



Search forums

Forum 4
The Military Industrial Complex

• [Subscribe](#)

◀ [Environmentalism as Religion](#)

[Environmentalism as Religion](#) ▶

Display replies in nested form

Move this discussion to ...

Move



The Military Industrial Complex

by Joe Escobar – Friday, May 20, 2016, 9:17 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, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Military Industrial Complex

Sum of ratings: –

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: The Military Industrial Complex

by Zachary Sielicky – Saturday, May 21, 2016, 2:04 PM

I think the use of terminology in the case of describing the Military Industrial Complex is something that brings up a compelling thought. The speaker is right when he says, "When we hear the term *Military Industrial Complex*, it sounds like a sinister bunch of people." It makes it sound like something so big and physical and complex that it builds disconnect with average American people. It does sound sinister and dangerous when you combine the words military and industrial and complex. When I think of the military I think of war, power and control. I do agree that a more accurate term would be lobby, because that is exactly what has happened with the military itself, it has become an extremely profitable business and what is scary is that it flourishes in times of war. I always hesitate to believe claims that are made by people trying to prove a point, but if the statistic is true that, "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," then the speaker makes an even more compelling point.

If Eisenhower would have changed the wording to "Military Industrial Lobby," it grows an even bigger disconnect with the American people and could in turn increase public backlash. When the word *Complex* is used it does sound sinister and scary and it does describe the Military Industry because it is complex, but when the word lobby is used, it highlights corporate interest and could establish the idea that America goes to war only for finical gains and interest. This would cause increasing public disapproval for any war that America might engage in.

My thoughts may seemed scattered but to make a point clear, I believe that the use of *Complex* opposed to *Lobby* benefits those who have financial interest in any military company because it disconnects war from business.

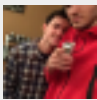


Re: The Military Industrial Complex
by [Balkhy Balkhy](#) – Wednesday, May 25, 2016, 11:08 AM

Your comments are a really interesting analysis to me. I think that I had similar views in the difference of the choice in wording, but I initially felt like 'lobbying' would be more accepted by Americans because it is a concept they are used to and usually feel helpless about. So it's interesting to see how "lobby" might actually anger people over the word "complex" because the latter may seem even less accessible or less understood.

I also agree with your final thought, and I'm glad you mentioned that because again, I didn't think of this when I made my first comment. I think it totally does benefit those with a financial interest in the military, or companies who produce military products.

Eisenhower and the commentator make the connection between war and business, and I hadn't thought about how "complex" actually creates a disconnect between the two, which could be seriously beneficial to those lobbying and those with a financial interest; though I'm sure that's not what Eisenhower intended.



Re: The Military Industrial Complex
by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Wednesday, May 25, 2016, 4:17 PM

I agree, I don think it is what Eisenhower intended but I do believe that he or his speech writers were very keen with their words for the intent to mislead listeners. Whether we like to agree with it or not or accept this as a reality, politicians and their speech writers word things and use metaphors and the use of the dominant rhetoric to hide realities. Speech is an incredible thing and when used by people with power, they tend to assert their power discreetly and persuasively in order for us to not find realities and feel threatened by their power. This is a great example and I am glad you agree with me, the word lobby would NEVER be used in describing something of this magnitude. There is a reason why we don't hear everyday about our involvement in the middle east, we still have thousands of troops in the middle east fighting terror. And the sad thing is, people are profiting off the war and if everyone recognized that, there would be a massive retaliation and increased public disapproval. Instead we are fed with material that distracts us from the reality of the world.

Now am I against the war on terror? No, I believe there are bad people in that part of the world doing terrible things to innocent people and as the most powerful country in the world militarily we should protect those who are effected by it. But we here in America, aren't faced with the threat of terrorists bombing our buildings, schools, streets, stores etc. But people tend to believe we are faced with that. It is an interesting world and I feel now I am just rambling. Thanks for the input my friend!



Re: The Military Industrial Complex/War on Terror
by [Balkhy Balkhy](#) – Thursday, May 26, 2016, 7:09 AM

Definitely. I think sometimes that writers and other behind-the-scenes people may have more of an intention than the speakers do. As for the war on terror, I am against it as a concept--because, with language, the U.S. uses this phrase to its advantage to benefit its desire for imperialism. In colonial days, they used the phrase "manifest destiny" to travel west and decimate innocent natives. I think that the modern day "war on terror" piggybacks off of that, as well as of course the "war on drugs" which was fabricated by the U.S. government.

All of these things serve the need of U.S. government to expand and really, conquer, under the guise of democracy which isn't really practiced here anyway.

And you're totally right, the U.S. doesn't wage war at home, so Americans don't have to see it and really can't conceptualize the drone attacks that occur overseas and kill innocent folks all the time. This "war on terror," which Obama has perpetuated despite his campaign promises (not that that's shocking), has really left the "average" white American largely untouched by the effects.

And think a lot of people who didn't live in cities or know people who lived in cities that were affected by the 9/11 attacks, are even more distant from the war we're currently waging. For example, my girlfriend is a New Yorker, in NYC all her life. She personally is really upset when folks post pictures of the twin towers, or the attacks, around 9/11 and has to avoid any kind of media around that time of year. Folks who are able to post these images, towers burning, the planes in the air etc., are already so desensitized about something that happened on U.S. soil just because they weren't in that region or knew someone who was.

So how could Americans even relate to attacks that their own government is making on other countries if they can't even relate to their fellow citizens about something so heinous? I think this is something that benefits the military industrial complex/lobby in an incredible way, and allows people to ignore those who have financial and political interests in the perpetuation of war.

Many many New Yorkers, like my girlfriend, do not support islamophobia nor the war on terror, but unfortunately, as we saw with propaganda, the conservatives and those lobbyists for military action, used the 9/11 attacks to wage a war on the Middle East just for being Muslim.

I feel I am rambling a bit but basically I am just saying that prejudice and ignorance (both in being islamophobic and in not knowing about the military lobby) allow for war to continue and for those who make a profit to continue making a profit, whether or not it benefits the U.S. socially or financially or at all.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: The Military Industrial Complex
by Benjamin Marshall - Saturday, May 28, 2016, 10:22 PM

You're definitely correct in that an eminent terror threat is nothing compared to what US Citizens imagine, and much of that fear is perpetuated by our media outlets. That being said the GWOT can be waged by a much smaller fighting force than our current standing army, so long as it has the necessary support from the other branches primarily our massive Navy. The shrinking of the Army could serve as the beginning of the lengthy process of dismantling the Military Industrial Complex. However the growth of involvement by private military companies to fight our war on terror for us proves that the military industrial complex is moving away from the conventional military and more towards the private sector as a means of making money.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Proper Wording
by Christopher Burton - Monday, May 23, 2016, 12:21 PM

I absolutely agree with the commentator about correct wording. One of my favorite books is *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*. In this book the author talks about the consequences of improper wording and punctuation. In all of my physics classes I have been called out on my, sometimes, improper wording. In my case it doesn't cause a war, but my grade takes a hit. No one ever truly knows what you're thinking, so you must try and make your words as correct as possible at all times. I don't know that I agree with either complex or lobby, but I also don't identify as an expert in this field.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Robert McNamara, The Ford Motor Company, and the MIC
by Benjamin Marshall - Monday, May 23, 2016, 12:56 PM

When Robert McNamara left his service with the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1946 he joined a group of young business men from his former squadron at the Ford Motor Company. This was at a time of decline for the company since there was no demand from U.S. government for equipment for the military.

Fast forward immediately following JFK's assassination and Robert, now secretary of defense is able to use the Vietnam War to blue print the MIC to how we know it today. He used his superior knowledge of business and

knew the benefits of war on industry having worked high up at Ford to create a blue print laying out the use of perpetual conflict to make money. A great example of this being practiced was Operation Rolling thunder in Vietnam. The U.S. dropped literally tons of bombs on empty jungle canopies to "send a message" to the NVA and VC calling for the manufacture of the more and more military ordinance by companies with private military contracts.

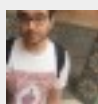
We see the same thing today when companies like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, KBR, Haliburton, Academi (formerly known as Black Water) and Triple Canopy make billions upon billions of dollars off U.S. Government contracts. The ongoing conflicts of the 21st century are expensive to the tax payers, but those within the Military, the U.S. Government and Private Military Contracting Companies see these wars as job security. A large inflated military is what Robert McNamara envisioned to create this type of revenue, especially when the U.S. government has no problem expanding the deficit.

The small surgical fighting force is what JFK intended to turn the Military, or at very least the Army, into at the start of the war in Vietnam with the expansion of the Special Forces (Green Berets). The desire to shrink the conventional Army down to the size of a corps as laid out in article IV b.1–4 of the Pentagon Papers would have proved to be greatly beneficial to American citizens then and now, but extremely bad for the war business. These are the “grave implications” Eisenhower warned against that have proved detrimental to every facet our society.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Complex v Lobby--a PR debate
by Balkhy Balkhy – Monday, May 23, 2016, 7:05 PM

In regard to the commentator on Eisenhower's use of the "Military Industrial Complex," I don't think that there is a misuse of language here. I think that the phrase "Military Industrial Lobby" is accurate in plain description, but the commentator goes into detail about the domino-effect of lobbying that makes it able to be described as a "complex." Both phrases are accurate, but one seems less threatening. Lobbying has not really been a secret in U.S. politics and using the phrase "Military Industrial Lobby" seems less harsh on the ears of Americans who are used to (then and now) hearing about lobbying. Defining the series of companies lobbying the Pentagon, the Pentagon lobbying Congress, and so forth, makes it a Complex, and calling it a complex makes it sound much more threatening.

I think Eiseinhower's choice of words and the commentator's critique of it comes down to a public relations issue--a "complex" is a lot more difficult to swallow than a "lobby" because a complex by definition is more involved and could make people more suspicious. A "lobby" is a word that begins and ends there--a single lobby, or at least it seems that way.

The discussion around the words really just seems like a way to make things more appealing to people, generation wise.

The fact that Eisenhower is talking about a military buildup during a time of peace does also inform on the situation. It seems like he uses the word "complex" and talks about a "permanent armament industry" to warn against this "potential for misplaced power." This really informs on my perception of it because, without knowing Eisenhower personally, you could still see that he is trying very much to warn against something that could "interfere" with liberty. He seems sincere and very insistent. I think he understood the nature of war, and by that point, the nature of Americans and felt like he wanted to warn against what he thought might happen.

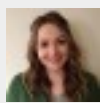
Especially what the commentator touched on, that unjustified military spending is a waste of national resources. He acknowledges that being prepared and not seeming weak is important, but there is a risk for excess that is bad for the nation as a whole.The United States federal budget spends way more on the military than any social benefits; which I think is definitely a waste of national reserouces

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

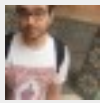
Keeping the peace through military establishment
by Chloe Duryea – Thursday, May 26, 2016, 10:36 PM



Eisenhower oversaw a military buildup in a time of peace in order to keep the peace. He believed a key factor in maintaining the peace was a military establishment. He mentioned that we could no longer risk an emergency improvisation of national defense. Therefore, it was a good time to establish a permanent military that included three and a half million men and women. Eisenhower did understand that resources and livelihoods were involved. However, we had witnessed four major wars against nations. I believe this was the right time to engage in building up the military. Now knowing that Eisenhower oversaw a military buildup in a time of peace, rather than war, makes me understand that his intentions were to keep the peace. Although these were his intentions, he warned us in his speech about the potential of misplaced power. It existed then and will continue to exist in the future. To this day, we have to find a balance between executing our power through the use of the military and conducting negotiations with other nations.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Keeping the peace through military establishment

by [Balkhy Balkhy](#) – Friday, May 27, 2016, 1:23 PM

I think your observations are totally accurate. I do see where Eisenhower was coming from with building the military in a time of peace instead of scrambling and forcing the whole country into the war effort, but I do agree that there is no balance of the U.S. military power against the rest of the country's responsibilities especially.

I think that the funding toward the U.S. military alone shows the tremendous amount of misplaced power that the country keeps within the military industrial complex.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Continued growth of the Military-Industrial Complex

by [Ethan Borsak](#) – Saturday, May 28, 2016, 7:46 PM

I think both the words “complex” & “lobby” could both used accurately, depending on context. Clearly, the defense industry involves a highly powerful lobbying wing, just like other big business (energy, healthcare, insurance, etc.). It seems like Eisenhower was fairly prescient about the growth of this “complex”, having witnessed the manufacturing & military industry boom during and post-WWII firsthand. As the defense industry continued to grow in power & influence during the Cold War, I’d imagine Ike was savvy enough to see that it wasn’t going to just slow down and contract back to pre-WWII levels. I think he was warning about it growing beyond control, and its “acquisition of unwarranted influence”. The article on Obama illustrated just how deep that influence goes, on both sides of the isle. I think the shadowy enemy we had during the Cold War could be, in some ways, be recalled in the war on terror we are presently in. Just as the military-industrial complex could then point to national security concerns as justification for increased spending & power, the same could be done now. With such a nebulous enemy being fought on so many fronts, I think the military-industrial complex is still very much an important subject.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Continued growth of the Military-Industrial Complex

by [Benjamin Marshall](#) – Saturday, May 28, 2016, 10:35 PM

One large issue with having a large standing military in peace time is a can quickly act as a catalyst to end the peace. A military build up is usually followed by an excuse to use it. There are hundreds of factors to consider as to the motivations of the US to conduct all the interventionist conflicts in the second half of the 20th century and I think having a huge standing military is one of them. As the US military develops more and more modern weaponry the Middle East serves as the perfect testing ground to see this machines practically utilized. We saw this with the Germans testing the products of their military industrial complex during the Spanish Civil War in 1939 and we see it today in places like Iraq and Syria. Americans aren't necessarily the ones pulling the triggers but the US Government can see the capabilities of some of their weapons in action.



The Military–Industrial Complex Before and After the Cold War

by Theodore Pratten – Saturday, May 28, 2016, 9:53 PM

The Military–Industrial Complex made sense in a way during the Cold War. The Cold War was unlike what the country went through during the World Wars. A buildup of armaments and weapons systems was sensible during a time period when we had to be ready to go to war with the Soviets. We had to assume that the Soviets were building up their military as vigorously as we were, so if it ever came to the point that war broke out between the superpowers, we would be ready. Nobody could have definitely known that war with the Soviet Union would never materialize.

Even though Dwight Eisenhower presided over a buildup of armaments during peacetime, he may have seen the potential danger of a permanent war economy.

The Military–Industrial Complex has taken on a sinister connotation during the post–Cold War era, though. One quote from the article stood out for me: "151 members of Congress in 2006 had up to \$195.5 million of their personal assets invested in defense companies." Also, the fact that defense companies give millions of dollars in campaign contributions to politicians from both major parties is something that should give one pause. I think most people would be disturbed by the fact that elected officials are investing in defense companies, and that their wealth can grow depending on how much profit these companies make from selling armaments and weapons systems. It can lead to dark assumptions about the nature of American wars after the fall of communism. Are our wars about securing freedom and bringing democracy and prosperity to people around the world? Or are they just another way to line the pockets of the wealthy?



Re: The Military–Industrial Complex Before and After the Cold War

by Benjamin Marshall – Saturday, May 28, 2016, 10:43 PM

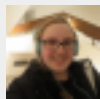
I think a great example of your point would be people within the Bush administrations personal interests in Haliburton. The Texas based company that made millions of dollars off the war in Iraq. The US Government out sourced almost every support roll of the military to this company. Everything from providing food for soldiers to building the super bases they were stationed on. And of course the military over payed for all of it.



Re: The Military–Industrial Complex Before and After the Cold War

by Theodore Pratten – Saturday, May 28, 2016, 11:15 PM

I think guys like Dick Cheney are interesting examples if you want to look at the revolving door between the private sector and the government. He went from Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush to CEO of Halliburton to Vice President under George W. Bush. He oversaw three major wars during his time as a Cabinet member between 1989–93 and 2001–09. I wouldn't ever claim to know a fraction of what went on, but it's definitely interesting.



A response to the eisenhower questions.

by Miranda Metzger – Saturday, May 28, 2016, 10:40 PM

I always wish the terminology could be put in the terms of a middle school child could read and understand what is happening.

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

Maybe he saw it as a calm before the storm. That he knew that at the moment of the speech it was peaceful but he couldn't promise it for tomorrow and he probably knew or felt that there would be a war eventually and so he spoke as a warning for the future.

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

It is interesting that he formed this contrary position. War is hard on the society maybe he was worried that we would spend too much money into the military that we would begin to lack in our other strengths or maybe he didn't

How are the concerns of this subject still applicable today, years after the conclusion of the Cold War in 1989?

Because we have became very militarized or very military focused when it comes to where a lot of our money goes right? So it's applicable because it is still a issue that each new president is having to deal with and because Eisenhower's worry has become a reality in a way.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

[◀ Environmentalism as Religion](#)

[Environmentalism as Religion ▶](#)

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)

[HST 203 Sp16 \(Escobar Meta 41147 41146\)](#)

[LCC Home](#) | [LCC Student Help](#) | [LCC Faculty Help](#) | [Faculty Moodle Training](#) |