

HST 203: History of the United States Sp14 (Escobar Meta 41237 41238)

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Military Industrial Complex



by Joe Escobar - Thursday, May 22, 2014, 8:43 AM

This forum thread is for the Military Industrial Complex discussion.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it

RE: Military Industrial Complex

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Industrial Military Complaining



by Kenneth Green - Saturday, May 24, 2014, 11:44 PM

I'm not sure we heard enough of the Commentators words to fully understand his point. It seemed he was trying to humanize the term "Industrial Military Complex" but it was too short to fully understand where he was going with his views. It is worth noting historically that Eisenhower was a guarded General in terms of how he prosecuted the end of WWII. (Was it General Patton?) among others who suggested we beat the Russians to Berlin, yet Eisenhower did not believe this was his stated military objective. He took many steps to reduce the loss of our men in uniform after we successfully invaded Europe. So his comments as he left the Presidency are not surprising. The Commentator makes the point that Eisenhower was speaking of "Lobbyist" but I'm not sure that's a correct interpretation, given Eisenhower's distaste for actual war. (At least if you study his actions as a General.) Wasn't it Eisenhower

who had an entire German town shipped in to a Nazi concentration camp, to witness the atrocities of their Nation? This was a man for his times, so I believe if he meant Military Industrial "Lobbyists," he would have used that term.

Concerning our Military build-up under his administration, according to our text it was Truman who initiated the Cold War. We've studied a limited understanding of Communists, knowing Carl Marx believed in a entire world of shared benefits of Production, however, the Soviets were never real Communists. At best they were military autocrats. (Watch Godfather II. The gangsters lost Cuba to other gangsters.) But the fact Eisenhower oversaw a military build-up in a time of peace only raises his warning to a new level, especially if you study his history as a General. It was Truman who gave us the idea of "containment." And containment of what exactly, is the point. The fact NSA has access to this communication as I post it to the Forum, is why Eisenhower (a formal General in the middle of a Cold War) would make his statement. And, despite the Commentator's desire to make it less troubling, Eisenhower was right.

The second part of the question concerning Afghanistan and the Industrial Military Complex is hard to answer without insulting those who served. But how many perfectly trained Seals did it take to kill Osama? Our "War On Terror," really? It takes an Industrial Military Complex to fight a group of extremists who are outcasts in their own religion? Eisenhower is still right.

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Re: Industrial Military Complaining



by Matt Hauge - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:48 PM

Kenneth,

Although the NSA having access to spy on us is a troubling topic, I would like to remind you that even before the term "Military Industrial Complex" was used by Eisenhower America has had a history with "autocratic" policy. I am not sure if you have attended History 201, and 202, but if you had, you would know about the Alien and Sedition Acts passed by John Adams in 1798 in which, "Obtaining American citizenship changed from 5 to 14 years, and allowed the President to imprison or deport aliens who were considered 'dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States.' " (Wikipedia, Alien and Sedition Acts) Moreover, it also "restricted speech which was critical of the federal government." (Wikipedia, Alien and Sedition Acts) The Alien and Sedition Acts ended in 1800. Under Woodrow Wilson, the Espionage Acts of 1918, also imprisoned, and deported dissenters of WW1. The act, in a nutshell, "forbade the use of 'disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language' about the United States government, it's flag, or it's armed forces or that cause others to view the American government or its institutions with contempt. Those convicted under the act generally received sentences of imprisonment ranging from 5 to 20 years" (Wikipedia, Sedition Act of 1918)

Eisenhower was right to fear the "Military Industrial Complex"; however, do not underestimate our own citizenry because more of our rights have been diminished historically from elected officials than the military or NSA has ever done. Eisenhower was calling for an educated citizenry and a balanced military. As Eisenhower stated in his farewell address, "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 can prosper together."

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Re: Industrial Military Complaining

by Kenneth Green - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 10:16 PM

Wow Matt, that was well spoken. Thanks.

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Re: Industrial Military Complaining

by Bart Golden - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 10:42 PM

I agree, I think Eisenhower saw the potential for abuse and warned us to never turn our backs on those that would capitalize on the first or any opportunity to make fortune in the killing business. but there has been a long history of corruption, elected or otherwise certainly not just in the military

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Heads up

by Jesse Flannery - Sunday, May 25, 2014, 12:51 PM

I don't think Eisenhower switched positions per say. Building up our military during peace times to me seems like a pretty intelligent idea. Everyone says you should plan ahead. We can agree that if we have a little saved up. A surprised expenditure may not seem as bad. After trying to rush to get ready for war multiple times. I think Eisenhower decided to plan ahead. In doing so for the first time. He probably witnessed the "complex" to make more, even when we may have had already reached a set goal. In the radio broadcast he mentions "Officers wanted more equipment than what was probably needed." Eisenhower says, "Unjustified military spending is a waste of national resources and as a free society we should be directing that." You can argue for, against, and anywhere in-between is either justified or unjustified spending. In my opinion I believe Eisenhower was warning us that we need to be the ones who decide how much we spend on military build up.

We as a “free society” need to guard against lobbyist trying to drive up industrial spending. I think in using the word “complex” it better stirs up an emotion of wrong doing which promotes action. To me a justified use. Eisenhower seemed very aware of what his actions caused. He oversaw the first peacetime military build up, witnessed the indirect outcomes. Instead of just leaving it at that. Left us with a heads up.

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No "BS"

by Bart Golden - Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 4:26 AM

After watching the President Eisenhower video I can say that I personally didn't get the impression that he was speaking of lobbies at all. I thought he made it very clear that for the first time there was emerging an industry based solely on providing the tools of war and that though it was necessary we should be ware of the possibility that such industry would need war to flourish, for lack of a better term. So obviously they could be prone to starting wars as a means of survival and that we as a nation must see that it never is allowed to become so powerful as to accomplish that ability (to start wars for nothing more than financial gain). That of course would be bad. That's what I got from the speech but that is just my opinion I suppose only Ike knows for sure what he was trying to warn us about.

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Re: No "BS"

by Robert Johnson - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:18 PM

I like your take on the Eisenhower video, I took it the same way. I especially like the point of industry based on providing tools of war, and that war would be necessary for this industry to flourish.

I do see how that could support and keep some type of war going somewhere in the world forever, just as it seems like it is. With as long as we been in the middle east, this really makes me wonder.

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Who's really running things?

by Thomas Stevens - Friday, May 30, 2014, 12:21 AM

The question of “complex” or “lobby”, is irrelevant. It's a matter of words falling out of favor and new ones replacing them. Whether we use the word complex or lobby really doesn't matter, it means the same thing. I do not know who the podcast commentator is, he is unidentified, but it does not mean that the words were

misused. We know now, with some degree of certainty, that lobbyists do run our country. They pay large sums of money to the election campaigns of our Representatives and Senators and in return get their ears. Many people believe that the [Affordable Healthcare Act](#), (ACA), was written by the healthcare lobby. Why would the military lobby behave differently? There is a lot of money to be made in armaments. Most recent estimates of total defense spending peg a Department of Defense (DOD) budget of \$526.6 billion. @

President Eisenhower was a general in WWII and he saw firsthand the money needed not only to fight wars but to run the military. He had friends and colleagues in the DOD and he wasn't going to cut their throats by cutting their budgets. While he may have used the speech to warn of the potential for abuse, his actions were clearly intended to support the military. However, one could argue that with the advent of the nuclear bomb, war is obsolete. [R. Buckminster Fuller](#) was quoted as saying, "Either war is obsolete or men are."# What would we do if we were in a hot war with Russia?

President Obama's situation in Afghanistan is similar. He relies on advisors who have their own constituencies, while he has little foreign policy experience himself, although he might be able to sell himself as more credible if he were to acknowledge his [Kenyon birth](#). (I am being slightly facetious with that last sentence.) However, his advisors might tell him that the Government of Afghanistan would collapse if he were to precipitously pull the troops out, when in reality it could be that U.S. defense contractors really need time to cut their own spending. Although, I do agree that President Obama deserves the criticism that the cartoon represents.

[Donald Rumsfeld](#) who served President Bush in the previous decade as the Secretary of Defense had a background in business and he was just as merciless with the troops. During a speech in 2004 to his troops, he said this:





Rumsfeld was pilloried extensively for that remark as he was considered a poor speaker. John Stewart later made fun of him in this clip:



Lots of people want to President, it offers a lot of benefits; valet, security,

limousine, airplane, kitchen staff, free rent and a salary for life of \$400K. Desire doesn't make for a great President, it only shows that they're willing to say anything to get elected.

[@http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_United_States_federal_budget](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_United_States_federal_budget)

[#http://quotations.about.com/od/warquotes/tp/10_war_quotes.htm](http://quotations.about.com/od/warquotes/tp/10_war_quotes.htm)

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Re: Who's really running things?

by Bart Golden - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 10:47 PM

\$400K a year for life sounds good to me , I think maybe I'll run

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The Military Industry

by Robert Johnson - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 6:21 PM

Eisenhower's complex, or the commentator's other word lobby, it doesn't really matter what it's called I don't think.

What does matter is a clear understanding of the idea, I think that is the real key to the question, and not the word. We can call it just plain old military industry without adding either of those words, and I'm good.

I can understand why Eisenhower supported military spending and build-up during peace time, when he as an officer in the military had experienced how unprepared we were during war, and realizing how vulnerable that made America. I think it was the right thing to do, no matter what it's called.

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Label it whatever

by Jesse Flannery - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:56 PM

I agree with you completely. I think we are reading a little too deeply into Eisenhower's words. We are trying to make it a big huge thing. Definitely him being an officer played a roll in this! He wanted to make sure we were strong,

and ready if another war were to arise. He starts with the fact that we had spanned 10 years and seen 4 major wars. I am sure the idea of another war happening was a very viable fear. I don't care what they want to call it either, but being prepared for a war sounds good to me. Maybe the unexpected outcome is other countries would build up their military, but I don't think they generally would be just sitting around waiting for us either way.

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The Complex

by Matt Hauge - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:03 PM

I agree with Bruce Carlson that the word "Complex" seems far more intimidating than lobby. When the term "Military Industrial Complex" is used it does seem like a, "Sinister bunch of people that are going to take over the country and bring us to perpetual war." (Carlson, My History Can Beat Up Your Politics) However, I do believe Eisenhower's warning was just that, a warning. In my opinion, Eisenhower did fear, "the acquisition of unwanted influence, whether sought or unsought by the Military Industrial Complex." (Eisenhower's farewell address) The military buildup during a time of peace in the United States was a new development. The founding fathers of our nation feared the existence of a large standing army. James Madison once said, "Keep within the requisite limits a standing military force, always remembering that an armed and trained militia is the firmest bulwark of republics - that without standing armies their liberty can never be in danger, nor with large ones safe." (James Madison, First Inaugural Address) I am a firm believer that Eisenhower knew his history, which means he knew the implications to a Republic if the Military grew out of control. Eisenhower, wanted a balance between the standing army, and the citizenry of the United States. As he stated in his speech, "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must not let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic process. . . ." and "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 can prosper together." Eisenhower did want a standing army because of the threat of communism spreading, but he did not want the military to become too powerful, politically.

I think the article shows Patrick Buchanan's bias when it comes to judging a Democratic president. Buchanan was a senior advisor to Nixon, Ford, and Reagan. Nevertheless, he does have somewhat of an argument. I think Obama was on the dramatic side of things when he said, "For what is at stake is not simply a test of NATO's credibility, what's at stake is the security of our allies, and the common security of the world." Buchanan hits it on the head with a satirical tone when he said, "To secure America and the world, not 5 percent of the Army and Marine Corps will be surged into Afghanistan for 18 months -- then they will start home." Moreover, if the "burden is not ours alone to bear." (Obama) where are all the other nations safeguarding the security of the world? In my opinion, both Democrat and Republican are at fault. I think, post 9/11, we should have used the CIA and other

specialist groups to destroy Al Qaeda. I mean going to war with Iraq because a splinter cell of terrorists attacked us? It was proven without a doubt that Saddam did not have WMD's and was not connected to Al Qaeda. The cartoon confirms that both parties are entwined in the "Military Industrial Complex".

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Military Industrial Complex Tap's into Hot and Cold

by Robert Johnson - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:02 PM

One thing that seems obvious to me, is that the military industry if you will, is supported by both types of wars. The big question to me here is, are we experiencing what Eisenhower was worried about?

The need for manufacturing weapons exist either way. So what ever it takes for those war mongers to feed their company's will work it would seem like to me. So how do they, or should they be compared?

Sure they can be compared, and if so then I would say that they are both a sad but true reality. They both involve the need for military, they both cost lives, and money. Maybe for the weapons manufacturer's, cold war is a filler for in between the hot one's.

The similarity's I can see between our most recent leaders, in regard to Iraq and Afghanistan, would be that our last two president's have both seen the need to keep our military over there.

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Re: Military Industrial Complex

by Emily Kiernan - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 11:36 PM

I agree with the commentator about the use of the term "military complex". I think that Eisenhower to use the term to grab the attention of the American people. I don't think that you can effectively compare different types of war such as hot, cold or the war on terror. All of these wars have a variety of factors and circumstances which makes comparing them difficult. We shouldn't be surprised by Eisenhower's buildup of the military during the cold war, Bushes decision to send in troops after 9/11 or Obama's reluctance to pull troops out of the Middle East. All of our Nation's leaders Democrat or Republican are concerned with foreign threats and don't want to be seen as weak to the "enemy" regardless of if the threat is real or perceived.

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