

HST 203: History of the United States Sp17 (Escobar Meta 41054 41053)

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The Military-Industrial Complex

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Forum 4

The Military-Industrial Complex

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The Military-Industrial Complex

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, May 27, 2017, 12:18 AM

This thread is for discussions on the 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

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Can Liberty and the Military Industrial Complex Prosper Together

by Jeff Johnson - Monday, May 29, 2017, 7:17 PM

I disagree with the commentator Eisenhower did talk about the lobbying but he also brought up the companies and millions of works involved. If Eisenhower had been just talking about lobbying the whole point of the speech would have made no sense. Although Eisenhower was talking about the military industrial complex and warning of its possible abuses he was not by any means saying get rid of it he was saying with the proper attention "security and liberty may prosper together" (Eisenhower speech video 2:19). Eisenhower believed we no longer lived in a world where it was possible not to have a standing army and the complex

around to support it. I believe these concerns are completely relevant today as we have been in and out of nonstop wars since Eisenhower left office. I would question his assumption that this complex and liberty can thrive at one time. We are now on the verge of a new cold war with Russia, fights with China over the South China Sea, constant demand for war with Iran and North Korea and the threat of terrorism home and abroad. If find it interesting hearing Obama talk about the NSA and how we can control it with proper oversight but recently I have been reading articles he might have used it to spy on his opposition.

<http://circa.com/politics/rand-paul-obama-may-have-spied-on-me-other-lawmakers-using-nsa-intercepts>

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A Complex Lobby

by Nick Lynch - Monday, May 29, 2017, 9:12 PM

I thought that the commentator in the podcast had a very strong point that Eisenhower's use of the word "complex" in "Military Industrial Complex" gave off a negative connotation. The word "complex" has us believe that there are many intricate, fragile pieces behind the military industry that is complex. And typically, when the word "complex" is used, it is usually used in a way that means it can't be described to the public based on their general knowledge of the subject. Lobby is a much softer term, because people have a general understanding of the definition of the word "Lobby." Joe said at the start of the term that definitions are important. If the definition of "Lobby" is clear, but the definition of "complex" leaves us with more questions, then which one would be more favorable by the public? I think that these podcasts and speeches gave us a great understanding on why Eisenhower would have had the military built stronger during the Cold War, and why leaders in recent times have continued the trend of upward defense spending; because there always seems to be a threat to the United States. During the Cold War it was Russia, who we almost started a nuclear war with during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Then, 10 years after the Cold War ended in 1991 we were attacked on September 11th, 2001. Of course Defense Spending is going to go up as we were headed to war. And now, almost 16 years later we have Trump increasing our Defense Spending again as North Korea is on the cusp of developing Nuclear Missiles that can reach S. Korea, Japan, and the United States. It's almost as if the United States and North Korea have had an ongoing "Missile Crisis" as the one we had during the Cold War in 1962. I'm not entirely sold on the idea of continually raising Defense Spending and feeding the economic prowess that is MIC, however I would hate to see something as tragic as a nuclear bomb going off in the United States. \$600B is an UNHEARD of amount of money to spend, especially when we are outspending the next 8 countries combined. However, when the intentions of a country like N. Korea have been made clear time and time again, maybe it's best if we don't play with fire. Or to put it more appropriately; maybe it's best if we don't play with nuclear bombs.

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Word choice

by Morgan Steinmetz - Monday, May 29, 2017, 9:42 PM

After listening to the commentators podcast, I actually do agree with him in regards to the verbiage that was used by Eisenhower. I feel like by him using the word complex, it added a more of a threatening tone to the phrase military-industrial complex. Like the commentator said, the word complex really does add a mysterious feeling to the phrase and it leaves it up to the people to interpret it for themselves which even today can be dangerous.

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Complex vs. Lobby

by Matthew Brownlee - Monday, May 29, 2017, 10:39 PM

I agree with the commentator. The word "complex" adds a level of dark, brooding mystery to the term. Though the weight that "complex" creates is important because the military industrial complex is a system that we can't take lightly, replacing it with "lobby" would ultimately be better--it would help clarify the term on the surface. Most people don't take the time to research such topics, so using clear, honest language is helpful to the countless uninformed people. That being said, we need to take it upon ourselves to not be lazy on such pertinent issues.

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Re: The Military-Industrial Complex

by Tyler Ingram - Monday, May 29, 2017, 11:31 PM

In terms of 'misuse' of vocabulary, I don't see the issues that everybody else seems to see. Language has never been a system of each word having one binary definition, and words are constantly used to convey a different meaning than their dictionary examples in modern language. I don't believe people should be criticized for creating analogies just because the literal definition isn't accurate.

Of course, Eisenhower resisted building the defense in terms of peace due to his resistance of building "military-industrial complex." as Eisenhower once said, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist."

Eisenhower's warning is still very applicable to today, in that the nation's spending on military defense is still enormous, even in times of relative peace that we've seen recently. The government needs to bring down spending to put focus into domestics -- not for the sake of a large commanding military.

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Re: The Military-Industrial Complex

by Morgan Steinmetz - Friday, June 2, 2017, 8:48 PM

Im glad that you said this. I had never even thought of it in this way. I, just like a lot of other people thought the words were misused and with a different word choice it could convey a different message. Im glad you said what you said because it actually opened my eyes to the other side of it. Like you said, words don't have a binary meaning and that's still true today.

I also agree with you about Eisenhower's message being applicable today. Unfortunately our president thinks differently and thinks we need to focus more money towards our military instead of the domestic side of things.

But once again thanks for making me think outside the box when it comes to the words Eisenhower used.

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Lobby vs. Complex

by Amelia Salzman - Monday, May 29, 2017, 11:54 PM

I think the use of terminology has a major impact of the understanding and the public opinion of US citizens. The Commentator's point of the lobby vs. complex seems valid. I would it was less about terminology and more about people understanding. It seems must of the time, the better people understand how things is the government works the more likely they are to keep claim. In the beginning the Idea of peace time military most have seemed very pessimistic. Or as Eisenhower said "grave impactions" People have just come out of multiple wars and it must have seemed like we were just waiting around for the next one. When explained in more detail it seemed more reasonable. The idea of being able to protect ourselves. When the connection of Lobbying was explained in the podcast it seemed to be easier to understand. I don't agree with all of Obama's point on the Military industrial complex but I did agree with wat he said about people readiness to assume the worst about their government" (I know I have a habit of assuming the worst.)

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Re: The Military-Industrial Complex

by Gabe Sorber - Monday, May 29, 2017, 11:56 PM

I agree with the commentator because of course definitions matter. If definitions didn't matter then anyone could go around making crazy statements mentioned to us in class about "radical conservatives" and many other examples used by the professor.

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Eisenhower's Farewell Address

by Bailey Davis - Wednesday, May 31, 2017, 4:42 PM

I believe that it made sense for Eisenhower to adopt a seemingly contrary position on the military-industrial complex during his farewell address. As president during the Cold War, it was logical to build up the nation's defenses. Eisenhower, who has been a general as well as president for two terms, had plenty of experience under his belt. Personally, I think he may

have issued the warning during his farewell address because of who was going to be president after him. John F. Kennedy was the youngest man to be elected president, and he was known for his strong (and potentially aggressive) stance on the Cold War. He was even called the "Cold Warrior"(lecture). It's possible that Eisenhower felt as though he had a good grasp on the growing military, but worried what young Kennedy might do with that power. As Eisenhower said during his Farewell Address, "the potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist."

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Eisenhower's Ignored Caution

by Jordan Selker - Thursday, June 1, 2017, 12:40 PM

I think that both lobby and complex are functional terms in this context. Complex highlights the interconnectivity between our military and the arms industry, while lobbying show the connection between said industry and politics. Both these connections, while similar, are important in their own right. Eisenhower has an incredibly insightful speech in which he highlights the possible negative impacts of the newly transformed military. While it may seem contradictory, I believe this balance view on the issue is essential, and one we see falling out of sight in modern politics. Eisenhower's life, and the concurrent era, was war riddled. Highlighted by aggressive leaders in charge of top-class militaries, and a fear of the ever-growing "threat" of communism; his development of a peacetime military and increased defense funding seems justified. Rare in today's politics however, Eisenhower identified the negative aspects and possible downfalls of the system he created, a warning that seems to have been ignored. Our military budget continues to balloon, across party lines, while our threat of invasion and large scale warfare seems to dwindle. We have failed to limit the arms industry in their influence, and see to this day with Trump's budget, that our military demands growth over every other aspect of government spending. While the cold war ended in 89, tensions are still to be found across the globe, and terrorist attacks help spur a widespread fear, soothed by, and used to justify not only larger military spending, but increased involvement overseas. The balance Eisenhower identified between defending yourself to ensure peace, and facilitating the horrors of war are ever-present today, and most likely for the rest of time. It pains me to see more and more money go into a military budget larger than the rest of the world combined under the preface of "defence". I believe that even the general Ike himself would disagree with the magnitude of our military and how we apply it's power.

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Keeping weapons consistent

by Jaclyn Bahn - Friday, June 2, 2017, 9:44 AM

Eisenhower building up our military in a time of peace, in my opinion, doesn't seem completely out of character. Being a former general I can see his desire to keep our military strong in the case of another war happening. Also the argument can be made that Eisenhower wanting to keep the manufacturing power of weapons consistent. Instead of it being retrofitted on demand of war.

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Re: Keeping weapons consistent

by Matthew Brownlee - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 1:19 PM

Considering the political climate of the time with the Cold War, I understand the desire to build up the military. In his warning, he was likely concerned because JFK would replace him. JFK, of course, as known as the "Cold Warrior" according to lecture, and Eisenhower felt that the growth of the Military Industrial Complex coupled with Kennedy's youth and inexperience could prove quite risky.

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Too little, too late

by Eric Walston - Friday, June 2, 2017, 9:30 PM

Eisenhower made this a concern of his in his farewell speech, yet there is a bit of irony involved there. Some of the things that he did, started this chain of events. It was Eisenhower who expanded the Air Force, and led the charge against communism. The highway program was developed during his time, so that troops could be more easily transported. In all, it appears that the good General, while an excellent field commander, became a very adept politician in the end with his usage of hypocrisy and double speak.

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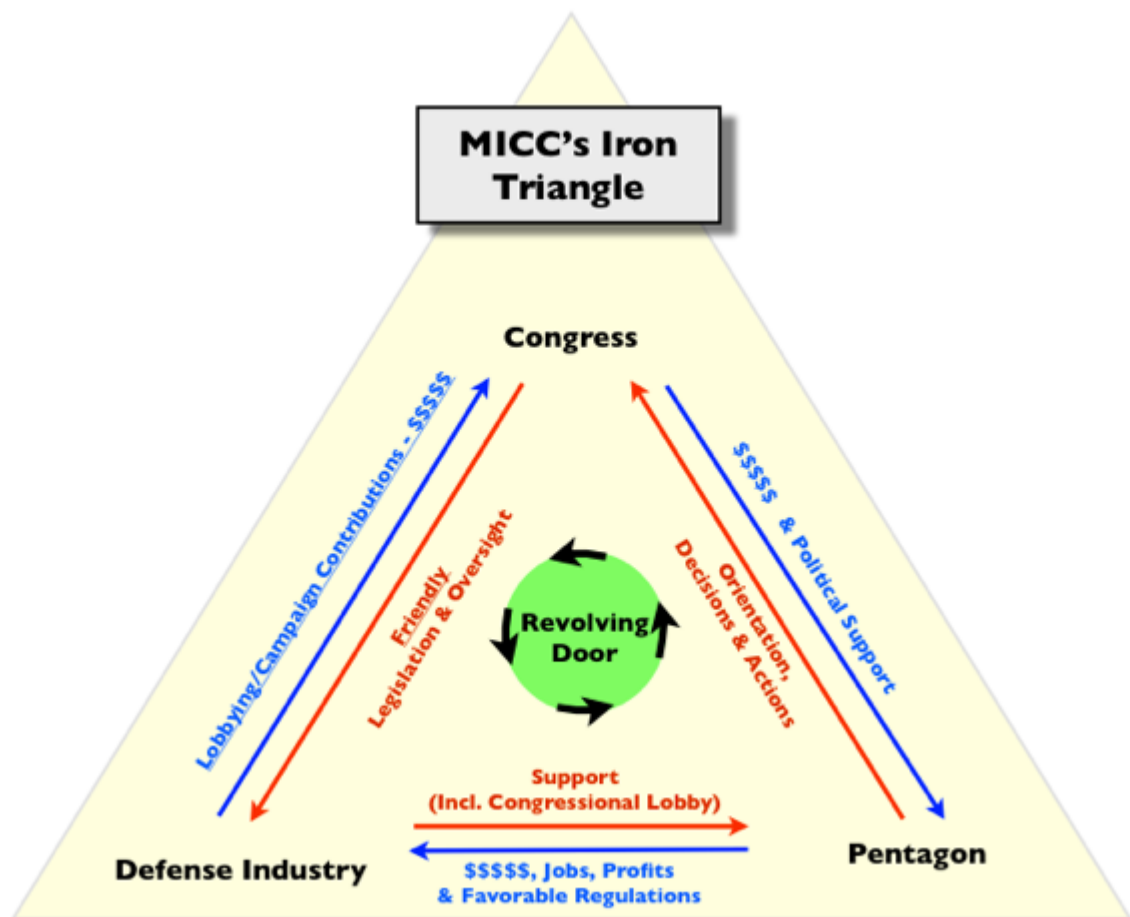
The "Defense Iron-Triangle"

by Andrew Trott - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 2:00 PM

To use the term "Military-Industrial Lobby" rather than "Military-Industrial Complex" certainly does add another layer to the discussion revolving around the military. However I still think that "Military-Industrial Complex" is a better term. To phrase it simply as a lobby would inherently dull down what the MIC actually is and all it entails. When referring to the MIC that this country is engaged in the role of lobbying must be active in that discussion. However it should not be the only part of the discussion; although it is seems to be a good place to start when trying to figure out how to bring the MIC into check. As with many modern issues as soon as we get into lobbying we open up a whole other issue of campaign spending, under regulated lobbying, and back door financing & bribing. Citizen United opened up the flood gates of campaign spending; spending that is often untraceable. It is hard to determine what the politicians real motives are, or at least the instigators, for their decisions.

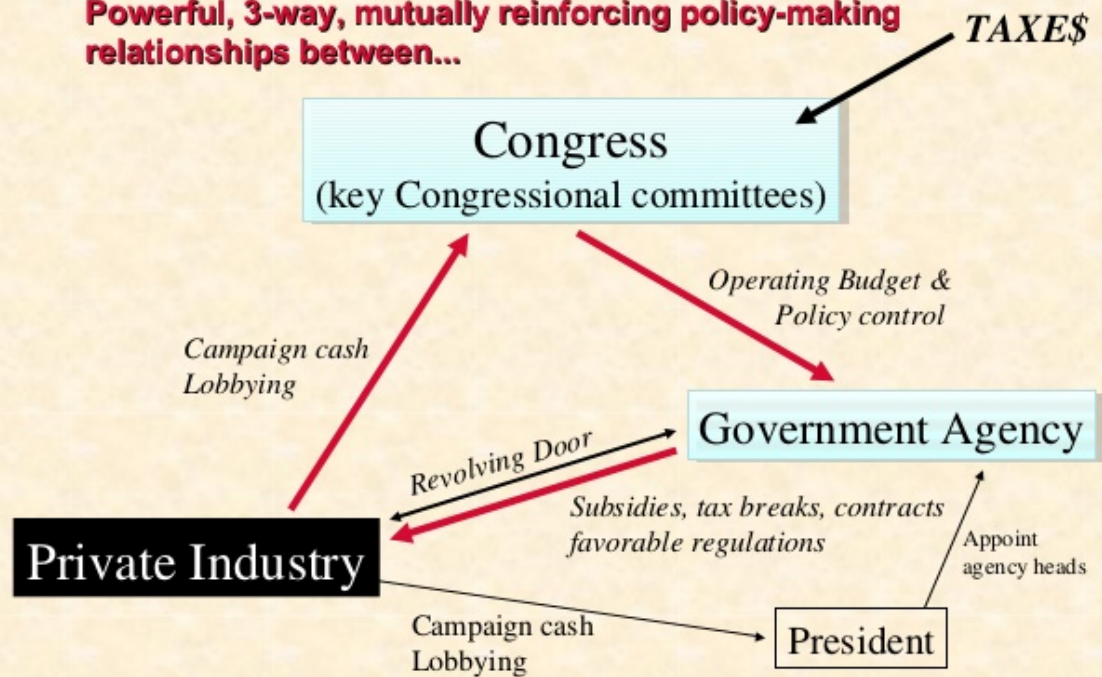
I agree though that the Military-Industrial Complex does hold negative connotations and is often used as a pejorative. I do not see this as an a large issue though; Even Eisenhower who coined the term was weary of the growing MIC thought People should be skeptical of the military spending and peace time build up of the military. He knew that "companies would need constant business; they'd like more profit. They would lobby the pentagon. The pentagon getting in equipment, being the managers and overseers of equipment, kind of, helped them secured their jobs. The pentagon would lobby congress.... So the companies would lobby the pentagon and congress, the pentagon would also lobby congress, and congress would lobby the administration." (2:56, Bruce Carlson). Then what has happened recently is that congress is actually helping fund the pentagon, or the private industry that is lobbying the pentagon. This is effectively referred to as the "defense iron-triangle." This is a really important term along with a feedback loop to bring into the discussion when talking about the MIC.

Currently the Military-Industrial Complex is still an issue because the military is a closed loop cycle. This closed loop cycle is, potentially, one of the larger issues with the MIC. The Clinton administration “increased foreign weapons sales from 16% of global orders to over 60% by end of his administration.” (Peter Phillip, zcomm.org). Then it would follow that many of those weapons are now weapons being used by people that the United States is fighting. This means that American corporations sell weapons, for profit, that get used against the U.S. then sell weapons to defend the U.S. against these weapons. The United State’s MIC does not end with the U.S. government in fact it expands out to much of the world. As former-President Obama said “America’s capabilities are unique. The power of new technologies means that there are fewer and fewer technological constraints on what we can do; that places a special obligations on us to ask what we should do.” (0:11, Obama) Here Obama is not referring to the U.S. Government alone, he is referring to American as a whole. This includes American Corporations. As Bernie Sanders says “we know that it is not just the a government problem; it is a private sector/corporate issue as well.” (0:38, Senator Sanders).



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Political Cartoons on MIC

by Andrew Trott - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 1:56 PM

A few more cartoons relevant to the discussion. What I particularly like about the first cartoon is that it does a good job, even with its bias, of showing that the US (and indeed the world's economy) is held up by the props of war, held up by the MIC. To eliminate the Military industrial complex currently would mean completely restructuring the entire economy.





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Re: Political Cartoons on MIC

by Morgan Steinmetz - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 10:30 PM

These cartoons are definitely fitting. Could you imagine if the funding for military was cut? Just like you said, the whole entire economy and budget would have to be reworked. Its interesting to think about that especially when you take the current presidents opinion on military funds into consideration. He thinks more should be put towards the military funding and less towards domestic, if the military aspect was eliminate, I sure wonder where he'd focus the budget on.

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Re: The Military-Industrial Complex

by Branden Long - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 6:36 PM

- I agree with the Commentator that Eisenhower used the word complex to point out how difficult and complex the military spending is. If Eisenhower would have used the word lobby it would have made it less crazy because that is what it really became of the United States Government. The reason that i agree is that it would change the response of what the MICC is because it would make seem more like a part of the government because when we use the word lobby means (a group of people seeking to influence politicians or public officials on a particular issue) instead of the word complex which is (consisting of many different and connected parts.). The Military-Industrial Complex is a lobby because it seeks out the support of people.

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Re: The Military-Industrial Complex

by Matthew Brownlee - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 9:46 PM

Using "lobby" would make the phrase incomplete, I feel. Lobbying is part of the Military Industrial Complex, but doesn't begin to describe the intricate network of politicians and military and economic elites. Lobby certainly has a less ominous tone than complex, so I think the word choice is fitting.

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Eisenhower's military build-up

by Branden Long - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 8:04 PM

The fact that Eisenhower oversaw the military buildup in the peacetime was a definitely something that i would think a general would do to prepare America for future war. In Eisenhower's farewell speech he said "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." that the build up was necessary for the our nation's defense.

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