

HST 203: ONLINE U.S.History Sp19 (Escobar)

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Military-Industrial Complex
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, May 25, 2019, 2:25 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Military-Industrial Complex topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the parts, pictures, and questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Military-Industrial Complex

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What's with the Military-Industrial Complex?
by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 9:40 AM

I think the most interesting part of Eisenhower’s speech was when he said, “We can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense.” This, in itself, is not entirely important, but the idea and consequent issue that is revealed by what Eisenhower talked about is extremely vital for America to figure out. The commentator, when he said that “lobby” could be used as well as “complex,” could be correct in the way that that might have been what Eisenhower meant when he said “complex.” However, I think that the word “complex” also works, as the situation is very complex. By using different terminology, different discussions will stem out of what is said. In this case, if Eisenhower used the term “lobby” there would probably not be nearly as much discussion made as the situation suddenly seems much less menacing.

As a general in World War Two, I think Eisenhower realized the importance of having a constant army and companies dedicated to making weapons so that there would not need to be as much of a plowshares-to-swords rush. That is probably why he spent so much money on maintaining the military. The United States could no longer take a neutral policy in world affairs now that it was powerful and had so many connections with other nations. The reason Eisenhower said what he did in his farewell address was probably because he had not figured out the right balance between industrial and military spending and was slightly worried that too much spending in either category could hurt the U.S.

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The Big Scary Complex
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 3:05 PM

I agree with what Bruce Carlson said about President Eisenhower’s farewell speech when he commented that he didn’t think it was an “extremely dark vision about America.” (3:16 into his podcast) I think that the reason people may have thought Eisenhower’s comment about the military-industrial complex seemed daunting was the fact that he used unnerving words to describe it that way. The specific quote during Eisenhower’s speech that had the greatest impact on me was when he states, “The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.” (minute marker 1:50 into the speech) I think that Eisenhower using words like “disastrous” and “endanger” could definitely influence a person’s perception of the threat that this complex had on the economy, and if he hadn’t wanted his speech to sound foreboding he should have probably changed the language to something less inflammatory. Even still using “complex” without words like “disastrous” wouldn’t have had such a threatening tone.

From my understanding of his message, Eisenhower was the founder of this movement, but wanted to warn America that there was a possibility of this change affecting expenditures in the future. This, to me, seems reasonable, since he was leaving and wouldn’t be overseeing the spending anymore. However, according to our book, these statements were in direct opposition of his actions. “Most obviously, this administration, while trying to contain costs, failed to prevent ever-larger sums of money from flowing to the military. Moreover, Ike’s selection of corporate executives to head the Department of Defense seemingly dramatized the very same linkage his farewell address would later decry.” (page 919 Murrin text) To me it sounds like he was warning America against the things that his administration let happen, like the military expenditures. In the podcast with Bruce Carlson, he quotes Eisenhower from his memoir as saying, “Unjustified military spending is a waste of national resources,” (2:49 into the podcast) which surprises me, given the excerpt from the book where they talk about him doing that exact thing: spending large amounts of money on the military. I think the idea behind using his farewell speech to make these statements was that he knew the military-industrial complex could get crazy and he wanted to remove himself from any blame.

It’s a smart move, when you think about it, given that peacetime military buildup had never been done before. This way he could get the credit for having a fully functioning army ready for the next war the US faced, but could also say “I told you so” if the economy took a dive because of the military spending getting out of control. I think he believed in his message and did want Americans to be on alert and pay attention to these agencies even though he himself allowed for some ironic behavior while in office.

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Re: The Big Scary Complex
by [Christina Dukes](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 9:32 PM

Carisa and Kaiser,

I agree with what both of you have to offer in your arguments about Eisenhower's Speech, however I feel more inclined to side strongly with Carisa especially since the last point of her argument. She wrote on how Eisenhower's Speech and the book depictions of him were widely contradictory of one another, but simply this speech could have been his fallout of a "in case something goes wrong and he can claim "I told you so" to detour from fault" type of scenario. I loved the quote you added “Unjustified military spending is a waste of national resources,” (2:49 into the podcast)" - to quote your same quote. This sentence alone I feel is repetitively said in different ways by presidents all throughout the history of the U.S. Each presidential figure has in some way demonstrated concern about allocating national resources better/less wasteful expenditures/ etc. but whilst maintaining our level of power in military within the world. This quote is directly said, or said in different words, but basically all the same ideal. To me, I agree that Eisenhower had a shift of opinions and demonstrated political speeches that progressively shifted towards a more calmer approach. Again, a fallback since he probably saw through presidency that expense/actions of military has been extensive and progressively shifting towards more and more Americans in opposition to a blunt military force.

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Military-Industrial Lobbyists
by [Jamie Atkins](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 6:42 PM

I think that Eisenhower meant it to sound ominous. Mr. Carlson says he was trying to convey the complexity of it, and I agree. If he would have used the word lobby it wouldn't have had the weight that he meant it to have. Mr. Carlson states in the podcast that Eisenhower admits in his biography to being part of the cause of the buildup of the military industry. While he thought it necessary to be prepared, he didn't want lobbyists from this new profitable industry influencing important foreign policy decisions. We know he was a general, so I would think it would be of particular concern to him that soldiers were going to war for just cause. He saw the danger of warmongering by those looking to make a continued profit. As he might have felt partially responsible, this was possibly a way he saw to discourage it from becoming a larger problem. The fact that he asks Americans to guard against this in his farewell address definitely gives it more merit, because he is not trying to gain political points and not worried about the repercussions of his words.

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Eisenhower and his farewell address Meaning

by [Connor Antich](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 11:50 PM

I believe President Eisenhower is speaking the truth in his farewell address about the dangers of the military-industrial complex has to our society. I say this because he has the experience of being a general and also the experience of being President. With that being said he has seen and operated the military as a general and has seen how the military operates in government from a President's stance. I think what Eisenhower means in his farewell address or is partly saying is that the U.S. can't become to consumed by military power and should be careful it doesn't become a society where its economy and people are dependent on its military. I think Eisenhower knows that the only way to win the Cold War without actual war breaking out is for one of the countries economy or government to collapse due to excessive military spending and build up. I think he fears the U.S. could possibly spend to much on the military and become to dependent on it to run the economy and it could one day cause the economy to collapse. I think he also fears the military gaining to much power in the stressful times of the Cold War and possibly how the military could put our liberties at risk by taking power in small steps at a time to ensure security but taking away liberties at the same time. The immense national security measures being taken by the military makes Eisenhower fear that during this Cold War and tremendous military build up that the U.S. might lose sight of its free liberties, principles and what it stands for. I think Eisenhower doesn't want the U.S. to lose focus on the principles that built this country and be demolished and turned into a military dependent society and a military first nation.

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Continued

by [Connor Antich](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 5:47 PM

I think what Eisenhower feared was what happened to the Soviet Union. When the economy started to collapse in the Soviet Union, its satellite states started to break apart from it and it eventually collapsed along with its entire government and satellite states. This is what I believe Eisenhower feared this one day could happen to the U.S. Excessive spending on the military and nuclear weapons led to the collapse of the economy, which led to the people suffering and protesting, which lead to the government collapsing. Imagine if this happened in the U.S. If the economy got so devastated that NATO countries left the alliance and even maybe individual states breaking away from the federal government maybe? Because of absolute economic failure. Overall, I think Eisenhower knew the country that didn't go bankrupt would win the Cold War. I think he was concerned about our economy one day collapsing due to military and nuclear spending.

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Re: Continued

by [Christina Dukes](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 9:39 PM

Connor,

In a forum post written by Kaiser Slocum somewhere within this thread/group, he mentions a quote in which Eisenhower states we should stop wasteful and dangerous expenditures and actions of the state, and to me it really felt like he should have made (or someone closer to the time) this speech around the aftermath of the atomic bombings. Eisenhower is within the era of WWII and a lot of the things that he had talked about seemed like something that should've been realized or stated following the proceedings of the atomic bombings of the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The whole nuclear warfare and the unnecessary

level of it was mentioned so much more at the end of Eisenhower's years in office, and quite possibly could have been attributed as a last ditch effort of him "saving his own ass" (pardon the language - just a common figure of speech), and could be used as a fallout of the aftermath he was seeing as inevitable. In the years following his presidency, he could have just as well predicted the collapse of the government and by the speech he made, he could claim "I told you so" because he had made this speech during his active role. Carisa Snell (another student in the course, also posting to this same forum thread), brought this point to light and it was a clear and accurate representation of something I was kinda thinking about, and simply stated. So I kind of stole her idea here with the "fallout of the inevitable", but I just think its a great point to address and think about!

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Eisenhower: Student of History

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 5:50 PM

I think the most interesting part of Eisenhower’s speech was near the beginning when he contrasted the “way we have always done it” with the “way we must move forward.” Eisenhower said that “Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time, and as required, make swords as well. But we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense. We have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions,” (Eisenhower speech, 0:27 minute mark). When I hear this, I hear a General who saw his country utterly unprepared and surprised at the coming of Hitler and the Second World War. I also hear a President who does not wish to see his country in that situation ever again. As the speech goes on, and Eisenhower begins to warn of the dangers of the military-industrial complex, I hear a realist who understands the potential downfalls of having so much influence concentrated in one group of people. While Eisenhower explains the need for such a group of people, he also warns of the potential that this group could grow too influential. I believe the former general was warning against the type of massive armaments which built up in Germany prior to the Second World War. While I agree with Carlson that the term “military-industrial lobby” might have been more appropriate, I think the language Eisenhower used had the intended effect. I think he wanted to make the American people think about the buildup which had taken place in Germany and led to the beginning of the Second World War. I think he wanted Americans to realize that their own country was just as capable of starting such a conflict should the greed of government contracts spread to enough people. I also think the timing of the speech is especially important. While it is true that Eisenhower was a former general and commander-in-chief, he recognized that if the wrong person were to assume his position, they could lead this country down a very dark road. Eisenhower had been Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe during the Second World War-a rare five-star general appointment, he had ascended to the Presidency of the United States, he had no one left to impress. He was not seeking any further political office or government appointment. He was in a position to speak with the type of honesty which only comes from a person whose race has been run. I believe he was honestly worried about the armament buildup which he helped create and the potential for it to fall into the wrong hands. While it would be easy to dismiss this speech as hypocritical, I think it speaks to a man who was looking at the past and trying to see how it might apply to the future. America was engaged in a cold war with the Soviet Union, the world had already witnessed the unbelievable destruction of the atomic bomb, and America kept building armaments out of necessity, whether real or perceived. Eisenhower simply wanted to warn against the dangers of taking it too far. He wanted to challenge the citizens to stay well-informed on what their government was doing and maintain their voice in the process.

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Re: Eisenhower: Student of History

by [Connor Antich](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 9:14 PM

I agree with you and I like the example and perspective you used that Eisenhower was worried about us as a country becoming to armed and having a war mongering government like Germany in the second World War 2. My post was on the perspective that Eisenhower warned about our military build up fearing our economy might collapse. But after reading your post I for sure think that he also warns about our government and military command becoming to consumed by our power and wanting to wage war across the globe. The huge military power that the U.S. had in its hands now was somewhat new to the country, and I think Eisenhower warns of his country going in the wrong direction foreign policy wise of being to aggressive and militaristic. A feeling I get from this speech is that Eisenhower wanted the U.S. to be more diplomatic I think with the Soviets and the world, knowing that the consequences of military first policy and actions would lead to a war of unimaginable destruction, something way worse than World War 2. I think Eisenhower feared that the U.S. would lose its democratic and peace ideals to war mongering and militaristic government with the new power and role in world affairs it now has since WW2.

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Eisenhower's Proactive Military-Industrial Complex

by [Devon Olsen](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 6:23 PM

Part 1:

In Eisenhower’s (Ike’s) speech there are a few phrases that he says that make me think about it on a deeper level. A few of the phrases were used in quick succession, but also in sometimes less than two words. However, the one that stands out to me the most is the use of the phrase “Disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist, we must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.” (Eisenhower farewell speech clip, 01:51 mark). This phrase sticks out to me the most presently given our current domestic and foreign affairs. The nuclear stockpile in North Korea, and Russia. I believe that the United States is at a weaker point, militarily speaking than we have been in quite some time, while other countries have been gaining power. I do not believe that the US is not a world power in any way, and I do have faith in our military and armed forces to keep us safe, both with foreign affairs and domestic affairs. However, despite whichever political beliefs a person may possess, it is in my opinion and not based off fact, that the governmental leadership is less stable than it has been in at least the last 20 years. This brings about another quote from Ike’s speech; “we recognize the imperative need for this development, yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications, our toil resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society” (Eisenhower farewell speech clip, 01:22 mark). The ideal that Ike purveys in this quote is the realization that by beefing up our military, it may be a show of force, and by doing say may provoke an attack. Ike goes on to speak to the implications that this “development” has on the society saying that there is “toil, resources and livelihood all involved.” I believe this is his recognition to the fact that many may deem his military build up to be warning that inevitably there will be more conflicts ahead. That the united states should be preparing for another war that will happen at some point, and where many could perish. He ends this phrase with the words “so is the very structure of our society.” I interpret this as a way for Eisenhower to acknowledge that the United States is a democracy. If the military buildup is not done to protect the country, then the entire society of a democratic government, a government in which the people govern themselves is at stake. I understand this part of the speech to be a rally cry, for the next president to continue the Military-Industrial Complex, and to brace the country in which they are the commander-in-chief, for another conflict, and to be prepared so that the perpetual war doesn’t take the American people by surprise. “After Korea, I wanted to be sure that we were never so weak as to provoke an attack.” This was a proactive approach to avoid the recurrence of wartime improvising for arms being produced rather than cars in the factories like Ford.

I neither agree nor disagree with the podcast regarding the use of misuse of the vocabulary complex vs. lobby. I believe that the use of the word complex makes the necessity for military build-up seem scarier but in Ike’s time, things were slightly unstable worldwide. The United States was still working on continuing containment. In 1952 both sides of the political spectrum were in support of containment (Murrin Text, 7th Edition, p. 751). Much of this political belief stems from the mistrust that there were soviet agents operating inside our borders. Adlai Stevenson, who was the Democratic presidential candidate in 1952 warned that “Soviet secret agents and their dupes burrowed like moles into governments throughout the world.” This also supports Ike’s thought that it would be wise to build up the Military-Industrial Complex. As such, I do not believe that the phrase was misused, nor should it be replaced by the phrase Military-Industrial Lobby as Carlson explains in his podcast. I do not believe that the changes of verbiage would be impacting on the discussion, especially in the time of the Cold War. I believe that Eisenhower, being a soldier had a healthy skepticism in the times of peace and was just waiting for the next conflict to arise. I think his build-up was a way to be proactive, while he had the power to make it happen. I also believe that the timing of his speech was also well thought out. I have never believed Eisenhower to be impulsive. I have a strong belief that becoming a General and serving in that capacity before beginning a career in politics made him resourceful and prepared for anything. He was a strong patriot and was willing to go against the grain if he needed to, in order to protect his homeland. I think that at the time Ike left office, he wanted to Prepare John F. Kennedy as well as he could. I also believe that regardless of the winner of the election to follow Eisenhower’s tenure, that it would have been a military man who understood the principle of preparedness. I think that Ike was preparing the country to be ready for anything when he left office, and his predecessor would carry the torch of this mentality. I also believe that he was telling the truth, given his history as a General, and leader, and he would be willing to protect his country, even if it seemed that it was counterintuitive.

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Re: Eisenhower's Proactive Military-Industrial Complex

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 8:08 PM

When I hear Ike speak about the military-industrial complex and the threats which faced this nation, I think back to the early 2000's in American history. This was a time when everyone was afraid. This was a time when nearly everyone (including Hillary Clinton) supported military action in Iraq as a way to protect American lives and interests. This was a time in which we were all afraid that the worst might happen in our country if we did not stand up and do something about it first. This cannot compare to the threat atomic bombs falling on American cities, but it is the closest that my generation has come to the threat of a foreign influence attempting to force their ways upon us—we were attacked, after all. I distinctly remember the fear and uncertainty which gripped the country as we looked for someone, anyone, to answer for the attacks on our country. I believe that America during the Cold War was quite similar. While America was not attacked, the threat of the worst type of attack was constantly looming overhead. Children were practicing drills in their elementary schools to survive a nuclear blast. The U.S. government was actively seeking out communists in America and trying to get rid of them in an effort to make America safe again. At the head of this mayhem was Dwight Eisenhower, a former U.S. General during World War Two, who was now seemingly arguing against the very military buildups which he had helped create. I think that Ike was realistic about the threats which America was facing, yet cautious about the potential downfalls of mass-hysteria in the American public. I think he was seeking to strike a balance between the two. Eisenhower wanted to maintain the military readiness of the United States without sending it plunging headlong into war-fever. He wanted to remind people that the Department of Defense was built on the concept of defense and not offense. He wanted to recognize that while there were a great many threats posed against America, we had no right to seek conflict. We had to wait for trouble to present itself and then deal with it in an appropriate fashion. Eisenhower acknowledged that up to the second world war, the American strategy of reactionary armaments had worked just fine (0:27 minute mark), but he also realized that such a strategy was not realistic in a changing world. His overall warning, though, was against the United States becoming so obsessed with its own military power that it let those building the armaments to dictate foreign policy. Eisenhower was worried that the American Democracy would fall into the hands of the warmongers. Warmongers are people who have never seen a war, they have only profited from war. Eisenhower had seen war and he had ordered young men to war who never returned. Eisenhower was not a warmonger, he was a realist. He understood the risks of being under-prepared as well as those of being over-prepared. He was simply trying to warn Americans against falling into either category without considering the associated risks. I think his was a very calculated farewell address, and I believe that was part of his personality. He was going to deliver the message he wanted the American people to receive exactly on the terms he had chosen. That message has simply been misinterpreted throughout history as people continue to wonder why such a great General would seemingly argue against military buildup.

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The Complex Issue of "Military-Industrial Complex"
by [Trey Husko](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 10:05 PM

In Eisenhower's farewell speech one of the parts that stood out most to me was when he stated "we recognize the imperative need for [Military Establishment and a large arms industry], yet we must not fail to comprehend it's grave implications" (1:20 into speech). To me this is Eisenhower showing he understood (as a former military general himself) the need to have a military built up for whenever it *may* be needed, however there are potential consequences to doing so. Having as vast of military power as the United States has, it's a double-edged sword doing so. On one side having a military is important to the defense of your country, but having such an extreme build up could give a leader too much power at his hands—something Eisenhower addressed in his speech.

While I do understand and think the point Carlson makes is true about the lobbying for military spending, I think that in it's own is a *closely tied* issue to the military-industrial complex. The lobbying for a buildup of powers is an issue with each level wanting to gain more powers and having the military industry continue to keep business going. Had Eisenhower used terms like lobbying his message would have been close to the same that there is the possibility of abusing powers to gain more power and profits. In the time following WWII and during Eisenhower's presidency that saw a military buildup (despite the US being at peace), it was justifiable. We did not want to be in danger of not being prepared with the looming threat imposed by the Cold War. Eisenhower's experience definitely contributes to the understanding of his message. He knew the importance of having a trained, supplied military would have but also saw the dangers that it also brought. The timing of the speech merely serves as a future warning to the people of the implications that a complex military-industry has.

The US having as vast of a military as it does now has been a dangerous issue. People today believe that it has gotten so powerful that it's wasteful of spending, or that the US is getting involved in foreign affairs that it has no such reason being apart. What Eisenhower said many years ago in his farewell address is still an existing issue today.

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Re: The Complex Issue of "Military-Industrial Complex"

by [Devon Olsen](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 3:27 PM

Hi Trey,

I agree with your point about Eisenhower being a military man, and fully understanding the need for a strong built up military. What I really like about your response is the fact the you emphasized that the military was built up proactively, for "when we needed it." I think this demonstrates your understanding of Eisenhower doing what he did. I also really liked what you said about when Ike had that much power at his disposal has its drawbacks. I think your summary is well-composed and well thought out.

As for your response to what Carlson says in his podcast, I also agree. I feel the same way with the two terms, and I firmly believe that the lobbying and the complex are interchangeable terms, especially in the era after WWII. He also talks about being prepared so that "After Korea, I wanted to be sure that we were never so weak as to provoke an attack." This occurs in the podcast, about the 1:20 mark. This expression, to me says that Eisenhower was making sure he was leaving the country in a stable and strong position. You mention that it is a warning to the people about possible implications, and I believe Eisenhower was also wanting to give his last bit of experience as a general in a massive war, a a bit of a heads up to the American people. I think he did this tactfully, and did so in such a way that did not promote panic, but rather preparedness. I believe Eisenhower's words were appropriately used, and I think he did so with tact, and humility. I believe that the use of the word lobby rather than complex is fine, but I also think it was important for Ike to make a point that would 'live in infamy" as another great president said. I think this was a great summary, and I feel the same way you do on many points you bring up.

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Re: Military-Industrial Complex

by [Sarah Willis](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 10:43 PM

Do you agree with the podcast commentator Carlson about the use or misuse of the vocabulary (complex vs. lobby)?

I agree with Carlson’s stand on Eisenhower's speech. As a president leaving office he wanted to insure the united states could still defend ourselves even in a time of peace. He also seems to want to make sure that the military did not take advantage of wanting and getting more unnecessary weapons and resources. Eisenhower's wording could be constituted as a negative with calling it the military industrial complex. Instead of having a positive with defending the nation and protecting the government from unnecessary spending and companies taking advantage of making money of the nations defences. Eisenhower wanted to challenge the government. If he had used the wording lobby instead this would have put a different spin on how the government and generals go about to get their spending for the military and perhaps shed a more understand light on how the military and government have to go throw check and balances so to speak to get their spending.

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Foreign Policy and Presidents' Militaries

by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 1:13 PM

Ever since World War One and Two and through the Cold War, America was thrown into world tensions and wars, as it tried to promote liberty and democracy throughout a hostile environment filled with dictators and communistic governments. Since the Cold War, most of the U.S. Presidents have supported a large military in hopes of preventing any recurrences of devastating wars and disruptions of human rights. This applies to Obama in that he also supported or at least maintained a large military budget and intelligence agencies. However, it would be ludicrous to say that Obama was “conservative.” If anything, he was a much more liberal President than many of the recent Presidents. Like Eisenhower talked about in his farewell address, the complexity of focusing on domestic issues and economy and maintaining a military to keep other world conflicts in line is a delicate balance. The bottom line is, after the wars of the 1900s and the Cold War, Americans were scared of international conflicts and

wanted to make sure they were ready for future conflicts that might happen. As world conflicts have reduced over the 2000s and new generations grow up that do not remember the horrors of the past, we can expect to see a smaller military budget.

With the amount of companies producing military goods, I believe the problem of industrial-military complex seems much less serious, but the problem of international intervention is as at-large as ever. When do you intervene and when do you not?! In the current decade, America appears to have taken a less interventionist role in world affairs than in the 1900s which indicates a small change in foreign policy. As direct military intervention wanes, though, cyber intelligence and privacy breaches is becoming more common as the U.S. monitors world-wide activity very closely. As the world becomes more digital, the government has become more digital in its "military" procedures, it would appear.

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Eisenhower's misinterpreted message

by [Kara Miner](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 6:18 PM

In President Eisenhower’s speech I found this quote to be the most compelling, “Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.” (Eisenhower Speech 2:06) I think that this quote summarizes what Eisenhower was trying to do, for 4 wars the United States has gone back and forth between a stable and unstable economy. Fear that we couldn’t defend ourselves took its toll on our society on numerous occasions. I believe that the idea of a peacetime buildup of armament’s was scary to Eisenhower and the American people, but it makes sense in terms of National Defense and Economic security. Having a pre established armament will ensure that we are prepared come the next big war. Better preparation means that the economy doesn’t have to change so much and that American soldiers are well trained, and well equipped. Also, having a huge army and using a huge army are very different things. In terms of defense, having a strong military makes us more intimidating and less vulnerable to attack.

I agree with Carlson’s conclusion that Eisenhower’s term “complex” makes the whole idea sound that much more intimidating. If he had defined his intentions a bit more in the speech, the process would sound a lot more reasonable. The term “lobby” might have been more appropriate given the audience, however I don’t believe the change of that one word would have offset the grim tone of this portion of Eisenhower’s speech. I believe Eisenhower should have gone a few sentences more in depth as to what he was planning and why he was planning it. I also agree with Carlson’s statements regarding Eisenhower’s intentions. Without oversight, military spending could be unreasonably high as well as inefficient. Funded solely by the Federal Government, the Industrial Military Complex could be controlled, and built up with as many checks and balances our own complex government possesses. Therefore, maintaining the principal of liberty our country was founded after all while ensuring our country has any defense mechanisms necessary.

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Obama and the Military-Industrial Complex

by [Devon Olsen](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:50 AM

Part 2:

I believe that amidst some differing opinions, Barack Obama was a great president, and I do believe that the comparison to "neo-conservatism" and he, are fair. Obama has a vested interest and involvement with international affairs, and did promote global unionization. It is in my opinion that the term neo-conservative is not fully understood in our world today, and many associate it with a negative connotation. I believe that President Obama was closer to the middle of the political spectrum than many democrats previous to him. He was generally socially liberal, fiscally conservative, and militarily neutral with a tendency to lean right. In my opinion, this is neoconservatism in an eloquent way. Obama was an advocate for change, and even had the campaign slogan "yes we can." This to me is a summary of the Obama administration advocating for much needed change in our society and doing so, yet continuing the "prepared for anything" mentality that the Eisenhower administration advocated for when building up the Military-Industrial Complex. Obama said in his speech "we need to ask tough questions about what we should do. For all these Reasons I maintained a healthy skepticism towards our surveillance programs"

(Obama NSA speech clip, 0:34 mark). He also ordered that the programs be reviewed by his administration, and maintained that the intelligence community did not violate the law. Nor was the intelligence program "cavelier" about the civil liberties of the citizens. He advocated for fortifying the military and and providing transparency by the surveillance programs for the people, and by doing so he intended to safeguard the American citizens. If this is not neoconservatism then yes, Obama was not neoconservative.

The definition by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is "moderate political conservatism espoused or advocated by former liberals or socialists." Obama maintained the idea that Eisenhower had mentioned in his farewell address; "After Korea, I wanted to be sure that we were never so weak as to provoke an attack." I believe that Eisenhower was trying to be prepared, and by building up the military-industrial complex, he was doing just that for the American people. I interpret Obama's ideal to be a similar sort of mentality, as he shared in his NSA speech. Neoconservative as defined by the Murrin text, found in the glossary page G-11 is a: Group of intellectuals, many of whom had been anti-communist democrats during the 1950s and 1960s, who came to emphasize hard-line foreign policies and conservative social stances. In this definition, I believe this is where the discrepancy lies. While Obama has more socially liberal stances, he did maintain a strong foreign policy, especially on the wake of the Bush administration.

I do not believe the nations foreign policy has changed that much, yet I do believe where the changes have occured make it significantly different. Rather than being a world police only in times of strife, the US has become more of a world police in times of peace as well. I personally believe this is some misallocation of tax-payer dollars, however I have never been a soldier so I admittedly have little knowledge on the subject. Yet the threats of the Cold War are paralleled with the situation we have found ourselves in, in recent years, such as the build up of nuclear weapons in less stable countries such as North Korea, and Russia again. Because of this, I think that the Obama Administration was evaluating the foreign threats and preparing the military, should another conflict arise. The brink of nuclear disaster was more prevalent in the times of the Cold War than now, but there still remains a threat in the aforementioned countries of such a WMD.

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Re: Obama and the Military-Industrial Complex
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 9:39 PM

Hello Devon,

I agree with you that though Obama certainly showed middle-spectrum tendencies during his terms as president, particularly when it came to the military. I liked how you laid out your position, and I am with you, that "If this is not neoconservatism then yes, Obama was not neoconservative." I think that compared to the events that happened during the Cold War era and particularly the CIA at the time, he was trying to reign them back in instead of give them a wider reach. In chapter 28 of our Murrin text, it talks about the covert operations that the CIA was a part of around the globe, and that the, "National Security Council widened the CIA's mandate. By 1961 the CIA deployed approximately 15,000 agents, as compared to about 6,000 only eight years earlier, around the world." (pg 917 Murrin text)

I also think that given what the administration looked like after Bush, Obama had little choice but to maintain a strong foreign policy. I think that by him doing so it showed that he took our threats to national security seriously, but also not so serious as to start the next Red Scare. He and Eisenhower had similar positions as far as being presidents during a war, and I think that shaped their views on our national preparedness and military strength. I agree that there are parallels today as far as our current threats and that our foreign policy hasn't changed much, but being a former military spouse I appreciated funding not changing too drastically as to affect us personally.

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Obama and the Military-Industrial Complex
by [Connor Antich](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 5:25 PM

I don't think it is a fair comparison to compare Presidents Obamas acts on the military industrial complex to previous presidents and presidents during the Cold War. I say this because the President before him (Bush) handed Obama an executive office where America was involved in two wars in the Middle East against Iraq and terrorist groups in Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East. It's not fair to compare Obama to Bush because Bush left Obama an absolute mess to try to deal with in the Middle East. For example, in the second paragraph of the article, Peter Phillips talks about how the neo-conservative administration laid out a plan to increase military budget and

dominant the globe will military influence to protect american corporate assets and make rival nations weaker. All of this was put on Obama's plate when he assumed the presidency. What exactly could he do to make the situation better? I believe bringing all the troops home in one swift move would make nations see American military as very weak, and undetermined to the world. Also I think it would disappoint military leaders and many agencies and politicians that were in favor of the wars and military policies. Also the people would then question why did we even go over there in the first place? I believe Obama was left no choice to clean up after Bush in the Middle East and try to fight our enemies and slowly bring our troops home. Obama called for little intervention in Iraq with a focus on Afghanistan but to slowly start reducing the troop numbers there. Overall, what I'm saying is Obama was left with no choice to continue the military efforts Bush started. I think Obama is less of a war monger and military spender than Bush was. Obama has showed me this by making slow efforts to bring troops home and by negotiating with nations in the Middle East and emphasizing intelligence gathering and making sure the U.S. military operates appropriately and respectfully (civilian casualties and torture of prisoners). I believe if Obama was president when Bush was, that America would have never gone to war with Iraq. But I believe the U.S. would hunt and operate in Afghanistan against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Obama was left to continue to fight the enemies that President Bush created.

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What would Eisenhower say?
by [Hannah Harp](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:06 PM

The part that struck me most in Eisenhower's speech was when he said, "We recognize the imperative need for this development, yet, we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved, so is the very structure of our society". I think this had the greatest impact on me because when comparing his words from this speech to the society we live in today, we can see that his words aged quite well. Eisenhower believed that unjust military spending is a waste of national resources, and something that the society should be able to direct and have a say in. Yet, today our military spending is outrageous, and is far more than what would really be necessary. Our country is power hungry, and set on being the best of the best. It's like Eisenhower's speech was foreshadowing this, and it just really made me take into question what he would have to say if he were still around to see how the world played out into today.

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Military Complex thoughts
by [Kathy Holmes](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:32 PM

"we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications... we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence...the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist." (1:40) These words alone have such an impact. The idea of misplaced power applies to everything, not just the concept of the military complex. I agree with Carlson when he states that using the term "military-industrial complex" can be intimidating and come across as sinister (1:00) I think using a more truthful or descriptive terminology would have less of an impact on the issue. With military industrial complex being seen as such a scary thing if the more truthful language was used I feel it would have a lesser impact on citizens.

I am conflicted in my thoughts about the timing of the address. My original thought was that he would be less truthful in his last days in office because he has nothing to lose, but then after thinking about it, why would he lie or be dishonest? Again he has nothing to lose. It makes me believe what he has to say more as it is his last attempt at doing what he feels is best for the nation at the time.

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Re: Military Complex thoughts
by [Devon Olsen](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 10:12 AM

Hi Kathy,

I agree with your phrase choice as an impactful one. I also had that same phrase rattling around in my brain for some time. I think what Eisenhower did, was smart, and proactive. However, I do also agree with you about the idea of it being a bit intimidating. I also feel like that is not the best terminology for the circumstances. I think complex is intimidating, and vague enough to mount skepticism. However, that being said I do not condone the use of the word lobbying either, because in my opinion this simplifies what he is trying to do. Merriam-Webster

defines lobbying as: to promote (something, such as a project) or secure the passage of (legislation) by influencing public officials. *Transitive verb form* as: to attempt to influence or sway (someone, such as a public official) toward a desired action.

I do not believe that this is the proper definition of what he was trying to accomplish either. I believe that he was less trying to promote the idea of Military build-up but rather, to warn the American citizens of the impending conflicts to come; especially considering the era Ike was in office for, during the cold war. I think the idea of a Military complex is to firm, but I believe the idea of military-industrial lobbying is too soft, and misguided. This all said, I believe neither term are the most appropriate for the goal of the Military-Industrial *Complex* that Eisenhower was speaking to, and I feel like there should be a term somewhere in between the two mentioned that would be better suited for the situation. Also, while I agree with you that more truthful language should have been used, I also am conflicted in the fact that Eisenhower, as a military man, chooses his words very carefully, so as not to promote hysteria or panic.

As for the timing of the address, I interpreted it to be well thought out. I don't believe Ike had anything to loose as he was leaving office, as a well-liked (for the most part) president, and a highly respected general in times of strife. I like how you shared the school of thought you had initially, but then reassessed and came to a different conclusion, as I did the same thing. When I think of my last thoughts on the matter of timing, I took it to be President and General Dwight D. Eisenhower leaving the country he served for his whole life in the best situation it could be in as his administration comes to its end. I think he genuinely had the countries best interest in mind when he gave his farewell address, but wanted to share a final warning about the unstable times that were facing the nation as the Cold War loomed. I believe Eisenhower would have made the changes he felt necessary for either Kennedy or Nixon to take on, especially because both of them were involved in the defense of our country and as both a lieutenant and a commander respectively both in the Naval Reserves.

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Attempting Ammends
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 5:24 AM

"The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist." This line from Eisenhower's speech had the greatest impact on me. He really hit the nail on the head. This misplaced power has persisted till today and is even greater than in Eisenhower's time. It is also important, because it shows that he had realized that this power had been put into the wrong hands. That if he did not make this part of his speech and attempt to bring the problem to light, the issue would simply keep expanding.

On pg. 919 of our textbook it states how "Eisenhower's speech masked certain ironies". Most being how Eisenhower had created and instigated this military-industrial complex. This was another important reason he needed to address this issue. He had unknowingly started this. Then he slowly watched it balloon out of proportion and continue due to the long cold war. He realized what had and could happen, he was leaving office and could do nothing about it but try to warn the people in his farewell speech.

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Complex- what does that even mean?
by [Hannah Harp](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 12:24 PM

Carlson felt that Eisenhower's use of "military industrial **complex**" made things seem a lot worse than they were, and he believed that Eisenhower could have improved his speech by using the term "lobby" instead. I can see where Carlson is coming from, because the word complex at the end of the statement makes things seem a little scary and confusing. Although, I don't necessarily disagree with Eisenhower using the term in his speech. Eisenhower wanted to leave the public with something to think about after his farewell speech, and I think the aim of using this vocabulary was to catch people's attention. It definitely left room for the mind to wonder and maybe even freak out a little bit, but I think that this was intentional, so it made sense for the purposes of the speech. He went out with a bang. The use of clearly defined terminology is never a bad idea. I think it is important to help people understand the facts of the matter, and exactly what you're saying means. One way I think Eisenhower could have

improved his speech would have been to further elaborate on the topic after catching the publics attention. It’s a good thing to give people something to ponder, but what we don’t want is to leave people uninformed. So without a doubt, being truthful about the matter, and using clear descriptive language could have benefitted everyone.

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Influence of the U.S. Military and Defense Industry
by [Christina Dukes](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 8:38 PM

Progressively since the United States has formed itself as an independent country within the world, we have always had the tendency and drive to make a notable impact on the world as a leading power in both intellect and military force. I mean, one of the main goals of the state was to make ourselves notable as a leading military influence, and because of this it is one of the main reasons why we started to invest in the Navy forces and prohibit other nations the "upper hand" on us by colonizing and obtaining power of the islands surrounding the world. In previous chapters in our textbook we went over so many details about political influencers either wanting or not wanting to involve ourselves in outside conflicts outside our nations borders, but it was the driving force of being one of the leaders in the world (especially military), that drove us to sort of expand our influence abroad. That being said, I think it has always been a topic of high interest for the United States overall to have a highly influential and powerful military. Coupled with this, I think it makes sense that we would have a lot of money invested into products or development of products. Sure I believe much of the industry developing these products, as well as the politicians allowing advancement is a very corrupt scene, but many businesses not military associated run the same way as well.

Take this quote written by Peter Phillips for example, "The US military industrial complex is deeply embedded inside the Washington beltway. According to the most recent reports from OpenSecrets.org, 151 members of Congress in 2006 had up to \$195.5 million of their personal assets invested in defense companies. " (Philips, **Barack Obama Administration Continues US Military Global Dominance**). In his writing, Philips speaks about how the influential political members of the United States (which lead many decisions in businesses and in law), have personal investments in the defense industry inside the United States. To many, this seems like a whole round-a-bout scheme of corruption where the political members are using their power and position to help benefit themselves and their own personal investments, (which I'm sure is quite possibly the case for some of the Congress members), but to me it seems like a good financial investment of a working American. Yes they probably unconsciously influence their political decisions biased, but they are wise enough to know the trend of war and militarism, and invest their personal finances into something that they know will give them a kick back of a profit. Same as any other American investing their money into stocks or the defense industry themselves. I think sometimes people want to put the blame on the political leaders of the world so often, they overlook the severity of some of the underlying problems, rather than trying to associate blame with someone/something more immediate - such as a member of congress.

We said as a nation, that after Eisenhower, we want to minimize our efforts of globalization of war associated military complex materials, but if the rest of the world is moving forward; it makes sense that we want to maintain our power of position as a leading military force above many of the others and not decline in power. I think that the progressiveness of the world overall in military possessions leads the United States in furthering their military advancements, and its simply not a trend that is going to stop. I personally believe that the world has a tendency to way overproduce weapons for war or destruction and there should definitely be more done by the U.N for example to stop the trend, but having America slow down simply because a past and current/recent presidential figure said we would - is not a good enough reason. I mean, every president has said something they are going to do or promise something that simply doesn't work in their favor, or some other reason, so its not like it is unlike presidents to promise something that doesn't end up actually happening.

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Obama Is Not Alone
by [McKay Luke](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 11:26 PM

I believe that the comparison between Obama and the neo-conservatism that was seen at the time of the cold war is a fair correlation. But I would say that it isn’t just a fair comparison to Obama in particular, but it seems to be a common ideal for most of the presidents we have had since the Second World War. In one of the previous forums on taxes, there was a diagram showing the national debt and tax rates since the birth of our nation. I cannot cite it

precisely (because the forum is now closed) but I do remember a steady increase in the deficit proceeding World War II with taxes not seeing a reduction like in former times. Now, after studying the decades following the war, we see that a vast majority of this was due to the increased government spending in national defense.

There have been a number of wars since World War II, however, among those are a few controversial and questionable pursuits. The Vietnam war was an enormous part of the '60s and one of the main proponents of the counterculture. The cold war, or rather, the super-power-competition is the prime example of this military industrial complex. While war was never declared on the Soviet Union due to obvious potentially devastating outcomes, the supposed need to increase spending in order to compete with Russia was the initial reason for this lobby but has maintained an aim of the United States leaders even after the close of the cold war.

Fast-forward to recent years and we see some of the underlying reasons for this complex. The article by Phillips shows that the major defense contractors were "seriously involved" in the 2008 elections (Phillips article). War, being such a lucrative outlet, results in this intermingling of cooperations having political sway. Politicians are not oblivious to this, as the article states that " recent reports from OpenSecrets.org, 151 members of Congress in 2006 had up to \$195.5 million of their personal assets invested in defense companies" (Phillips Article). Many of the presidents are to blame for this increase in spending and use of taxes. Bill Clinton, while in office, " Increased foreign weapons sales from 16% of global orders to over 63% by the end of his administration" (Phillips article). So again, I do not believe this complex is unique to President Obama, but unique to the United States, being that we are the "highest war-tax payers in the world" (Phillips article).

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