

## THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: A CATALYST FOR CONFLICTS AND WARS (USA)

**Samson akpati nzeribe mukhtar imam**

*Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Baze University Abuja Nigeria*

*Phone: 234- 8065723203/234-7066025461, 234-8059477384*

*E-mail: [mukhtarimam01@gmail.com](mailto:mukhtarimam01@gmail.com)/[samson.nzeribe@yahoo.com](mailto:samson.nzeribe@yahoo.com)*

### Abstract

This paper brings to the fore the business and commercial aspect of the Military Industrial Complex (MIC) the world over and in particular the United States of America, as a catalyst and instigator of conflict and wars all over the world. The owners of the MICs have integrated into government and wield enormous powers and influence in the areas of national security, foreign policy, economy and defence matters. This research explores the obvious over-bearing influence of MIC in nudging and steering the world towards one crises after another just because of their self- serving ideology which is 'profit' at the expense of peace. This paper aims to create awareness of the activities of MIC and add to the not so much literature in existence about it. Different types of military conflict and wars have erupted in the past and some are still on-going that have the United States of America as participants in one form or another. Amongst other factors, this paper also investigates the extent to which profitability has helped in fueling these crises and wars. This paper investigates a few of these wars like the Afghanistan war, Desert Storm in Kuwait , Iraqi war in which Saddam Hussein was deposed, hunted down and killed with a view to unravelling some of the huge profits made by the different branches of the MIC.

**Keywords:** Military Industrial Complex, Catalyst, Wars, Conflict.

### Introduction

Of all the political ideas that gained popular currency in the 1960s, the military-industrial complex is the concept perhaps most gravely deformed by public opinion. The debate of 1968 and 1969 over the influence of the military establishment in the United States was so disappointing. After all was said, the concept of the military-industrial complex remained muddled and its attendant questions of international and domestic political influence were still unanswered. The military industrial complex has grown to be part of the commercial, economic, social and political part of the US system. It has been so integrated that it cannot be separated from the system. Political leaders reflected the confusion of the man in the street, of business leaders, industrial workers, farmers, college students, and activists for conflicting causes. All were caught up in a dilemma—that armaments cause wars and those arms industries create prosperity. At the same time, nearly everyone agreed that some military forces were needed for national security, and these in turn depended upon some kind of military industry. (Journal of International Affairs)

Earlier in the 1960s it was President Dwight Eisenhower, who being full of wisdom and knowledge as far back as in 1961, in his farewell address to the nation warned of the dangers that the military industrial complex poses today to American tax payers and the international community. He acknowledged that maintaining a strong army is an assurance of peace but at same time he warned against acquiring what he called 'unwarranted influence', sought or unsought by the military industrial complex. He advised Americans to guard against this inimical trend. vital element in keeping the peace

is our military establishment. Our arms must be might, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction. . . . American makers of ploughshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defence; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. . . . This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. . . . Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. . . . 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, President Dwight Eisenhower (1961).

This paper is of the view that the military-industrial complex in its modus-operandi tends to be a catalyst for conflicts and wars and will in no small measure, continue to instigate and cause future conflicts, crises and strife. It will immensely be of benefit to acknowledge the rationality of this paper in concurring that military industrial complex as was intended, was the un intentional result of both a desire to stabilize the global capitalist system and to protect national security interests, but that military spending is now closely linked to the personal interests of a small, influential group of elites. In the United States of America which this research is using as a case study it will be of interest to note that those that sit at the boards of these gigantic MICs are always serving influential policy makers in Washington, i.e. people in high positions in the US government at each point in time. It does not really matter the party in power. This comes at a high cost and inconvenience to the general public and tax payers. The remaining part of this paper shall be divided into four parts. First will be a theoretical framework, followed by 'Military Industrial Complex' as a Concept. Here, this paper unravels the military industrial complex and its inner workings within the commercial, governmental and political framework of the United States of America. Third will be its 'Evolution' from the world wars and how it has gradually metamorphosed into a warmonger monster through the decades. Fourthly, this research rationally and critically examines the global war on terror and the in-prints of military industrial complex in it. In the fifth place will be a general evaluation of the influence of military industrial complex in contemporary and future warfare, of-course highlighting both positive and negative impacts on humanity. At the tail end of this paper will be conclusion and recommendations.

### **The Military Industrial Complex Concept**

The concept of the military-industrial complex, rather than being a radical departure from conventional sociology, is, instead, a quite logical development within the mainstream of American political sociological theory. The development of the concept is traced not only to C. Wright Mills' "power elite" but beyond to Harold Lasswell's "garrison state" and James Burnham's "managerial revolution." Ultimately, the concept of the military-industrial complex is seen as derived from an anti-Marxian perspective initially reflected in neo-Machiavellian and Weberian thought.(Moskos C 1974)

The military–industrial complex (MIC) is an informal alliance between a nation's military and the arms industry which supplies it, seen together as a vested interest which influences public policy and opinion. A driving factor behind this relationship between the government and defence-minded corporations is that both sides benefit, one side from obtaining war weapons, and the other from being paid to supply them. The term is most often used in reference to the system behind the military of the United States, where it is most prevalent and gained popularity after its use in the farewell address of President Dwight D. Eisenhower as already stated. In 2011, the United States spent more in absolute numbers on its military than some 13 nations combined, In the context of the US, the appellation given to it sometimes is extended to military–industrial–congressional complex (MICC), adding the U.S. Congress to form a three-sided relationship termed an iron triangle. These relationships include political contributions, political approval for military spending, lobbying to support bureaucracies, and oversight of the industry; or more broadly to include the entire network of contracts and flows of money and resources among individuals as well as corporations and institutions of the defence contractors, private military contractors, The Pentagon, the Congress and Executive branch.

After World War II, the United States military gradually came into a position of overwhelming dominance in the world. Military spending in the United States far outpaces that of other countries, with their world share of military expenditures at 41% in 2011, followed by Russia and China with only eight and four percent respectively (SIPRI 2012). This has been the case since the Second World War and has been justified in different ways over time. The arguments for continued military dominance have ranged from "long-term economic gains" at the start of the war (Shoup & Murray 1977, cited in Hossein-zadeh 2006: 45) to Soviet containment during the Cold War, "a broader responsibility of global militarism" since

the 1980s (Ryan 1991, cited in Hossein-zadeh 2006: 73), and most recently the need to protect citizens against Islamic fundamentalism and terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, there has been consistent concern that powerful groups in military, political, and corporate positions, profiteering from conflict and sharing interests in intensifying defence expenditure, have become the primary actors for making and administering U.S. foreign policy. Today the scope of the defence industry is now much bigger than legitimate security needs justify (Moskos, 1974; Mintz, 1985, Waddell, 2001 and Hossein-zadeh 2006).

The above position is in consonance with the argument that expansion of the U.S. military establishment from the 1940s onward was initially a means to an end in the process of stabilizing the world economy and serving national security interests, but – over time – became an end in itself, serving the interests of an elite group that uses the projection of power as a way to justify the continued expansion of military spending. Two diverse arguments have been advanced on the issue of the drive behind the rise and expansion of the MIC, this paper will look at these broad arguments: the first focuses on the origins of America's military-industrial complex, beginning with a definition of the elite group that the complex comprises. Next, by focusing on the period in which the foundation for the complex was laid – the Second World War – it is argued that the complex arose 'unintentionally' in some ways, although important characteristics of it were visible from the start. Third, military Keynesianism often used to defend high military budgets once the complex was in place, will be discussed and refuted. It will then focus on the argument in favour of high military budgets today: 'the need to protect American citizens from the global threat of terrorism'. It is argued that public perceptions of the causes of terrorism are incorrect, yet have been gladly utilized and fostered by the American military-industrial complex to justify an ineffective global war.

Suffice to say that what distinguishes the "power elite" that constitutes the military-industrial complex from other powerful groups in American society who also seek advancement of their own interests is that this is not a ruling class based solely on the ownership of property (Mills 1956, cited in Moskos 1974: 499-500), rather, it is a coalition of civilian agencies that formally shape military policy (such as the Senate and the CIA), military institutions, private firms, research institutions and think tanks – all centred on and linked to the Pentagon (Hossein-zadeh 2006: 13). As a result of power arising from the occupancy in top bureaucratic positions as well as from capital ownership, the interests of this ruling elite go beyond the mere accumulation of wealth and include desires to maintain themselves in power and to press for specific forms of public policy. Their most important common interest is intensifying defence expenditure by creating, identifying and intensifying conflict zones that should attract the attention of the US. George F. Kennan wrote in his preface to Norman Cousins's 1987 book *The Pathology of Power*, "Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial complex would have to remain, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy. War profiteering in itself is not new – wars have always been fought at least in part for economic gains. Today's military-industrial complex is different in that it treats war as a business, the ruling elite's goal of having a large military establishment is not to expand the nation's wealth, but "to appropriate the lion's share of existing wealth for the military establishment" (Hossein-zadeh 2006: 90). As a consequence, decisions on defence allocation, arms production and military operations are motivated by desires for profit and personal power, not necessarily by security requirements.

In every state of the world when budget is being increased for any adduced reason, there are always behind the scene beneficiaries in corporations, interest groups or even individuals. The American military budget is not in isolation in this this type of scenario. The first big expansion of the military establishment took place in the early years of the Second World War, when the U.S. had legitimate concerns for its own national security due to such events as the attack on Pearl Harbor, and feared the war would negatively impact foreign trade. Military expansion became a logical result of the former concern, as it is a means to preserve physical security. However, it is closely linked to the latter concern, too. The Council on Foreign Relations, one of the nation's most influential foreign policy think-tanks, advised the U.S. government that it needed free access to markets and raw materials in all regions outside of continental Europe for economic self-sufficiency. To this end, the U.S. advocated globalization and open economic cooperation through multilateralism. At the time, the crisis of the '30s and the war had made the concept of the free market highly unpopular. This made "military supremacy for the U.S. within the non-German world" a complementary requirement to ensure all countries within the "U.S.-led, non-German Grand Area," including Japan, would accept American conditions (Shoup and Murray 1977, cited in Hossein-zadeh 2006: 45). In short, military spending was not yet an end in itself, it was the combined result of needing to increase power in the face of security challenges and wanting to restore trust in and stabilize the global capitalist system.

Key characteristics of the current military-industrial complex, however, were already present when the objectives of U.S. foreign policy during World War II were drafted. As Hossein-zadeh points out, a brief look at the social status and class composition of the Council on Foreign Relations, which consisted of wealthy, influential people with ties to major industrial corporations and politicians, shows that a ruling class shaped major government policies “operating through the institutional umbrella of the Council, and providing intellectual justification for major foreign policy overhauls” (Hossein-zadeh, 2006: 41). The military-industrial complex in its present form might not have been in place then or have been created intentionally, but clearly there already was a power elite based on more than capital ownership, and strong ties between the military, political, and corporate spheres.

After World War II, the Cold War stabilized U.S. foreign policy for over forty years. It was a time that presented itself into the hands of US MICC as it would never have gotten, as they say on a platter of gold. With its demise, a “vacuum in the organizing principles of national government” had emerged (Waddell 2001: 133). Even if unintended, the military-industrial complex was well in place by now, and suggestions to curtail the military budget were met with fierce opposition. However, cutting back on non-military public expenditures while an expensive military establishment is preserved proved harder to justify with the loss of the perceived Soviet threat. An argument in favour of military spending that has been used consistently is that it boosts economic growth (Dreze 2000: 180). Mintz, for instance, notes that the military-industrial complex is seen by many to have “considerable influence on levels of employment, the profitability of arms manufacture and the scope of exports” (Mintz, 1983: 124).

The view that large military spending is an effective means of demand stimulation and job creation, and hence of economic growth, is called military Keynesianism. Keynes’ (non-military) theory holds that in times of inadequate purchasing power, the (non-military) private sector becomes wary of expansion, and so the government should spend money in order to boost the stagnant economy by stimulating demand. Since expansion of the military industry is a government investment, it could have the desired economic effects in times of recession. However, it is important to keep in mind that Keynes argues for little government spending in times of high employment and sufficient demand. Military Keynesianists seem to ignore this fact completely and have argued for high government expenditures even during the Golden Age after World War II – and in no other sector than the military-industrial one. This can only be explained by the fact that it is a constantly shrinking number of people experiencing the economic benefits of high military spending (Waddell 2001: 135). The same people tend to switch positions between the Pentagon, its prime contractors and lobbying think tanks supporting those contractors, meaning that military spending is no longer an economic stimulus for the entire nation. Instead, it has become a redistributive mechanism of national resources in favour of the wealthy (Hossein-zadeh 2006: 226).

What gets lost in the debate over the economic consequences of military spending is the effect it has on international stability. An old principle asserts that military threats are essential in preventing wars from occurring (Dreze 2000: 1178), but an overly extended military establishment means actual military operations are necessary from time to time to ‘prove’ the necessity of the army. And indeed, militarists have found that the most effective manner of convincing the American public of the need of a large military establishment is the constant ‘discovery’ of external threats. The threat currently most emphasized by the U.S. is global terrorism and perceived Russian aggression. We argue that while some fears of Islamic fundamentalism are justified, most are not; and that the threat of terrorism is not logically followed by higher military investment.

### **Theoretically,**

As has been continuously mentioned in this paper, the elites are the main dramat-personae. That justifies this paper theorising the elite theory of power propounded by Vilfredo Pareto! The theory posits that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning networks, holds the most power and that this power is independent of a state’s democratic elections process. A major problem, in turn, is the ability of elites to co-opt counter elites. Vilfredo Pareto who lived between 1848-1923 and Gaetano Mosca 1858-1941 are the two pioneer social scientists who propounded the elite theory of power. Pareto, who made popular the concept of elite said, ‘so let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity and to that class give the name of elite’. So we get two strata in a population: (a) a lower stratum—the non-elite (common men), and (b) an upper stratum—the elite.

Thus, elite is the highest stratum within a society. This stratum is composed of those persons who are recognized outstanding and are considered the leaders in a given field of competence. This class of elite (highest stratum) is further

sub-divided into: (i) a governing elite; and (ii) a non-governing elite. The 'governing elite' comprises of individuals who directly play some considerable part in government. They wear labels appropriate to the particular political offices, namely, ministers, legislators, president, secretaries and so on. The 'non-governing elite' are those people not connected with the governmental activities.

Pareto takes existence of ruling class for granted and concentrated on the 'circulation of elite'. He was basically concerned with the consequences of 'open' and 'closed' elites. He argued that a closed aristocracy inevitably decays, producing cleavage and dissension within its own ranks. When it happens new elites emerge from other classes to give leadership to revolutionary change. Gaetano Mosca, an Italian jurist and political theorist, expounded the familiar thesis that all human societies were always and everywhere ruled by a controlling social class and thus these are always divided between rulers and ruled. He contended that, whatever the form of government, power would be in the hands of a minority who formed the ruling class. Explaining the contentious historical division between the ruling class and the class that is ruled, Mosca explained the rule of minority over the majority by the fact that it is organized and is usually composed of superior individuals.

The minority is organized for the very reason that it is a minority. Members of a ruling minority have some attributes, real or apparent, which are highly esteemed and are very influential in the society in which the minority lives. Mosca also introduced the concept of the sub-elite. This group is composed of civil servants, managers of industries, scientists and scholars and is also known as 'new middle class'. Thus, there is a general agreement between Pareto and Mosca about the concept of elite as a minority which rules over the majority or the rest of the society. This class of people has the direct influence over the decision-making process by influencing the decision-makers. However, there is a difference between both the scholars regarding the nature of elites. Pareto stresses the universality of distinction between ruling elite and the masses. Mosca, on the other hand, distinguishes between masses and elite only with reference to the Marxian theory of economic classes; otherwise he says that the elite itself is influenced and restrained by the various social factors. Pareto has reserved his comments for the modern notions of democracy, while Mosca has recognized and to some extent appreciated the special characteristics of democratic elites.

Pareto differs from Mosca when he insists that the character of democratic elites is not qualitatively different in democracy. Mosca, on the other hand, lays emphasis on the pluralistic character of democratic elites and postulates a reciprocal relationship between the rulers and the ruled, instead of simple dominance by the rulers over the ruled. Mosca identifies the political class with men of property in general, and sometimes with intelligentsia, but most often with the political personnel in government. Not only this, as written earlier, Mosca introduced a concept of sub-elite in his theory we do not find in Pareto's theory such distinction of elites. This paper therefore totally agree with the elite power theory that the military industrial complex phenomena in the US and major developed states is actually in the hands of few individuals who are able to influence government policies and decisions to their advantage and that of their principals.

### **Profit making in wars**

On the 8 of March, 2013 Anna Fifield in an article published Financial Times (FT) highlighted the hypocrisy of the American government. Eight days after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Paul Wolfowitz, then deputy defence secretary and a leading proponent of the war told a congressional committee "we are dealing with a country that can finance its reconstruction, and relatively soon". More than a decade later, this statement has turned out to be totally wrong. The United States of America has borne the brunt of both the military and civilian reconstruction costs, spending at least conservatively US\$138bn on private security, logistics and reconstruction contractors, who supplied diplomatic security, power plants and toilet papers. The major beneficiaries of these contracts are, 1) KBR, once known Kellogg Brown and Roots. It was a subsidiary of Halliburton, which was once run by Dick Cheney, Vice President to George W. Bush got a contract of \$35.9bn, 2) Agility logistics \$7.2bn. 3) Kuwait Petroleum Corporation \$6.3bn. 4) International Oil Trading Company \$2.1bn. It thus follows that the United States hired more private companies in Iraq than any other previous war. Still on contracts, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2003, Joseph Kay of International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), revealed that the USAID awarded a contract to the tune of \$680m to Bechtel Corporation, a private company with ties to the republican party under George W. Bush, Research Triangle Institute got a contract of \$167m while Creative Arts International got \$62.2m. The contracts ranged from the supply of toilet papers, petroleum, water, meals and ice. Similarly, private contractors have made close to \$100bn in profits since 2007 in Afghanistan. The defence industry itself is not left out in profiteering. It has made

incredible profits from 2001 to 2007, it recorded nearly \$100bn in profits. Thus war is a very profitable venture for those pushing it and everybody involved except those who are unlucky to lose their lives.

The U.S. has never seemed to be rational in its assessment of the Arab threat. The conventional wisdom in analysing issues – which in most cases is misleading – in the Public domain today implies that Islam is inherently more rigid and anti-modern than other religions. Huntington famously predicted that most major conflicts would be between Muslims and non-Muslims, as “Islam has bloody borders” (1993: 12). In 1990, Historian Bernard Lewis described a “surge of hatred” arising from the Islamic world that “becomes a rejection of Western civilisation as such” (cited in Coll 2012). Richard Perle, American neoconservative militarist and advisor to Israel’s Likud Party, proposes a strategy of “de-contextualization” to explain acts of terrorism and violent resistance to occupation, arguing that we must stop trying to understand the territorial, geopolitical and historical reasons that some groups turn to fundamentalism; instead, reasons for the violence of such groups must be sought in the Islamic way of thinking (Hossein-zadeh 2006: 101).

Religious fundamentalism, however, is universal: it arises in response to extremism in modernity and secularism, both of which tend to weaken or threaten religious traditions. John Voll points out that by the early 1990s, “violent militancy was clearly manifest among Hindu fundamentalists, Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Jewish fundamentalists in Israel and others elsewhere” (1994, cited in Hossein-zadeh 2006: 110-11). As one scholar points out, if the Bosnians, the Palestinians and the Kashmiris are asked about their borders they would say that, respectively, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism are the ones that have bloody borders (Ahmed 2002: 29). Yet statements like the ones by Huntington, Lewis and Perle cited above single out Islam as the most dangerous potential enemy of the West. They all interpret the militancy of Islamic fundamentalism as being somehow directly caused by distinctive Islamic doctrines and traditions (Voll 1994, cited in Hossein-zadeh 2006: 111) and attribute terrorist attacks to “pathological problems of the Muslim mind” (Hossein-zadeh 2006: 101). In doing so, they posit a ‘characteristic’ supposedly shared by Muslims from Indonesia through Iran to Senegal, that makes conflict with the West inevitable.

An incorrect assessment of the roots of terrorism does not justify the extent to which the U.S. expanded its military activity after 2001; nor does it explain why it continues to fight an ineffective war. As Peña points out, a larger military would not have prevented the tragedy of 9/11, and it will not prevent future terrorist actions (2001, cited in Snider 2004). Terrorism, much like the war that is fought against it, is a means of pursuing objectives, not an actor, for example in the case where the rationale behind engaging in these wars would be to encourage the sales of arms in the United States and around the globe thereby enriching a few individuals who run the gun companies. In real terms the acts of aggression in itself cannot be stopped by military action as fighting does nothing to address the issues that terrorists feel can only be resolved violently; if anything, this is more likely to lead to a vicious cycle of constantly growing military budgets and an ever higher number of terrorist attacks. As Bernie Snider once asserted: “the moral crusade to end terrorism can only begin with a realistic assessment of its cause” (Snider 2004). So far, the global war on terror has done little to eradicate terrorism.

On the contrary, it seems the threat of an attack is now bigger: the number of terrorist attacks worldwide has increased from just over 1800 in 2001, to a staggering 5000 ten years later, (START, 2012). The question that arises, then, is why successive U.S. administrations have found it so difficult to accept that perhaps their assessment of the causes of terrorism is incorrect; at perhaps, the policies built on their premises are not effective, but rather a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading to a vicious cycle of constantly expanding military activities and an increasing number of individuals who believe their grievances cannot be settled non-violently. This has everything to do with the never-ending need for militarism and an avenue to give rise to the expansion of the Military Complex, thus 9/11 was approached by the U.S. as an opportunity for aggression. The attacks, however heinous, were approached by the government not as crimes (which would require criminal prosecution and law enforcement), but as a personal attack against Americans (Hossein-zadeh 2006: 91). With the views expressed by Huntington, Lewis and Perle widespread among the American public already, pre-emptive war and military expansion was easily justifiable to Americans. After all, how would dialogue help if the Muslim mind is pathologically troubled? An American citizen might cringe at the idea, but it is true: the 9/11 tragedy “came from heaven to an administration determined to ramp up military budgets” (Johnson 2004: 64).

Military technology often seems to be the dark side of innovation, countless inventors and innovators, from Alfred Nobel to Robert Boyle, thought of weapons positively. They believed that they could banish the scourge of war, or at least restrain its excesses, if they could only invent the ultimate weapon, the instrument so horrible that no one would dare use it. More

than six decades into the nuclear age, there is growing evidence that the hydrogen bomb may prove to be the long-sought war-stopper, (Gaddis, 1987). But should that be the case, it will run counter to the sorry record of prior human civilization, when each new instrument of war contributed to the carnage without altering the human nature. Melvin Kranzberg, a co-founder of the Society for the History of Technology and the founding editor of its journal, *Technology and Culture*, once observed that technology is neither good nor bad, nor is it neutral. Technology in essence is a process of manipulating the material world for human purposes. Whether it does good or ill depends not on the technology itself but on what humans choose to do with it. Military machines and instruments can nonetheless be understood using the same concepts and categories that scholars apply to technology in general. This paper categorises subsequent discussion in three ways to help us grasp the notion that the activities of the military industrial complex and its quest to revolutionize the military industry will only lead to further Balkanizing and intensifying the occurrences of future strife around the world.

### **How Technology Shapes Warfare**

Technology has overtime been instrumental to giving impetus and direction to warfare and this is seen in the evolution and transcendence of wars throughout history in different times and at different places. Warfare as we know it is an integral conduct and aspect of wars which often more than not has been described as the clash of arms or the manoeuvre of armed forces in the field. It entails what military professionals call operations; this is regardless of whether or not opposing forces actually unleash violence or confrontation on one another. War is often descends in a scenario condition where opposing forces find themselves; which in most cases is borne out of a physical activity initiated by forces equipped and armed with the intent of waging wars. Of course, many kinds of group violence, from gang fights to terrorism, might display some or all of the characteristics of warfare without rising to this definition or standard of war, however there is the certainty that these violent conflicts implore the use of instruments of war. In a bid to have a vivid understanding of the place of technology in warfare it is imperative to understand the place of technology in most public violence viz a viz the choice of nomenclature. Technology can often more than not define, govern and dictate warfare, it is seen in most warfare scenarios to set the stage and act as a catalyst or instrumentality of warfare.

In all the most important euphemism describing the impact of technology on warfare is ‘changes’, this is rightly so as technology has been the primary source of military innovation throughout history. It has served as a driving factor in transcending wars more than any other variable. This point is even more glaring in the two aspects of warfare known to man which is the aerial and sea warfare. Naval warfare does not occur without ships, which, through most of human history, were the most complex of human technological artefacts. Of course the same is true of planes for air warfare, missiles for strategic warfare, and spacecraft for star wars. In each case, the vehicle defines the warfare.

The more modern, or postmodern, the warfare becomes, the more the generalization holds true. Technology defines warfare. Air warfare was not even possible before the twentieth century, save for the vulnerable and inefficient reconnaissance balloons that were pioneered in Europe and America in the nineteenth century. In the twenty-first century, air warfare ranges from strategic bombing to close air support of ground troops to dog fights for air superiority to pilotless drones that carry the eyes and ears, and sometimes the ordnance, of operators hundreds, even thousands, of miles away. The U.S. boasts a missile defence installation that can stop the unstoppable, an intercontinental ballistic missile. Space-faring nations flirt with anti-satellite weapons launched from earth and even the prospect of space-based weapons to fight one another and threaten the earth below. Air warfare differs from naval warfare, not because the strategy and tactics of conflict in those realms differs, but because planes differ from ships. And, of course, both differ from tanks and rockets and satellites. Each technology shapes, defines, circumscribes, and governs a new kind of warfare.

Nor is it just the evolution of weaponry that changes warfare. It is the distribution of the weaponry. Throughout history, states have usually fought one another in weapons symmetry, Connell (1989). It is therefore pertinent to note that those responsible for crafting the new and enhanced equipment in warfare are doing so at the expense of peace around the world, because the reality is that these modern weaponry will have to be sold in the open market to the highest bidder – either they be militias or governments – by the military complexes that make them thereby exacerbating tension around the world.

### **How Technology Does Determine Warfare**

So far as technology may change warfare, it can be said to determine warfare — either how it will be conducted or how it will turn out. Technology presides in modern warfare, and it does rule it. The whole notion of “technological determinism”

is not a red herring, Roland (2007), the argument that humans can always resist the historical forces surrounding them is a complete fallacy and an outright denial of the powers of the modern weaponry and the narcissism of men. Some have said that to believe in determinism is to believe in inevitability, which is practically correct. But to ask the questions that may follow such as; “Why”? ‘What historical force or law pushes events to some inescapable outcome?’ is to ignore the very existence of power tussle and the quest for material dominance which sits at the heart of most industrialists and that includes owners of the military complexes. Of course in hindsight, it could be argued that events may appear predetermined or inevitable, but nothing in human activity can be predicted with certainty, but this does not also negate the fact that technology in more than one way adds to the explosion of conflict around the world and throughout history this seemingly irresistible weapons have often led to inevitable rising and falling in their turns of war equipment; from gunpowder through the “Dreadnought revolution” and strategic bombing to the recent enthusiasm for the “revolution in military affairs,” a technological superiority that was to have given the U.S. unassailable military prowess.

### **The Difference in Modern Military Technology**

Modern military technology is not different in kind, but in degree. World War II was the first war in history in which the weapons in use at the end of the war differed significantly from those employed at the outset. The atomic bomb is the most obvious example, but the list of military technologies introduced between 1939 and 1945 includes as well jet aircraft, guided missiles, microwave radar, and the proximity fuse, to name just a few. Some military leaders concluded from this experience that industrial production had won the world wars but military innovation would win the next war. Especially in the U.S., the military establishment began to institutionalize research and development, adopting from industry a kind of planned obsolescence that would keep American armed forces a generation ahead of their potential foes. They created what President Dwight Eisenhower called in his farewell address a “military-industrial complex,” a perpetual arms race, not necessarily with any particular enemy, but with the status quo.

The introduction of systematic, institutionalized innovation makes modern military technology seem radically different from all that went before, Whitehead (1925) states that the difference is simultaneously real and daring. The reality stems from the accelerated pace of technological change in the modern world and an unprecedented mastery of energy and materials ranging across a dimensional scale from nanotechnology to floating cities like the modern aircraft carrier. This in real terms is what will lead future wars and conflicts around the world. As it is only natural the proliferation of these sort of arms and military equipment of warfare by the military industrial complex in the United States will only spark a reaction from other countries like China and Russia who will not feel safe with such a scenario.

### **Conclusion**

This essay has sought to argue that the U.S. military-industrial complex is indeed a catalyst for contemporary wars and will in no small measure spark major future conflicts and strife. It would also do us good to bear in mind that the paper is rational in its acceptance that the military complex as it was, was the unintentional result of both a desire to stabilize the global capitalist system and to protect national security interests, but that military spending is now closely linked to the personal interests of a small, influential group of elites. In the first section, it was illustrated that the context of the Second World War made increased military expenditures a necessary means to other ends, although the powerful elite that would eventually come to benefit from these expenditures was already in place. Once in place, these power elite have constantly needed to justify the disproportionate allocation of national resources to the military establishment. Emphasizing the economic benefits of military investment by drawing on Keynesian theory is a way of doing so, but military Keynesianists seem to give a one-sided account of the theory, one that suits their interests. The second section focused on the global war on terror, arguing that the U.S. is capitalizing on public fears which are based on an incorrect assessment of the causes of terrorism. The war on terror has done little to eradicate terrorism, but as long as the public continues believing it is a necessary war, the U.S. military-industrial complex will continue using it as an opportunity to keep military budgets high.

### **Recommendations**

- The United States elites must heed to the warning of President Dwight Eisenhower who said that “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”, else the future will be replete with wars and chaos such as what characterizes present time.

- So long as spending on education, healthcare, housing, environment does not equate spending on military and defence then the spending on military and defence will never be justified, for what people need at the moment the most is not military security but the security of basic needs.
- The world over, governments need to cut down their budget on military security so as not to be throwing more money in the hands of the military industry. The treaty on the proliferation of arms has to be taken seriously in a bid to make the ecosystem habitable for us humans.

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