

Big tech fights back on tax by aligning with right wing...

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It would seem that almost uniquely [the Guardian has reported](#) yesterday's televised open such on the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting process in Paris that was dominated by what might best be called the fight back of the tech giants.

As they report:

Lobby groups representing Google, Amazon and other powerful US tech multinationals have launched a fierce attack on global plans to stamp out artificial corporate structures used to avoid tax.

In responses to the latest stage of a two-year, G20-led programme of international tax reform, lobbyists for the US tech industry condemned the plans as riddled with "fundamental flaws" and said parts "must be rejected".

I admit I half wish I had managed to stay in Paris to witness this, but was in the House of Commons instead. The rejection of the process is, however, hardly surprising: we've not yet seen much of business voluntarily agree that it has a duty to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time without some coercion applied.

The rejection appears to be of many issues, across the range of issues the OECD has proposed, from country-by-country reporting to attempts to reform the rules of what are called permanent establishments.

But what I did really find interesting in the Guardian's report, which is sketchy on the day's events, is the news that Google is willing to align itself with some of the most right wing lobby groups in the US as part of the tax fight:

Some reports have suggested Google has been making concerted efforts to broaden its engagement beyond historic ties to the Democratic party, hiring Republican operatives and building campaign contributions to rightwing candidates from its political action committee. Among those receiving support from Google are the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute and Americans for Tax Reform.

The libertarian Cato Institute, funded by the billionaire industrialist Koch brothers, [said it had received support](#) from Google in the form of free web advertising. Among the issues on which this lobby group campaigns is taxation; it expounds the virtues of tax havens and has described the G20-led efforts to reform international tax as a “global tax cartel” plot.

These lobby groups are those who most definitely defend tax haven practices.

Many oppose corporation tax altogether.

And they have real problems with the attempts to gather data by way of international cooperation to ensure people pay tax where they owe it. That, they say, is anti-competitive, as if states compete and should not be allowed to cooperate.

That this breaks the law is no concern to them. Amongst the arguments such groups have offered is the claim that money made outside the state where a person lives should not be taxable. That would, of course, appeal very strongly to Google.

That all of this happens to fuel inequality whilst denying government's revenue is not their concern: these groups argue government has no business doing anything but defence and protecting property through law enforcement. Pretty much everything onwards from health (in fact, most especially health) should be delivered by the private sector with no state support.

So this is the vision of the world Google now appears to be buying into. It's a very, very long way from 'Do no evil'.