

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

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The Military-Industrial Complex



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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Get Them Thinking

by Austin Muller - Monday, May 29, 2017, 7:53 PM

I would agree with the podcaster in the fact that he believes President Eisenhower misused the term military industrial complex. Eisenhower's use of the word is not incorrect in the sense that it is downright wrong, it does however have a certain misleading nature to it. The podcaster states, "He used the term military industrial complex to reflect the complexity of it, there were so many interlocking pieces." (Starting at 3:40 in the podcast excerpt) By using the word "complex" it gives the the term a seemingly darker tone that may frighten some. I searched for the scientific name of the common cold, and the result sounds much more medically frightening than what popular culture likes to call it, acute viral rhinopharyngitis. If one did not

know what that name was referring to, they would be much more intimidated by it than they need be. Not to say that using a different name makes vast military build up any less serious, however it is another example of differing views based on vocabulary usage. Perhaps that was Eisenhower's strategy though, not to instill outright fear into Americans, but deliberately choose his words to display how serious this actually was to the future of the country. Get people thinking about this new way of life that the United States was inevitably headed towards.

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Lobby Vs. Complex

by Hope Walston - Monday, May 29, 2017, 10:14 PM

I think I agree with the commentator when he says that Lobby would have been a better word for Eisenhower to use instead of complex. Eisenhower used the word complex to show how many parts there are to it, it's intricate. However, at least speaking for myself, complex doesn't immediately make me think of intricate, it makes me think of a person who is obsessed with something. Lobby on the other hand means to influence people on a particular issue, i.e. more spending for the military. I believe Lobby would have been the better word to use.

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The Business of War

by Kevin Smolek - Monday, May 29, 2017, 10:44 PM

I thought President Eisenhower Made some good points, and am kinda surprised that he understood at the time how influential and important the military industrial complex (MIC) would become. He saw the need to keep a whole industry on standby in case war broke out again. The previous major wars had needed time to ramp up and start mass producing war necessities, however in the modern age the time just isn't there to gear up and increase production in wartime. So we need an entire industry built up and ready to churn out everything we'd need to fight a major conflict. The problem with this is the business building the bombs and guns and uniforms and trucks and all manor of other things are out to make money, and in peacetime it's hard to justify the expense. So they make sure that the government keeps buying tanks and things by lobbying. It's a problem having so much conflict of interest going on in the government with campaign donations and the like, but I just don't see a way around it. We need these industry's up and running, and to keep them in business we end up spending money we don't need to, and taking what amount to bribes.

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Re: The Business of War

by Austin Muller - Thursday, June 1, 2017, 3:25 PM

In your post you state, "in peacetime it's hard to justify the expense" with the expense being the enormous amounts of military funding the U.S. government allows. While I don't disagree with you that in a time of true peace the government would have a difficult time selling the U.S. citizens on the need for constant armament build up. I would say however

that the U.S. is never at peace and it conveniently finds some sort of conflict to ensure that military build up has some justification. Eisenhower gave his farewell address in 1961, since then the U.S. has been involved, to varying degrees, in 21 conflicts.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_the_United_States) I can't come outright and say that the U.S. actively seeks out war, but when you consider the numerous conflicts we have been involved in, it is hard to deny that there is a correlation. With just how large a part of our economy military build up has become, the "lobbying" serves no longer just for the spending on military build up, but also for the assurance that we are actively using what is built up. If we were to be truly at peace, then and only then would we be able to start to roll back this ludicrous spending.

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Re: The Business of War

by Kevin Smolek - Friday, June 2, 2017, 6:43 PM

Oh I totally agree, and am glad that you came to that conclusion. With a massive MIC, comes the need to justify buying the bullets and bombs that they are producing. Some say that the US is sticking it's nose places it doesn't belong, and others would say that our interventions around the world are helping make it a safer place. But there is no doubt that the huge war industry in this country has some effect on why we chose to go where we do and fight the wars that we have. This graph shows total military spending during the cold war years, and clearly we spent an unbelievable amount on defeating the communists.

<http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1297>

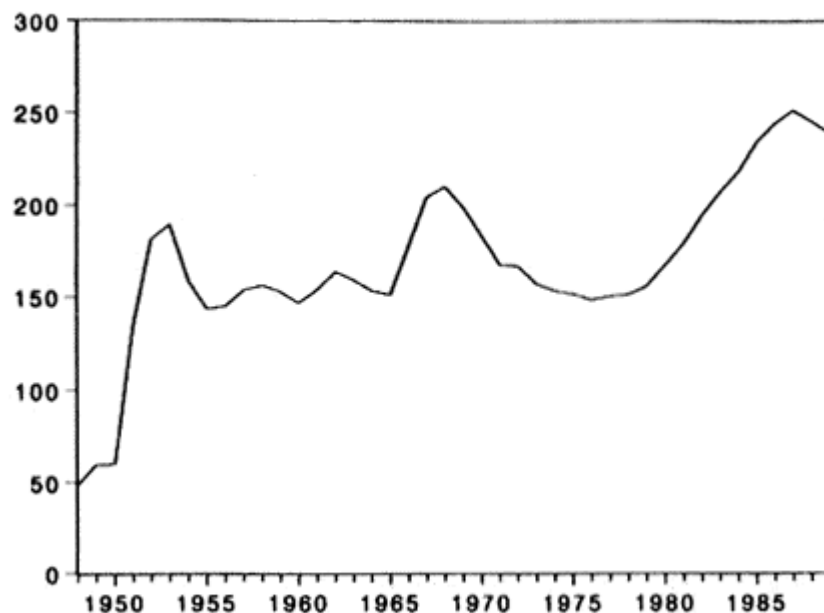


FIG. 1. Real military outlays (billions of 1982 dollars), 1948-1989.

We won by outspending them, and there's something to be said for that strategy. They didn't have the economic system to keep up with us, and in the end that was their downfall. The fall of communism stands as a warning, and despite the recent trend back towards that direction from the left, we've seen how it turns out, and hopefully learned from the past.

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Re: The Business of War

by Austin Muller - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 4:25 PM

I agree with you about how outspending our communist enemies was one of the more important factors in their collapse and our victory. From a governmental standpoint, if you have the means to outspend your enemy while still providing a reasonably stable economy for your people, then it makes complete sense to do so. However, even with it showing the flaws in a communist government as you state, the U.S. with their spending seemed ready to accept the negatives that would come from their victory. Once a military of that magnitude is achieved, there is no going back, in fact it's more likely to only increase.

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Re: The Business of War

by Kevin Smolek - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 6:11 PM

I think that one of the main problems is the catastrophic amount of waste that happens in government. The Washington post reports: "The Pentagon has buried an internal study that exposed \$125 billion in administrative waste in its business operations amid fears Congress would use the findings as an excuse to slash the defense budget, according to interviews and confidential memos obtained by The Washington Post."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/pentagon-buries-evidence-of-125-billion-in-bureaucratic-waste/2016/12/05/e0668c76-9af6-11e6-aoed-ab0774c1eaa5_story.html?utm_term=.a50f3ea2f3d7

And that's simply administrative waste. Another problem is what seems to be a hold over from the WWII policy of spending 200-300% more on goods heading to the battlefield to instinctive manufacturer. The F-35 is a great example of outrages cost overrun and how a new piece of equipment can cost many times what was expected. Thats not the only MIC boondoggle though. The U.S. under Obama spent \$500 million training troops in Syria, and all but 4 have defecated to ISIS or runaway at this point. So we spent half a billion training our enemies...

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/28/politics/worst-military-waste-errors-2015/index.html>

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Re: The Business of War

by Kiet Bui - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 1:16 PM

I agree with you that the U.S. "conveniently finds some sort of conflict to ensure that military build up has some justification". In addition to that, I would argue that it is necessary for America to be constantly involved in conflicts in order to maintain part of

its economy. With the largest MIC in the world, American arms industry need to have customers: either its own military or its allies' military. America, as a world power, seeks to create stability, or sometimes to "make the world a better place for democracy" while benefiting the industry. Personally, that justifies the various conflicts that U.S. has been and will be a part of. In fact, in the last articles in the forum readings, when it is predicted that about 60,000 U.S. companies are expected to be closed, unemployment would be 14 percent, the administration's response was "continue high defense/war spending to insure military control of both domestic and foreign instabilities". So I thought America was "lucky" to be involving with Syria conflicts at the time.

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Eisenhower's intentions - complex vs lobby

by Dana Lowder - Thursday, June 1, 2017, 3:34 PM

I agree with the commentator regarding Eisenhower use of words when he says military industrial complex. It does sound mysterious especially in a farewell speech but I also agree that he did not mean it do be this way. He should have said military industrial lobby which the commentator suggested and it leaves out the complexity that people were thinking. Being very clear and descriptive in a presidential speech is so important and if Eisenhower would have said lobby instead of complex than I really don't think it would have been a topic of discussion. But it does beg the question in my mind as to why he would use the term complex. He was a supreme commander of allied forces, and then our commander in chief so someone who knows and served in the military, also a president who has his speeches looked over and reviewed to avoid the wrong usage of words it does bring out a mysterious feeling.

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Re: Eisenhower's intentions - complex vs lobby

by Hope Walston - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 11:46 AM

I like what you said here. I have been wondering though why JFK didn't take Eisenhower's warning seriously. Maybe he was trying to say that the U.S. is developing a "Complex" for military buildup. I mean it's sort of along the lines of the bigger military and the newer weapons you have, people will come along to challenge you. I think this could be a possible explanation to why Eisenhower said what he did.

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Eisenhower military buildup

by Hope Walston - Friday, June 2, 2017, 8:47 PM

I don't really understand why Eisenhower decided to say that the U.S. should stay away from Military-Industrial Buildup, when he himself oversaw military build up in a peace time. Maybe he realized his mistakes and wanted to make sure they weren't made again. "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist" (Eisenhower farewell address, 1961). I don't really see a reason for him to take a contrary position to his original belief.

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The Military-Industrial Complex: Inevitable given the 1960s' situation.

by Kiet Bui - Friday, June 2, 2017, 10:38 PM

In his farewell speech, president Eisenhower warned America about the fact that permanent armaments industry had emerged after WWII and the Korean war, and their possibly only "customer" is the U.S. military. The commentator stated that the reason why Eisenhower used the term "complex", instead of "lobby" is to emphasize the complexity of this model, and its potential consequences in the his future. I would argue that, since Eisenhower himself is not against this model, he wouldn't use the term "lobby". It would have raised more suspicions on the federal government's collaboration with industrial leaders. I personally don't think that any American would like to see their government, then congress getting lobbied to make decisions that represent the country.

Eisenhower predicted the outcome that this collaboration will potentially lead to abuse of power, and yet he is still for it, because he believed it was necessary. Coming out of the wars as the world's economic and military leader, then immediately falling in the Cold War with Russia, there aren't many choices for the U.S. It needed a strong military and good supplies for it to maintain the country's position and foreign policy.

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The MIC Vocabulary

by Isaac Anderson - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 12:02 PM

I agree with commentator about the misuse of vocabulary regarding the Military Industrial Complex. I agree that saying complex instead of referring to it as a lobby is a source of mystery to the people of our country (1, 0:24). The Military Industrial Complex "is an informal alliance between a nations military and the arms industry which supplies it, seen together as a vested interest which influences public policy (2)." For the average person the term "Military Industrial Complex" seems very sinister and unknown (1, 0:26), but it's a very straightforward economic strategy. If Eisenhower was trying to warn future generations of the MIC, labeling it in a more straightforward fashion would have enabled people to see it in its simplest form rather than creating a sense of fear. The more we understand completely, the easier it will be to change.

1:http://media.lanecc.edu/users/escobarj/203/forums/4/4_eisenhower_milit_indus_complex.mp3

2:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military%E2%80%93industrial_complex

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**Re: The Military-Industrial Complex; do you agree with the commentator?**

by Trevor Remington - Saturday, June 3, 2017, 8:18 PM

It's my understanding that the commentator wasn't really disagreeing with Eisenhower, but explains that Eisenhower uses the word complex because it's such a complicated topic. Then explains that Eisenhower could have used the word Lobby as it sounds a little softer and less intimidating to the public.

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1



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