" "Currently, the public is outnumbered and outspent by corporate lobbyists, but this is not necessarily an immutable state of our society. The term 'lobbyist' has an innately negative connotation in our society, but that too could be turned around if more people rallied for and used the term 'public lobbyist' or 'lobbyist for the public', which is something we need." So, what do you say to that, Ralph?

Ralph Nader: Right on, Chris W. Yeah, there are other groups; I'm going to tell you. Obviously, our group. You can go to info@csrl.org, and then there's Public Citizen that has different sections, the Congress Watch, and the Litigation Group, and the Health Group, and other groups working on Capitol Hill. And then there's Common Cause, you've heard of that. Then there's People For the American Way set up by Norman Lear, the great film-person, years ago. The Center for Science in the Public Interest that has dramatically changed nutritional habits and put pressure on food companies to provide larger choice of food in the supermarket. Then, there's the Pension Rights Center, which we established, Karen Ferguson, Karen Friedman; they're the only game in town. They deal with what's happening in the trillions of dollars of worker pensions. And then there's the Center for Auto Safety, which has been responsible for the recall of millions of cars and other watchdog functions over the Department of Transportation. So, they're going on, but you're right, they are completely outnumbered; I mean, laughably, tragically outnumbered. Hundreds and hundreds of corporate lobbyists to the few that represent you, the people. However, these people have made dramatic gains on your behalf because they have truth, facts, science, and your public opinion behind you. And if you see your cars are safer and you don't have as much lead in your blood, or asbestos has been phased out, I mean you can attribute that to a handful of small citizen groups. There's obviously the environmental groups like Sierra Club, groups like NRDC [Natural Resources Defense Council], the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU]; you have the Center

for Constitutional Rights [CCR], and other similar groups. But, they don't add up to the size of one giant corporate law firm in terms of staff. Yet, as I say, they have the truth, the justice, the facts, and your public opinion, and support behind them. However, the public opinion is not enough. We're losing ground in many areas, and I must say, Steve, I've been disappointed by the response to our efforts to get you, the people, out there to organize Congress watchdog groups. I've tried in all kinds of ways over the years, even a humorous way with *How the Rats Re-Formed the Congress*, which is a fable to make you laugh yourself seriously into picking up the great details of how the people organized themselves to take back control of Congress from the corporate power structure. And it's still available. People who do order it often are excited enough to order five at one time, discounted.

You can go the ratsreformcongress.org; see for yourself. And if people are a little averse to very serious, ponderous tomes on our U.S. Congress, the most powerful branch under the Constitution, they can change the whole situation in America and bring many long overdue changes in healthcare, and living wage, and corporate-crime crackdown, and better tax system, and infrastructure repair [for] schools, public water systems, public transit, and other services back home and get out of the empire business; you can go to this tome. It's not very long. It's very lively and it'll show you how people like you woke up to their huge potential of the sovereignty of "We the People" in the Constitution and swarmed over Congress back home, swarmed over them around the Congress; a lot of interesting techniques on how to make yourself powerful vis-a-vis your two senators and representatives. So, go again to ratsreformcongress.org, that's ratsreformcongress.org and set up a little living room meeting back in your town, or city, or village, and get it underway with a letterhead. Get a Congress watchdog group, or we call it a rat watch group just to get people's attention. And you'll see the difference in terms of how those two senators and representatives respect you, reply to you, and even come to your summons for town meetings where your agenda is on the table, not theirs.

Steve Skrovan: And Chris, I would just add, you have already come to the right place, the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website. All you need to do is go through our archives and you can hear and listen to many of the people that Ralph has talked about, representing the organizations that he mentioned, plus many more. So, you're already here; this is what we're trying to promote, and we continue to do so on the show today.

On this show today, we welcome a guest we've spoken to before who has a unique take on the climate crisis. His name is Michael Klare. He's written a book entitled *All Hell Breaking Loose*, which has been described as an "eye-opening examination of climate change from the perspective of the U.S. Military". That's right, this is something that is very rarely spoken about, mainly how the Pentagon, the largest and most powerful government bureaucracy in the world, if not the most politically conservative, has never denied that there's a climate crisis. In fact, they've been planning for climate disruption for years, with the potential for drought, and famine, creating conflict over food resources, and arable land, and Arctic ice melting, creating new seaways to defend. They are gaming for the challenge while politicians fiddle away.

Meanwhile, as Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson told us a couple of weeks ago, the military is also the biggest user of fossil fuels in the country. So, I guess that means they are planning for crises they're

helping create. They don't deny it. The deniers are the corporate honchos and political hacks that are selling them the stuff. We'll be talking to Michael Klare about all of that. And as always, we will take a break to check in with our corporate crime reporter, Russell Mohkiber, who always has his finger on the pulse of the corporate crime beat.

Last week, we had a discussion with former member of the Fed [Reserve] Board of Governors, Sarah Bloom Raskin about how the Federal Reserve is not dealing with the climate crisis. Today, we're going to start off with another august institution, the Pentagon, which in at least one important way, is gaming for climate disruptions. Professor Michael Klare is the author of 15 books, including *Resource Wars*, *Blood and Oil*, *Rising Powers*, *Shrinking Planet* and *The Race for What's Left*. He is the director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies [PAWSS] at Hampshire College. Professor Klare is also the defense correspondent for *The Nation* magazine, and his latest book is entitled *All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change*. Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Michael Klare.

Michael Klare: A pleasure, always, to be with you.

Ralph Nader: Indeed. Welcome, Michael. I've read every page of your book and marked it up. And so, we're going to go in deep here. It's sort of counterintuitive to most people who are deemed progressive, look on the Pentagon as a military empire representing the White House in the military industrial complex. You're trying to give an additional view here, and in the process, educate people about something very significant. And just to give people a sense of what your book is all about, you, in your introduction, say that, "In response to this peril of climate change," I'm quoting, "The military leadership has not sought to position itself as a significant actor in a national debate over climate change. Well aware of the partisan nature of that debate and reluctant to become embroiled in domestic politics, senior officials have said relatively little about the causes of warming or other controversial issues. But, for many officers, neither the dangers posed by global warming nor the imperative of addressing these threats have disappeared, because a climate change skeptic has entered the White House. From their own experience, these military officials know that many U.S. allies are experiencing severe drought and other harsh consequences of warming, exacerbating internal divisions and triggering violent conflict." And this will frame what Michael has been writing about before we get into the discussion. I always like to go to the table of contents. Now, just look at what the Pentagon is actively involved in under the radar of Donald Trump's denial, a chapter on the "Climate Threat to American National Security," subject of a lot of Pentagon studies. "Humanitarian Emergencies," "Climate Disasters," "Civil Disorder in U.S. Military Relief Operations Around the World," "States on the Brink," "Resource Scarcity," "Ethnic Strife and Government Collapse," "Food Shortages," "Energy Crisis," "Pandemics and Mass Migration Due to Climate Disruptions," "The Melting Arctic and Other Conflict Zones," "Domestic Climate Disasters and the Military Strategic Predicament," "No Safe Harbors" The climate change threat to American military facilities alone, damage to military bases.

So, you can see that there are billions of dollars being spent on this when there's a disaster due to a huge flood in South Asia. U.S. ships are detoured; military cargo planes come in with supplies, and it's becoming more and more an expectation that the U.S. Military will come to the rescue. So, Michael, I know this book does not spend much time blaming Donald Trump; this book is a

synthesis of studies [by] such groups as Union of Concerned Scientists and so forth. And people shouldn't expect it to be a denunciation of Trump.

Also, you don't spend much time on the kind of military actions that have no basis in American law and have not been authorized by Congress. You don't talk about the lack of an auditable budget by the Pentagon. You've written other things about those subjects. And I only wish you would use the word "climate disruption, or climate crisis, or climate catastrophe" instead of climate change. But, in all of these pages and these footnotes, you really drill down on what message the American people have got to incorporate in their mounting momentum to turn this country's priorities around towards solar energy, energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gases.

Michael Klare: Indeed, yes. Well, you begin, Ralph, by saying that this book is not a critique of the U.S. Military. In other books and other articles, I've certainly leveled criticism of the U.S. Military for a whole lot of reasons. Although, it's the policymakers in Washington [on] who I lay most of the blame for those things, not the soldiers. I think American soldiers, American officers, for the most part, believe they're doing the right thing, that they're doing what's best for the country, and that it's policymakers, whoever, the President, and the Secretary of Defense, and so on who choose the bad policies in which soldiers often get ensnared. And I think that's certainly the case today with the forever wars in the Middle East. That's obvious.

But, what my book is about is how the military sees climate change, a topic they're not even supposed to talk about, according to their Commander-in-Chief. But they cannot avoid this subject, because it interferes with their work, as they see it, of defending the nation. From what I could tell, they would really spend their time studying how to protect the United States from what they see is the real threats, which in their mind, for the most part, is China, and then followed by Russia, and maybe North Korea. And we could discuss whether or not that assessment is correct or not. I think that's a very interesting conversation. That's what they see is the primary threat. But, they believe they see, with their own eyes and their own intelligence, that climate change, or a climate disruption, or a climate crisis, will impede their efforts to defend the nation and to carry out their duties, as they see them. So, they cannot escape the ravage of climate change, climate disruption. It's going to increasingly undermine their work as they see it. And for that reason...

Ralph Nader: Michael, let me interrupt you here. Hurricane Michael really leveled an Air Force base jutting out in the Gulf of Mexico. Most people don't remember that. Why don't you tell us when that happened and what kind of damage was done to the U.S. Air Base there.

Michael Klare: Certainly, and of course people in Florida remember this because this is Tyndall Air Force Base in the Florida Panhandle. It sticks out into the Gulf of Mexico, and it was utterly destroyed by Hurricane Michael of October 2018. We don't know the full extent of how many billions of damage was done by this. The buildings alone suffered an immediate \$3 billion worth of damage, but the base also houses a large share of America's F-22 Stealth Bomber fleet, and many of those planes couldn't get away because they were in repair in hangars, and the hangars were destroyed, and the planes in them were destroyed too. Each one of those cost \$350 million. So, you could tally up that cost. And the people in Florida are very concerned that the base will never be restored to its original condition, and that will have an enormous impact on the economy

of the state. So, climate change has an effect on the military readiness. It also has an enormous impact on the economy of coastal communities.

Ralph Nader: Explain, also, the varieties of storms--hurricanes, floods, fires--just to give a picture of this enormous devastation from an abused nature by mankind over the decades--fossil fuels and other greenhouse gases--to set the stage for why the Pentagon is deeply worried; not just because of the damage to various bases, and Tyndall Air Force Base is only one of many damaged bases here and abroad you described in your book. So, give a picture of what's coming in on our country, and of course around the world.

Michael Klare: So, yes looking abroad, the biggest worry they have is drought, a water scarcity, resulting collapse of agriculture in much of the developing world. In Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, they see a future in which food, agriculture collapses in those areas, send huge waves of migration across continents headed to this country, to Europe, wherever, along the way, producing chaos, mass pandemics. And we're seeing a pandemic now, and we could see how quickly these spread.

Ralph Nader: Michael, you're not only predicting, but explain what happened in Syria over 10 years ago, and the consequences.

Michael Klare: Absolutely. In Syria, in the first decade of this century, we saw profound, prolonged drought in Syria. And this led to waves of migration from the countryside to the cities. And when those cities revolted, the displaced farmers were among those who protested against the regime, because they never got treated very well by the Assad Regime. And of course, many of those desperate people then fled to Turkey and onward to Europe, creating immense political upheavals in Europe that haven't ended to this day. This is the kind of future we can expect from increasing drought and agricultural collapse around the world, but it's just a tiny indication of what we could expect. And then at home, there are forest fires that are burning large parts of the West, and many U.S. bases are vulnerable in the West, while on the East Coast, you have rising seas and severe hurricanes that threaten many East Coast coastal communities. But, that's also where many of the Navy's bases are located as well.

Ralph Nader: And in your book, you talk about DoD directive, Department of Defense Directive 4715.21 titled "Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience" from 2016, which emphasized the protection of the military's own infrastructure against the ravages of climate change and the development of a climate-conscious institutional culture among combat forces, enabling them to better cope with future challenges. Every military installation and organization is directed, by the Pentagon, to identify its vulnerabilities to extreme climate effects and to take whatever steps are deemed necessary to overcome these vulnerabilities." Well, this is official policy. Why haven't they educated Donald Trump in the White House? He flatters the military. He says they're the best in the world. Why doesn't he listen to them?

Michael Klare: Well, now first of all, it's not clear how much he listens to the military. He often denigrates people in the military when they don't do what he wants them to. So, there is this divide, and I think what's happening, actually, is that the military is going about carrying out that directive, trying to adapt to the threat of climate change, but just not telling the president about it, using

euphemisms like "severe weather", and "rising seas", but never mentioning the words that he might object to and get him into a rant. So, quietly, I believe they are carrying out that directive of adaptation.

Ralph Nader: But, you know, Michael, there is an intersection between the Pentagon, Trump, and our own borders. Although Trump helped create the migration crisis from Central America up through Mexico to the U.S. by threatening to close the borders to stop asylum-seekers, people freaked out in Honduras, and El Salvador, and Guatemala, and said, "Well, this is our last chance. We better head north." But, part of the pressure to uproot these families in Central America came from climate disruption, right? Drought and so on. Can you explain that?

Michael Klare: Absolutely, there's no question about it. Migration is never or rarely a single matter. It's always a combination of factors. What's happening in Central America is that a combination of prolonged drought and consistently rising temperature has destroyed traditional agriculture in many parts of Central America--Honduras and Guatemala in particular. And it's forced a lot of farmers and their children to migrate to the cities in those countries, and the cities are horrible places where there's a lot of crime, and violence, and poverty. So, they get to the cities and their kids are forced into gangs, and it's at that point that people say, "Well, maybe it's better to migrate to the U.S. Whatever the dangers along the way, we'll be safer there than in our crime-ridden cities." So, climate change is a factor. It's the original factor of drought and food insecurity. But, other factors get involved, and this is going to become more frequent in the future, not less so.

Ralph Nader: You mentioned in your book that few serving officers in the military are willing to say much in public because Donald Trump doesn't want it discussed. He doesn't think that climate disruption is an omnicidal threat to the globe, much less the U.S. But, you say in March 2019--that's less than a year ago--"the *Los Angeles Times* published two official memos sent from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert Neller, to the Secretary of Defense, delineating the harm to readiness being caused by the border assignments. The deployments along the southwest border, Neller indicated, posed 'unacceptable risk to Marine Corps combat readiness and solvency.'"

This is when Trump sent several thousand U.S. Marines on the border. And you know, under Federal Law, they can't engage in any military activity. They can just do logistics or ministerial work, helping the National Guard people there. So, I find it difficult for Congress, the House of Representatives, going along with this muzzling of the Pentagon. Why haven't they had a hearing and demanded that the Pentagon generals come up and tell the Congress what's on their mind? Why should they be so passive? I don't recall there has been a hearing in the last year since the Democrats took control of the House. Do you?

Michael Klare: Well, the Democrats certainly have raised objections to the Wall on many grounds. So, there have been hearings about the Wall and how it detracts from other national priorities, including national defense, because Trump is taking money away from things like improvements to housing on bases and medical facilities on bases. So, there's a deep reservoir of anger about

what he's doing to find money. He's scraping funds from other projects that are considered more important for political purposes.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, that goes without saying. We've all seen, or heard, or read about those hearings. And by the way, by diverting over \$3 billion without authority of Congress from the military budget to the Wall, he has violated the Anti-Deficiency Act, which has criminal penalties. The Republicans keep saying, "Where's the crime?" People around the country who like Trump, "Where's the crime?" Well, he's violated that criminal statute, which is impeachable, as well as the Anti-Impoundment Act, which has civil penalties, quite apart from other federal statutes he's violated in the context of violating our Constitution.

To answer the question, "Where are the crimes?" well has there been a hearing, a general hearing, Michael Klare, author of the book, *All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change*? Has there been any general hearings to give the Pentagon a protected venue to talk about this enormous pressure on military facilities and countries who are suffering from drought, migration, internal conflict, civil war that the Pentagon has to rush to relieve, etcetera? Has there been any hearings?

Michael Klare: Well, there certainly have been occasions on which members of the military have spoken about the ways in which climate change is affecting their ability to carry out their duties, and they've been, as recently as January 2020, where the people responsible for installations, for example, those people have been very clear that they cannot maintain the integrity of U.S. Military bases any longer without addressing the climate risks. There have been hearings on that just last month. So, yes people in the military are speaking out on those issues. You also have commanders from AFRICOM, the United States Africa Command, speaking about how drought in Africa has increased the level of conflict there and caused problems for the military. And other senior officers have testified on this issue repeatedly. There have been other hearings as well. So, yes there has been testimony, but the military officers, senior officers are very, very careful in their use of language and are hesitant to say those two words, as if they're prohibited sin language.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, in other words, they describe the disasters, but not the cause.

Michael Klare: Often, that's the case. But, you can read between the lines or you can, when they're questioned by members of Congress, "Are you really talking about climate change?" they say yes.

Ralph Nader: Now, we're facing the China pandemic coming out of China, this Coronavirus. It had 7, 8 thousand cases, so far, documented; probably more they're unable to document, and well over 100 deaths. And of course, it's cropping up in various countries, including our own. Tell us about climate disruption in pandemics. I don't think many people make the connection. Describe it in some detail, Michael.

Michael Klare: Yes, I'm happy to do that. Now, so far, the Chinese outbreak of Coronavirus, I cannot, at this point, point to any connection to climate disruption, climate change, although there may be. At this point, that's not evident. But, other outbreaks, like the Zika Virus, and especially the Ebola Virus, can be associated with climate change, and many scientists believe this will be increasingly so in the future. Why is that? That's because Zika and Ebola are transferred by

mosquitos, and mosquitos love hot, warm weather, hot, humid weather. And climate change is producing a lot more--is going to produce a lot more hot, humid weather in many parts of the world. And as people congregate in these dense urban centers, another product of climate change because, as I said, the inland farming areas are being devastated by drought, pushing people to coastal areas in big cities around the world, especially in Africa, and Latin America, and Asia where these diseases, mosquito-borne diseases can travel more easily. That's what happened with Zika and with Ebola Virus. Another disease that's ravaging this country is Lyme Disease, and Lyme Disease is clearly benefiting from warmer temperatures in this country.

Ralph Nader: Yes, you're talking about the ticks that started being discovered in Lyme, Connecticut, which gave this disease that spread over half the country, Minnesota and elsewhere, its name. Now, there are Pentagon officials who are totally beside themselves about rising sea levels, because this hits so many vulnerabilities: civilian vulnerabilities, commercial vulnerabilities, the military vulnerabilities. Tell us about that.

Michael Klare: People in the military are smart people and observant people. You could talk to a crowd of Trump supporters in a rally and say there's no such thing as climate change, and they'll go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, go Trump." But, people in the military are not dummies. They can see, with their own eyes, what's happening. And if you're a sailor or a commander, say, at Norfolk Naval Base, the largest in the world, America's most important naval base, the fact is that the sea has been rising steadily for the past century, and they have measurements to see it, and the rate of increase is growing and it's growing rapidly. So, they could see that, over the next decades, Norfolk Naval Base, which is very close to sea level in Virginia, is going to be under water. And this entire base, the largest in the country, is going to be submerged, and this will of course [mean], submerged in high tides, and storms, and eventually, completely submerged. And how are we going to fight our wars, conduct our other business if our major naval base is submerged? Of course, they're truly beside themselves, and they try to get the President's attention to this, and of course, he won't pay any attention.

Ralph Nader: You think, Michael, in a perverse way, that climate disruption can be inadvertently a peace movement by disabling all these military facilities around the world?

Michael Klare: I think it could play a positive role in bringing about international peace and collaboration. Yes, I do, because I think every nation is going to face the same problems, and some more than others, and it's going to make war a frivolous luxury for most nations. As I said earlier, right now, the major preoccupation of the U.S. Military is to prepare for a future war with China. Well, I can tell you, based on the scientific evidence, that the Chinese military is going to have zero time for fighting America in another decade or so because China is going to be completely preoccupied with defending its shores against rising water and the rest of the country from spreading deserts, and drought, and floods, and fires. And the military will have no time to fight the United States. And the U.S. Military will be doing much of the same. So, there's a basis for international cooperation to address the climate threat, and some American military officers have called for this kind of cooperation.

Ralph Nader: And this is a very important point. There's nothing stopping universities and colleges from inviting these generals and admirals to talk candidly on campus about all this. So much change has historically started with our campus, and nothing preventing them from developing this. They come on with great credibility on this issue. No one's going to challenge their loyalty. But, before we get Steve coming on with comments and questions, I'm sure, on his mind, let's be a little bit controversial here. My guess is this important book affects everybody in the world. You give examples. You're not just predicting. The damage is occurring all over the world: hurricanes, droughts, massive wildfires, wind-swept buildings crumbling, migrations, semi-starvation, violent conflict on borders. It's all happening now. So, question number 1--if you can answer these very quickly--have you been on NPR or PBS on this book?

Michael Klare: Not yet, but it is scheduled.

Ralph Nader: Okay, have you been on any of the network shows? They have all kinds of talk shows, late night shows, morning shows, *Good Morning America*, *Today Show*.

Michael Klare: Not on any of those national shows, no.

Ralph Nader: Have you been reviewed in the *New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, and *LA Times* book review sections?

Michael Klare: No, but you're making me sad.

Ralph Nader: Well, I'm going to go to a point here. Have you gotten any environmental groups and citizen groups really affected by this book--in terms of expanding their range of concern--mobilizing the public, the voters, making it an issue in the presidential campaigns, the senatorial campaigns, the gubernatorial campaigns?

Michael Klare: Well, on that score, Ralph, I think there is some interest in the topic. I've been going around speaking to various groups, and I do see interest.

Ralph Nader: That's good. Here's my point. And you know, authors don't like to admit this. I admit it myself that people are not, with few exceptions, interested in serious descriptions of perils to themselves, their economy, their world, their children, their grandchildren. When I was a youngster in the 1940s, Michael, there was an independence movement in India to break away from the British Empire, and the empire people would say, "The people of India are not ready for democracy. We have to have India under the British Empire and the military presence in India." And my father would say, "You know, that's a good question to ask here. Are the American people ready for democracy?" And I want to ask you candidly, given the lack of mobilization against this serial ignoramus in the White House, who is not only refusing to reduce the risk of climate change by controlling fossil-fuel reduction, and expanding solar energy and energy efficiency. He's not only doing nothing about it, but he's actually aiding and abetting the worsening of fossil-fuel burning expansion, drilling in the Arctic, etcetera, to make the devastation on the people of the United States and the people of the world even worse. Now, in any sane society, this would be a criminal felony of the first order of magnitude, "Out of here, Trump. You're impeached and convicted in the Senate." Now, I want to ask you, very candidly, Michael, because you've been all over the country speaking for decades. You have been right in your warnings; you have been right

with your facts. You have spoken in colleges, and universities, and citizen groups, and political groups. Are the American people ready for democracy?

Michael Klare: The American people, in my mind, have embraced democracy long ago, and they've discovered that it's a complicated bowl of fish. I don't know how to put it better. And they improve it, and it gets better, and then they allow it to get sour. And I think we're in one of those periods. So, I think it's hard to give you a clear answer. I think democracy is an experiment. It's a changing...it constantly changes, and we can make it better and have made it better by allowing women to vote, giving women the right to vote, and then the civil rights laws that increased voter participation. Those were strides for democracy. Today, I see backward strides.

Ralph Nader: Yes, I think you're right. Let me be clearer. When I say, "Are they ready now for democracy?" I don't mean, "Do they approve of democracy?" Most people like democracy. It brings the best out of people, whether they're conservatives, or liberals, or what have you. Are they ready to use the tools of democracy: at the ballot box, in the courtroom, statewide initiatives, referendums, recall, mass rallies around Congress, state legislatures, demanding that the press pay more attention to it and not be so trivial and sensationalized and otherwise diverted by political and corporate charlatans? I don't think they're ready by those yardsticks!

Michael Klare: Well, if you're speaking specifically about climate issues for now, on this issue is the one that we're particularly focused on and concerned about. At this point, I don't see that the public is ready, for the most part, to embrace climate change as the leading democratic issue.

Ralph Nader: You remember Governor Jay Inslee who was a candidate for the presidency from Washington State. He said that was his main issue, and he's one of the first to drop out because he didn't get traction. We've been talking about climate disruption for over 25 years, and it's not making Trump lose a minute of sleep between tweets, politically.

Michael Klare: That's right. But, looking forward, I do believe that, community by community, county by county, this will change. And I saw that in my most recent speaking tour in Florida. Florida is a Republican-leaning state, and a lot of Trump supporters there, and historically, a lot of climate denialism. But, that is changing, and changing rapidly because Florida is one of the states most exposed to sea-level rise and extreme storm behavior. So, when I spoke on these topics in Florida, I had the largest audiences and the biggest sense that people there--Republicans and Democrats, I'm saying-- are becoming most aroused about the topic. I think you're finding this also true in the coastal communities of Virginia, around Norfolk and Virginia Beach where the town council just adopted much more stringent regulations on where you could build homes and flood zones.

Ralph Nader: You're quite right. Whether they're Conservative, Liberal, Democrat, Republican, they're afraid of losing their homes. The waves are lapping where they work, where they sleep at night, where they engage in recreation, and you're right. Still, however, the Republican members of Congress haven't gotten the message.

Michael Klare: No, there are some. Actually, there is now a caucus called the Climate Solutions Caucus that's made up half of Republicans and half of Democrats that's working on issues so that

even, for example, the Department of Defense National Defense Authorization Act contains a whole range of measures adopted by both houses of Congress, signed by the President, requiring the military to begin to take steps to protect against climate change. So, there is actually steps being taken by this bipartisan group in Congress. There is actually progress being made, but it's being led by people in the most affected, Republicans I'm saying, in the most affected states. Many of these states also have large military installations, large military communities, and my book is very much addressed to those communities. And I hope to be speaking more often in those places because people there really are coming together and beginning to pay much more attention to the dangers they face.

Ralph Nader: Well, I hope our listeners will stimulate invitations for you to make your position clearer and lecture venues all over the country. We were talking with Michael T. Klare, K-L-A-R-E. His new book is called *All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change*. Steve, what would you like to say?

Steve Skrovan: Well, I have to say I was heartened by the idea that, perversely, these climate disruptions would possibly preoccupy the major powers, supposedly China and the U.S. from confronting each other because they'd be so busy trying to rehabilitate their own land. But, Professor Klare, you're a student of war. Isn't the history of war more about reaching beyond your borders when you have a crisis at home, your situation is bad, or your land is no good, or you're overcrowded, so I'm going to take somebody else's? Isn't that more the human nature of war?

Michael Klare: Well, there certainly is a long history of that. The problem for the future is that military resources, however much money we throw at them, however powerful they may be, they're limited. And the U.S. Military is very aware of this. They're very concerned that they're faced with the threats or the challenge posed by a more assertive Russia in Europe and the Middle East, and by a rising China, by North Korea. All of these require that certain forces be allocated against those adversaries. Then, there's Iran, and we rushed more U.S. troops to the Middle East. So, now in a climate-affected world, despite what you say, the thought--and now I'm speaking from the perspective of the military--of addressing the collapse, say, of Pakistan, Nigeria, India, and Saudi Arabia, which I think is very realistic, and they think is a real possibility. Pakistan and India are nuclear weapons states. If they were to collapse, setting off chaos throughout Asia, possibly nuclear, that's going to make enormous demands on their capabilities, far beyond what they have. And then at the same time, they know that the U.S. will be attacked by multiple hurricanes, floods, droughts, and fires, and there will be requests from every governor in the U.S. to send troops there to help out with American victims. This is what I call "all hell breaking loose", the all hell breaking loose scenario. So, they're not going to be looking for more wars to fight, and that's certainly the case for China.

Steve Skrovan: So, we'll be more occupied fighting the war against nature than wars against the humans.

Ralph Nader: Michael, has the Pentagon responded to you? Have you gotten an invitation to speak at the National War College in Washington, DC?

Michael Klare: I have spoken there in the past, Ralph. Not on this occasion, but I have been asked to speak at other military academies in the future.

Ralph Nader: And what's the Pentagon response to your book?

Michael Klare: You know, the Pentagon is not a "it". It's a very large bureaucracy, and many retired officers have endorsed the book, and you'll see their endorsements when the paperback comes out on the back cover, or at Amazon, you could see. So, the current leadership is not going to speak out on something like this. That would be a little bit difficult for them for reasons we've discussed. But, former officers have endorsed the book quite strongly.

Ralph Nader: On this note, we have to conclude. We've been talking with Michael T. Klare, spelled K-L-A-R-E. The book is *All Hell Breaking Loose*, Metropolitan Books, a major publisher. It's been out for over a month, and we recommend that listeners buy it, form discussion groups, and summon your two senators and representatives for town meetings on this momentous topic that includes so many of your own concerns and worries about the future and the present of our country and the world. Thank you very much, Professor Klare.

Michael Klare: And thank you so much, both of you, for giving me this opportunity to speak on this topic.

Ralph Nader: You're very welcome.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Michael Klare. We will link to *All Hell Breaking Loose* at RalphNaderRadioHour.com. You're listening to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. Back after this word from our corporate crime reporter, Russell Mohkiber.

Russell Mohkiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, D.C., this is your Corporate Crime Reporter Morning Minute for Friday, January 31, 2020. I'm Russell Mohkiber. When you download your Uber app, you agree that you're older than 18, that you're not using a stolen credit card to pay your driver. And if you're like one Philadelphia woman and fracture your spine in a car crash, that you won't seek a jury trial against Uber. But, a Philadelphia common pleas court judge has ruled that because Uber can't prove that Jillian Kemenosh actually read the company's terms and conditions before she signed up or rode in the car that ran a red light, she can't be forced to settle her claims behind closed doors. Uber argues that, by approving the rideshare's terms and conditions when she downloaded the app in 2013, Kemenosh had already forfeited her right to a jury, agreeing instead to resolve any legal disputes only through binding arbitration. For the Corporate Crime Reporter, I'm Russell Mohkiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. Let's take another listener question. Okay, this listener question comes from Gregory Nelson. He says, "I love Ralph Nader. He's a brave voice of reason and a humanitarian. I agree with him about 95% of time. Regarding Tesla, however, he apparently doesn't understand its value, products, or mission. Tesla and Elon Musk are doing more to move us away from fossil fuels and mitigate the climate catastrophe than just about anyone else on Earth, and Tesla's market cap is a reflection of its inevitable disruption of the largest industries on the planet.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, a few days ago, I did a couple tweets on Tesla's skyrocketing stock price as an example of a bubble on top of the overall emerging bubble of the general stock market, which is going way beyond normal price earnings ratio stability. And a lot of Tesla fans confuse my Twitter with criticizing Tesla products, which is not the case. Tesla and Elon Musk have broken the myth of the auto industry's technological performance. They have shown how technologically stagnant General Motors, and Ford, and Chrysler, and other auto companies have been, and moved toward electric cars and renewable solar energy. But, even if the products are pioneering and environmentally more benign, there's still the battery disposal problem. That doesn't justify a \$570 per stock price, which is more value for Tesla than the combined valuation of Ford, General Motors, and Porsche, or greater than the valuation of Toyota. Tesla sold slightly under 400,000 cars last year. VW sold over 10 million, and Tesla's valuation is greater. That's nosebleed territory in stock-market terms, and a note of caution is warranted, which is what my Twitter was about.

Steve Skrovan: All right, very good. Thank you for that question, Gregory. So, Ralph you wanted to say a few words about the impeachment of Donald Trump. And I just want to remind guests that we are recording this in the middle of the week. We don't know if witnesses are going to be called yet or not. But, go ahead, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: There are a few Democrats in the House of Representatives aghast at the way Majority Leader McConnell is suppressing a full trial of Donald J. Trump based on the narrow impeachment articles that Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, sent to the Senate, centering on the Ukraine situation, who think there should be a second round and fast.

On other impeachable offenses, many of them totally slam dunk, like a broad defiance of all kinds of congressional committee subpoenas, like the self-enrichment violation of the Emoluments Clause, like the spending money by Trump that is not only unauthorized by Congress, but prohibited by Congress [and] diverting money to the Wall from the Pentagon budget. And then send it over to the Senate and let the Republicans defend those and other abuses of trust, such as having been a serial sexual predator mired in dozens of contemporary lawsuits by his victims, his bigotry and racism, which he implements with policies on the ground, not just words, as well as his practice of constant lying and fabricating, day after day, hour after hour. From my point of view, Steve, a president that lies daily, hourly, doesn't correct his lies, doesn't correct his fabrications, is separating millions of his supporters from reality. And when you're separating millions of your supporters from reality who trust you and still don't think that you, Trump, have betrayed them, you're putting them in a very serious state of fantasy, which is not good for them, or their children, or their community. So, we'll see what happens, to use a phrase of Donald Trump, "We'll see what happens."

Steve Skrovan: I guess it really just is about power that how could you not have witnesses, especially this firsthand witness? How so many Republicans can agree or hang their hat on Alan Dershowitz's unconstitutionally-supported idea that you actually need to commit a crime to be impeached, that they're now saying, "Well, okay so he did it, but it's not impeachable."

Ralph Nader: As Senator Blumenthal, who is former attorney general of Connecticut, said, "There are crimes." What he did in Ukraine was a bribe. That's a federal crime and state crime, criminal

statute. He violated the Antideficiency Act, which says, "Any president who spends money unauthorized by Congress violates a criminal statute." And there are other criminal statutes. The problem is that Nancy Pelosi didn't include these statutory crimes in the impeachment charge that she narrowly sent to Majority Leader McConnell and the Republican-dominated Senate. So, we're beginning to pay the price for that.

Steve Skrovan: I guess, just to play Devil's Advocate here, the argument for her doing that is, and I know this when I talk to people who support Donald Trump, is they're always talking about a laundry list, that they don't want to play into the narrative that you've been trying to impeach this president since he went into office. Of course, they don't acknowledge he's been doing bad things since he went into office, but that, "Oh, it's just a laundry list. You're throwing everything and seeing what will stick just because you want to reverse this election."

Ralph Nader: It's a crime violation list. It's not a laundry list. And why should we not use statutory criminal prohibitions violated by Trump just because there's a lot of them? That's like saying, "He's too illegal to impeach."

Steve Skrovan: Yeah, or, "There's too much evidence," which seemed to be the argument for not calling witnesses is that, "There's too much evidence."

Ralph Nader: And by the way, he violates the Constitution in all kinds of ways that aren't strictly Constitutional, that aren't strictly statutory crimes, but it's well-settled jurisprudence. Going back to our Founding Fathers in earlier that they never meant to say that every violation of the Constitution also had to be a statutory crime. There wasn't even a federal statutory criminal code when they ratified the Constitution. So, it's quite clear they meant "unconstitutional behavior, violation of public trust, destroying the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branch", and other measures that James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, and others thought were impeachable offenses, regardless of the absence of any statutory crimes on the books.

Steve Skrovan: Well, I guess we'll see how this all plays out. Maybe by the time you hear this, we'll have more answers. But, that's our show. 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. Transcript of this show will appear on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website soon after the episode is posted. Subscribe to us on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* YouTube channel, and for Ralph's weekly column, it's free, go to Nader.org. For more from Russell Mohkiber, go to CorporateCrimeReporter.com. Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* when we speak to progressive former congressman from the state of Florida, Alan Grayson. Thanks, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thanks, everybody. And listeners, be sure you think about empowering yourself vis-a-vis senators and representatives. Go to RatsReformCongress.org.