

Amazon reportedly locates new headquarters in New York and metropolitan Washington

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After a year of deliberations, Amazon will reportedly be splitting its new headquarters between Crystal City, Virginia, a suburb of Washington DC, and Long Island City, Queens, located across the East River from Manhattan. The corporation has not made an official announcement and is still in the process of negotiating with the two cities. Amazon will likely announce its decision within the week, according to sources familiar with the company.

Amazon, whose main center is located in Seattle, Washington, has promoted its search for a second headquarters as a national competition. In the fall of 2017, 238 cities, counties and states submitted bids to win the company's favor. Amazon said its "second home" would bring 50,000 jobs and billions of dollars in income.

The massive transnational corporation, headed by the world's richest man, Jeff Bezos, whose wealth is estimated at \$160 billion, used the competition to extort billions of dollars in tax abatements and other inducements from state and local governments. The spectacle has highlighted the dominance of the corporate-financial oligarchy over the politicians of both major parties and the political system as a whole.

The city of Newark and the state of New Jersey have offered \$7 billion in incentives to the company, whose profits are derived from the brutal exploitation of low-paid, overworked employees at its distribution centers in the US and around the world.

In New York, Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the city would invest \$180 million in preparing Long Island's infrastructure for Amazon's arrival.

It now appears that the supposed competition was a ruse to bid up the incentives provided by Amazon's desired locations. It cannot be an accident that in

choosing Crystal City, a virtual stone's throw from the Pentagon, and Long Island City, a short cab ride from Wall Street, Bezos is placing his new headquarters at the heart of the military-industrial complex and the center of US and world finance. The Amazon CEO already owns the *Washington Post*, enhancing his ability to influence policy decisions at the White House and in Congress.

Just weeks ago, Bezos, who is fighting to win multibillion-dollar Pentagon contracts, gave a speech urging tech companies to collaborate with the US military and national security apparatus and touting Amazon's eagerness to work with the US war machine. "If big tech companies are going to turn their back on the US Department of Defense, this country is going to be in trouble," Bezos said at the Wired25 summit. "We are going to continue to support the DoD," he added, "and I think we should."

Amazon, Google and Microsoft, among other tech giants, are competing to secure a multibillion-dollar Department of Defense contract to construct and oversee the US military's cloud computing infrastructure. The project, dubbed the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI), will be used to oversee every aspect of the Pentagon's global operations.

After backlash from its own employees, Google withdrew from the competition. Thousands of employees signed a petition condemning Google's decision to supply US drones with facial recognition software. Amazon is now the likely winner of the military contract.

Bezos recently announced that he was raising the minimum wage at his facilities to \$15 an hour, a move that was hailed as a humanitarian and philanthropic milestone. However, even apart from the fact that a \$15 wage leaves workers in poverty, Bezos accompanied

the increase in base wages with the termination of incentive and stock bonus plans, leaving many Amazon workers worse off than before the wage hike.



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