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Military Industrial Complex

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 10:48 AM

This forum thread is for Military Industrial Complex posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the individual questions in SEPARATE posts.

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.

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post.

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Re: Military Industrial Complex

by Michael Carlisle - Sunday, May 26, 2013, 7:13 PM

In my opinion, the fact that Eisenhower oversaw this military build-up at a time of peace does not affect my understanding of the situation. From a military stand point it is better to be prepared for war/battle then to just wait and improvise when something happens. Not just for the reasons of having the weapons or products that came out of production, but these complex's also gave millions of people jobs. With all that was said in the video clip and the short radio clip though, I could also understand that at this point in time Eisenhower was probably leaning more towards the prospect of peace rather than building up stock for other countries to see that we are ready for war. The grave implications i think Eisenhower was referring to could be the possibility of all of this power being misplaced in the wrong hands, which could have lead to the endangerment of our liberties.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Military Industrial Complex & Privatization



by Sarah Lafferty - Monday, May 27, 2013, 4:02 PM

I agree with Bruce Carlson that Eisenhower's intention of the Military Industrial Complex (or lobby) was meant as preventative measures after the Korean War; an act of deterrence towards aggressor nations. However, like Eisenhower cautioned, that excessive military expenditures and build-up was unnecessary and could potentially lead to proliferation; an arms-race. As for the usage of the terms complex vs. lobby; I believe Eisenhower's intention in 1961 may have been to *lobby* for a defense establishment. But since then, many of the government-run war production industries have been privatized, like the prison-industrial complex for example. The switch from state to privately owned and operated industry, which happened largely in the 1980's, is where the term 'complex' became more relevant and representative of what really was/is happening often being linked to the complex system of corruption.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Complexing  

by Robert Sappington - Monday, May 27, 2013, 7:45 PM

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

I listened to his audio more than once. I don't like changing words used 50 years ago with today's meanings. But...it sounds like Eisenhower's warned of companies/people taking advantage because of this "complex" or huge group of everything/everyone interacting. While the commentator says lobby because it comes down to today, just certain people lobbying congress. I think, the commentator is just trying to update his meaning, or trying to be more specific. The commentator seems to be suggesting it isn't a complex but a smaller group of people. I don't know if its a misuse, but maybe more politically correct these days.

Does the fact that Eisenhower oversaw a military buildup in time of peace, rather than war, affect your understanding of the situation?

When did dedicated companies start building military goods? Did they build them because the Cold War, then Korea, then Vietnam and the arms race? Or did we have those because of the military complex? This sounds like a questions of "What came first the chicken or the egg?"

Since the standard of war use to be whoever has the biggest army is "safe," no it doesn't seem weird. Who is going to start a war with the biggest kid on the block?

Why would Eisenhower, a former general, and outgoing commander-in-chief, take this seemingly contrary position in the middle of the Cold War?

As a WWII General and as President of the United States I believe he foresaw an arms race leading to WWII because that is what happened with WWI and WWII. Countries build up arms to do what? To fight wars. I don't think the concept of, "mutually assured destruction" was around yet, or maybe that's what he feared.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Popular presidents

by Kaylee Garman - Monday, May 27, 2013, 10:54 PM

Sure the wars should be compared. I don't really see why not. There are plenty of things that can be compared such as Obama and Nixon's exit strategies from the two different wars. I think the actions of our presidents have been almost entirely based on their reelection desires. Obama wanted to pull our troops out of Afghanistan because the war had then become unpopular to the American people. Now when the U.S. is in trouble the president would be extremely unpopular if he didn't do anything. Americans want America and its president to act strong and not be seen by the world as a big pushover. When America gets attacked or threatened, the U.S. citizens demand action. Every U.S. war time president, when America is threatened, jumps into action. When Pearl Harbor was bombed we ended up joining the war. When communism was spreading in the Korean and Vietnam wars, this threatened U.S. freedom, so the U.S. ended up once again in war. Now we are dealing with war because the U.S. was attacked in 2001. No matter if the president is Democrat or Republican, they are still going to do what makes them popular with the American people.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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The general knows best

by Ryan Dixon - Tuesday, May 28, 2013, 12:39 AM

Military Industrial Complex

After listening to the clip of the commentator I do not agree that Eisenhower's choice to use the word complex instead of lobby has such a big effect as he was suggesting. When I first heard it used I thought it was a frame of mind, a certain way of thinking. Now maybe back during the time when the speech was actually given, people may have thought differently and the initial reaction to the use of the word complex was more along the lines of what the commentator was suggesting. I think Eisenhower was smart in the choice to start building up our military even during peace time for the exact reasons the commentator gave, mainly being that we don't want to appear weak, vulnerable or not ready for any sort of attack against the United States. If other countries see that our military presence is not only numbers but military technology is advancing then they will be less likely to make a move against us. Also another great reason is that it provides consistent jobs, helping people earn a living, be patriotic and serve their country in a different form than on the battlefield. Not to mention it helps stabilize the economy. Overall this was a smart move for Eisenhower to take and has helped our country for the better. Yes the question of over spending in the military may be a concern of some but ask yourself, what would you rather have, a big military or a small military that can be easily taken

out and the country invaded.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Who doesn't like Ike?

by Gregory Vandelune - Tuesday, May 28, 2013, 12:25 PM

I think that Eisenhower's Farewell Address was a reflection of what he witnessed during his administration. The fact that he was a former general has little bearing. A build-up of national defense and the strengthening of defense contractors is understandable during that era. The Korean War and the implications of Task Force Smith played a considerable role.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Osan#Aftermath) Despite being technically in a state of peace, there was a strong desire to never repeat those events. The proliferation of nuclear weapons was another cloud looming over the heads of our nation's leaders. It would have been easy to get caught up in the fear from the arms race.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Who doesn't like Ike?

by Robert Sappington - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 10:56 PM

Sir, to quote the book, "this term signified an informal relationship among military, political, an economic elites committed to expanding national security capabilities." P. 947

I got to agree with you 100%. This is everything he saw during his administration. This is as you said a "reflection of what he witnessed during his administration." Like the book says, "Eisenhower's warnings about possible impending danger came after eight years during which his white house had praised the nations continued economic growth."

So call this a flip flopper situation? No, I think he saw the way things were going and it worried him.

The concept of the military-industrial complex wasn't 100% new, just new for the US. And knowing where this usually lead country is probably what was of concern to him. (Mutual assured destruction)

Side note: I want to say military-industrial complex goes hand and hand with lobby. But lobby sounds less war hungry and less tuff, more politically correct. Military-Industrial Complex sounds more military like, more aggressive. Different times, difference words used.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Ike's warning

by Kaylee Garman - Friday, May 31, 2013, 5:03 PM

I was thinking about your last couple sentences about the fear of the arms race. It made me wonder if Ike was also warning the American people of the political strategy involved with the Red Scare. Republicans built up Americans' fear of the Red Scare to get more people to side with their party. A sort of 'look at what's happened under the Democrats watch. If you want to get rid of the Red Scare, side with the Republicans.' The Republicans built up the Red Scare fear so much that it caused people to want to increase America's defense. So I was thinking maybe the warning in Ike's speech came from the political problems born out of the Red Scare.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Ike's warning

by Robert Sappington - Friday, May 31, 2013, 6:13 PM

"Republicans built up Americans' fear of the Red Scare to get more people to side with their party."

"The Republicans built up the Red Scare fear so much that it caused people to want to increase America's defense."

I don't think that's so. Let's ignore the first Red Scare of 1919-1920, and look at other communist events.

Under Dems:

Iron Curtain (1945)

Cold War (1947 to 1991)

Second Red Scare (1947)

Executive Order 9835, Truman signs, creates "Federal Employees Loyalty Program"

Truman Wins Reelection (1948)

Soviet Nuclear Testing/ Start of the Arms Race (1949)

China falls to Communism (1949)

Rosenbergs (May 23, 1950)

Start of Korean War (1950)

McCarran Internal Security Act (1950) (took away citizen freedoms) – See source 1

Truman loses presidential election (1952)

Eisenhower took office in January 20, 1953.

I think the fear was built already. The only thing the Republicans did was point out that the Dems failed at containment (containing communism).

Both parties built up and or onto the fear of communism.

Source 1:

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCarran_Internal_Security_Act#Provisions)

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Ike's warning

by Kaylee Garman - Saturday, June 1, 2013, 9:14 PM

I see what you mean that all the events you listed happened under a Democratic president and you are right. The Red Scare was alive during the Democrats' reign in the United States. Democrats allowed the door to the Red Scare to be open, but I think that Republicans were the ones that took it to the next level. My main point was that Republicans were preying on Americans' fear (and making some of it up) to get elected.

"In American politics, the post war struggle was for the control of Congress. The Democratic Party had been in power for nearly two decades, and Republican Party conservatives seized anti-Communism as a platform for two reasons. First, they truly did believe that liberal Democrats had been lax in responding to the Communist threat; and, second, they saw it as an avenue to political advantage."

<http://fc.nbsc.org/~swurster/3bredscareamerica.html>

Two of the most well know Republicans who used the Red Scare to gain political advantage were Joseph McCarthy (pretty much everything he did from February 20, 1950 and on) and Richard Nixon (Alger Hiss and the Pumpkin Papers).

<http://fc.nbsc.org/~swurster/3bredscareamerica.html>

<http://socalhistory.org/biographies/richard-m-nixon.html>

"Republicans and their allies were obviously planning to use the Red Scare to their advantage in the presidential election of that year"

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/red-scare-dominates-american-politics>

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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comparisons?

by Francisco Gomez - Friday, May 31, 2013, 3:17 PM



I only think it's fair to compare wars when it comes to their victories (WW1) and their failures (Vietnam). But also wars have to come to an end. Ever since in my lifetime, I've heard and read about the war on terror. It's the most diverse war I've known. The exit strategy has been the polarizing issue of the war. While I agree the troops should come home, what are we doing to keep any type of threat from our shores? I don't want to see another world war and I don't want our United States to be the cause of a war. We either jumped to problems that wasn't a real threat at all or willing not to settle for peace. Which comes to Eisenhower's comment on military industrial complex. The fear that our military buildup will burden our economy and start up a war we never agreed to in the first place. I assume that Eisenhower is telling us to keep the military industrial complex in check. I fear we haven't and needs to be addressed.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Someone had to say it  

by Gregory Vandellune - Friday, May 31, 2013, 9:22 PM

I am going to broach the questions that seemingly have been avoided, "Moreover, what does it reveal about our nations' leaders, Democrat or Republican, and their response or reactions to real or perceived foreign threats?"

I think the best way to approach this question is to look at what has happened historically. As illustrated during lecture, the Democratic Party is certainly the party of war in the past century. I find it interesting to compare the past three presidents.

Clinton involved the US in many different things that while not qualifying as war put Americans at risk: escalation of US forces in the Balkans was under his administration, the death of 19 Americans in Mogadishu on October 3, 1993, and the commitment to stop the genocide in Rwanda. Of course, that part was sarcasm. The Clinton administration sat by and watched as 800,000 Rwandans were murdered with such efficiency as to shame Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot. "In reality the United States did much more than fail to send troops. It led a successful effort to remove most of the UN peacekeepers who were already in Rwanda. It aggressively worked to block the subsequent authorization of UN reinforcements. It refused to use its technology to jam radio broadcasts that were a crucial instrument in the coordination and perpetuation of the genocide. And even as, on average, 8,000 Rwandans were being butchered each day, U.S. officials shunned the term "genocide," for fear of being obliged to act. The United States in fact did virtually nothing "to try to limit what occurred." Indeed, staying out of Rwanda was an explicit U.S. policy objective."

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/09/bystanders-to-genocide/304571/>)

President Bush responded to terrorist attacks on US soil by a network sponsored by the Taliban government of Afghanistan. Additionally, he committed a special operations force with a low signature (“flexible response”) to the southern Philippines in January 2002 to combat Al Qaeda affiliates with ties to the attacks that took place in September 2001. Bush also, with Congressional authorization, oversaw the invasion of Iraq in 2003. This was not a Republican only vote, approximately 50% of the Democratic Senators and Representatives voted to authorize this.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_war_by_the_United_States,
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0774721.html>)

President Obama, like LBJ, while promising voters that he would “bring troops home” committed more. LBJ would not commit to the numbers that Gen. Westmoreland said that he would need to win the war.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Westmoreland, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/westmoreland-asks-for-more-troops>) The Clinton administration’s refused to allow armor and AC-130 gunships to be sent to Somalia despite the requests from Gen. Garrison, the TF Ranger Commander. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Aspin) With a resounding similarity to Democratic “war-time” presidents, Obama would only commit a fraction of what Gen McChrystal said would be needed to win a counter-insurgency fight in Afghanistan.

(<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/17/obama.troops/>,
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/21/world/asia/21afghan.html?_r=0)

It seems to be an undeniable trend that the Democratic presidents of recent years are willing to commit Americans to die but not willing to commit enough Americans to win. Furthermore, if the threat is credible, ie. the US Embassy to Libya , or simply even genocide, those same politicians are willing to sit by and watch the death and destruction while they begin their processes of consequence management, at least Bush was willing to fully commit when asking Americans to risk their lives.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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