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# **The United States' Military-Industrial Complex and War Case Study: Afghanistan**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for Master Degree in Civilization and Literature**

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents. I would like to thank them for their endless support and love.

To my dear brother and sister who always supported me.

To my friends who were always there for me.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Mihoubi, for his continuous guidance and assistance during the process.

Best regards to the members of the jury, and special gratitude and thanks to all my teachers.

## **Abstract**

Since the 1960s, the term "military-industrial complex" has been a quite controversial topic, especially in Western civilization, leading many experts in the field to attempt theorizing the term. This study aims at showing the function of the military-industrial complex, illustrating how harmful it is, and demonstrating its double standards, and therefore, its effects on the United States in particular and on the world. This study also aims at showing the military industrial complex's developmental history and specifically how it functioned in Afghanistan to exploit the war to its advantage. To accomplish that, relevant data specific to the military-industrial complex are collected, explored, and analyzed. The study found that the military-industrial complex is, to a large extent, powerful, harmful, and corrupt. The military-industrial complex, especially in the United States, influences politics, economy, and society; therefore, it should be put into questioning.

**Key words: The military-industrial complex; Afghanistan; Congress; Department of Defense; private contractors.**

## **Résumé :**

Depuis les années 1960, le terme « complexe militaro-industriel » a été un sujet polémique, précisément dans la civilisation occidentale, entraînant de nombreux experts du domaine à tenter de théoriser le terme. Le but de cette étude vise à montrer la fonction du complexe militaro-industriel, à illustrer sa nocivité et à démontrer sa face cachée ; et par conséquent, ses effets sur le monde, en particulier sur les États-Unis. Pour accomplir ceci, une série de citations et d'opinions d'experts concernant le complexe militaro-industriel sera recueillie, explorée et analysée. L'étude a révélé que le complexe militaro-industriel est largement puissant, nuisible et corrompu. Le complexe militaro-industriel, en particulier aux États-Unis, a une grande influence sur la politique, l'économie et la société ; et ainsi, il devrait être remis en question.

## الملخص

منذ الستينيات، كان مصطلح "التحالف الصناعي العسكري" موضوعًا مثيرًا للجدل، خاصة في الحضارة الغربية، مما دفع العديد من الخبراء في هذا المجال إلى محاولة تعريف المصطلح. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار وظيفة التحالف الصناعي العسكري، وتوضيح مدى ضرره، وإثبات ازدواجية معاييرهِ، وبالتالي آثاره على الولايات المتحدة بشكل خاص وعلى العالم، مع إظهار التاريخ التطوري للتحالف الصناعي العسكري وتحديدًا كيفية عمله في أفغانستان لاستغلال الحرب لصالحه. ولتحقيق ذلك، سوف يتم جمع المعلومات ذات الصلة الخاصة بالتحالف الصناعي العسكري واستكشافها وتحليلها. وجدت الدراسة أن المجمع الصناعي العسكري قوي وضار وفساد إلى حد كبير. يؤثر التحالف الصناعي العسكري، وخاصة في الولايات المتحدة، على السياسة والاقتصاد والمجتمع. لذلك، يجب وضعه موضع التساؤل.

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# **General Introduction**

Nations across the world have always made use of their militaries to defend their lands or to attack other nations, in case of threats. To do so, militaries have had access to a lot of weaponry. Typically, weapons were manufactured by governments in order to supply their militaries' needs. However, this trend seems to be slowly declining as governments, especially the United States', opt to rely on other sources to supply its military needs. Nowadays, this reliance on external sources instead of the governments' facilities has become more accessible than ever.

Industries have gained much power with the occurrence of wars. Arms industries, consulting industries, security industries, and military industries have become the United States' primary contractors before, during, and after conflicts. These industries are now corporations that are worth billions of dollars. These powerful corporations have been examined by many experts, especially about their legal status, which is not yet clear. The merger of the military and industry has been called the military-industrial complex.

Theoretically, the military-industrial complex has no fixed definition, for it has different shapes and has undergone major changes through time. The term was first uttered by the former United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower. However, the acts of the military-industrial complex can be traced back to the eighteenth century. This collaboration between the military and different industries has been put under the microscope by several experts of the field to define the term.

In his farewell address, Eisenhower asserted that the United States government must control the influence of the constituents of the military-industrial complex: Congress, the Department of Defense, and private contractors. Eisenhower also claimed that these elements would harm the country's best interests by encouraging some policies.

According to an article in the *Journal of International Affairs*, the term military-industrial complex continues to be unclear. Even its local and international effects are still

vague. The article claims that the military-industrial complex has become integrated into the commercial, economic, social and political American system.

Professor Rachel N. Weber defines the military-industrial complex as a colluded group of individuals and organizations to produce arms and military-related technologies. Weber claims that a country's military-industrial complex tries to gather political assistance to urge a government to increase the military budget. Weber further explains that the military has to assert that its distributors (private companies) have the ability of production, and in return, the latter must ensure that the military spending on their products does not fall. The United States' involvement in the Middle East and its war on terror are the main reasons that the military-industrial complex has kept its strong status, especially politically, according to Weber.

David Mooney defines the military-industrial complex as a combination of public and private, military and civilian, political and academic groups. The combination of these groups supports a strategy, in which they prepare for war, by planting fear and doubt in order to achieve common interests.

Marc Pilisuk and Tom Hayden define the military-industrial complex as a continuously changeable alliance of groups that have interests in the continuous production of arms, in the retention of colonial markets, and in maintaining a place in internal military affairs. Similarly, Steven J. Rosen sees the military-industrial complex as an independent politico-economic system that aims to profit from using industries to supply the military, especially in the United States. Rosen claims that the military-industrial complex consists of competing as well as allying organizations. Beth Hallowell proceeds by pointing to the fact that the military-industrial complex's objectives are achieved by promoting technical possibilities and by claiming that military readiness is essential to eradicate certain dangers.

The previously mentioned definitions attempted to explain what the military-industrial complex means. This study will examine the United States' military-industrial complex at

different periods. It will also delve into the different stages and shapes of the military-industrial complex. Moreover, the study will investigate all the involved elements in the military-industrial complex and their functions. Furthermore, it will discuss the suspicious actions by the military-industrial complex across the world, with a special focus on the function of the military-industrial complex in Afghanistan.

The study aims to show how the military-industrial complex functions, by illustrating and clarifying the limits that have been crossed by the military-industrial complex, as it is unjustifiably provoking conflicts and wars across the world. This way, the military-industrial complex only does more harm to the world. Moreover, this study aims to present actions, attitudes, and misconducts of the military-industrial complex in Afghanistan. Thus, the military-industrial complex should be weakened, or at least reevaluated.

One important aspect that this study explores is the military-industrial complex's disguise as a servant to the United States best interest, especially internationally. The study's central question is to what extent does the military-industrial complex cause wars while influencing the United States' local and foreign policies?

Further related sub-questions are listed below:

- 1-What is the relationship between the defense sector and private contractors?
- 2- How does the military-industrial complex function?
- 3- What are the limits that the military-industrial complex has crossed in Afghanistan, and what are the consequences?
- 4- How did private contractors operate in Afghanistan, and what were the outcomes?
- 5- Knowing its negative sides, why is the military-industrial complex still powerful?

This study hypothesized that:

- 1-The defense sector, being unable to achieve its needs, uses private contractors to provide services.

2- There is an organized, systematic method that involves the government's branches as well as the government's personnel. Together, they seek to strengthen the military-industrial complex.

3- The military-industrial complex is trying to surpass the government's authority. It functions without guides and with full uninterrupted power. It harms the government's best interests, and therefore the citizens' interests.

4- Being aware of their history, private contractors most probably took advantage of the war and profited greatly.

5- The military-industrial complex is still powerful because it is lucrative and profitable for all sides involved.

This study will discuss the military-industrial complex and how it can affect the United States in particular, and the world in general. This research is exploratory analytical, in which qualitative data will be collected and analyzed, taking into consideration the history and current events related to the study. Thus, a close reading of some quotations, points of view, and facts will be presented to comprehend the military-industrial complex, its function, its effects, and its aims.

This study will consist of three chapters. The first chapter will offer a thorough historical background of the military-industrial complex. In addition, it will discuss the economic development of the military-industrial complex through different periods. The second chapter will explore the military-industrial complex's history with wars across the world. It will also describe and explain the corruption and abuse of the military-industrial complex by showing its function. Finally, the third chapter will provide practical, real-life actions committed by the military-industrial complex. It will discuss how the military-industrial complex operates in the actual world, specifically its operations and function in Afghanistan.

**Chapter One:  
A Historical  
Background of the  
Military-Industrial  
Complex.**

# Chapter 1: A Historical Background of the Military-Industrial Complex.

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## Introduction

The military-industrial complex has gone through different developments through time, especially in the United States. The military-industrial complex received mixed critiques. Some find it beneficial and serving to the United States, others, nevertheless, consider it a threat. Thus, this chapter aims to show how the military-industrial complex functioned through time, by exploring the history of the United States' military alliance with several industries. It also shows how the former president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower expressed his fear of the military-industrial complex as well as the growth of the budget of the United States' military and where it was used.

### 1.1. The Historical Background of the Military-Industrial Complex

The military-industrial complex has undergone many changes through time. It can be traced from the United States' independence until the present. Given the fact that Dwight D. Eisenhower was the first person who spoke about the military-industrial complex, one can divide it into three phases: before Eisenhower's presidency, during Eisenhower's presidency, and after Eisenhower's presidency.

#### 1.1.1 Before Eisenhower (1780s-1950s)

Mark R. Wilson, who is a professor at the University of North Carolina and one of the writers of the book *At War: The Military and American Culture in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, states that after America had been declared a nation on its own, a strong and active army was built, though it was considered weak compared to other nations' armies. Globally, one of the advantages that helped America was the Atlantic Ocean, as it prevented any sort of confrontations between the American military and the dominant European forces at the time. Actually, The British Royal Navy provided Americans with safety and consistency when it

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came to international commerce. In the Americas, the United States military was the best known and the strongest in the area. A good example is the Mexican-American War, which is an excellent proof of the lethality of the American military at that time. In the late 1840s, America succeeded in capturing several formerly Mexican lands into the American soils (71,72).

At that time, Wilson notes that the United States applied several methods to arm its military. In the 1790s, the American government depended on private contractors to provide the military with different weaponry. However, after 1800 and particularly after the 1812 War against Britain, the American military shifted from relying on private contractors to relying on the government's production facilities. This was due to the fact that after the 1812 War, it was apparent to military officials that the American military was still weak compared to other nations' militaries. One branch that witnessed a significant development was the Navy, for the government built naval shipyards in several states in America. These naval bases produced warships until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, the U.S. Army also started to depend on its facilities to manufacture different armories, as Springfield Armory and a similar facility in Virginia managed to produce one of the best rifle muskets<sup>1</sup> in the world (72).

The method of arming the military by only using the government's facilities was fruitful at peacetime. The military also hired for-profit contractors to arm the military, especially during wartime, for the in-house installations were unable to supply the military with all the necessary weaponry. For instance, during the Civil War, The Union Army used only 20 percent of the in-house arms. Private contractors played a significant role in developing the arms industry, as they provided naval shipyards and army armories with the necessary components to produce weapons. Consequently, private and public installations were involved directly together to build

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<sup>1</sup>**Musket:** a heavy large-calibre muzzle-loading usually smoothbore shoulder firearm broadly: a shoulder gun carried by infantry

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world-class weapons. Wilson discusses that the defense sector, at that time, witnessed an unprecedented mixture of private and public industries (72).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States started to depend more on private companies to strengthen the military. This was true in the case of building a strong navy. The Newport News Shipbuilding, Drydock Company and the Bethlehem Steel Company, which are private corporations, were contracted by the U.S. military mainly to purchase shipyards and steel mills. These companies were not only responsible for building warships, but also for providing the military with high-tech components. The latter, according to Wilson, required the military and the contractors to rely on lots of research and experimentations (Wilson 73).

The association between corporations and the military increased in both the First World War and the Second World War. In 1917, the military assembled and deployed several troops. Corporations were a part of the mobilization<sup>2</sup> of war, as these corporations' leaders were directly involved in the act. Similarly, a corporation during the Second World War led the way to another mobilization. These acts were criticized, for some believed that these acts would let the interests of the private corporations to surface at the expense of the people's security needs (Wilson 73).

More specifically, with the coming of the First World War came public concern, particularly concerns about profit corporations that existed. The public feared that international security would be in danger. The profits of corporations from supplying, not only the U.S. Army but also Britain and France, were of concern to the public. As a result, the public hated what they called "War Profiteers." One main reason, claims Wilson, is that the public believed that the war profiteers became wealthy, while soldiers were facing death in battlefields (73).

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<sup>2</sup> **Mobilization:** the act of organizing or preparing something, such as a group of people, for a purpose.

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One opposition side was a U.S. Senate panel called the Nye Committee. It was specialized in conducting investigations. It led to an investigation of the arms industry. There was a common belief among the Nye Committee as well as the public that the private arms companies were one of the causes to blame for the disasters of the First World War. Consequently, the Nye Committee, along with several portions of different groups, criticized the mixture of business and war (Wilson 74).

Meanwhile, the United States shifted to nationalizing the defense sector. The industry was more nationalized as a result of Roosevelt's New Deal reforms, in which the United States was healing from the Great Depression. Besides, political and social reforms were taking place at the time. Consequently, the United States was becoming more powerful. This change was first seen in the Navy Department. Josephus Daniels, who was leading the Navy, accused private corporations and contractors of raising arms prices. Therefore, Daniels suggested that the government should produce its weapons and arms in the government's facilities. Indeed, in the 1920s and 1930s, Congress demanded that 50 percent of the warships to be made in government's installations. At the same time, the army, especially in peacetimes, continued to provide itself with arms, using its facilities. By middle of the twentieth century, the U.S. Military was more nationalized than it was privatized (Wilson 74).

The shift from relying on for-profit corporations to relying on the government's facilities to supply the military with its needs, suggests that the military-industrial complex is not constricted in only one form. This shift challenges the idea of the existence of a specific pattern of development intended to strengthen the private companies' power. Past statistics show that the United States military adopted a mixed policy on relying on both public and private companies to supply its military with the necessary needs (Wilson 74,75).

The idea that the military-industrial complex is the alliance between the military and corporations was proven, to a large extent, to be true, as this relationship was quite evident

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during the Second World War. According to Wilson, both government and private corporations were involved in arms production and distribution. Indeed, private companies such as Newport News and Boeing became big corporations with thousands of workers. Moreover, the government's companies like General Motors and Du Pont shifted to become involved in the industry of arms. Similar to the First World War, corporation leaders, during the Second World War, helped with the mobilization of weapons (75).

Additionally, Second World War weapons were made and distributed by private contractors, but they belonged to the United States government. By 1945, the United States government managed to have control over approximately 20 percent of the industrial capacity. This allowed the government to maintain itself as an essential provider to the military. The military also managed to control the prices, and thus the profits of the contractors. This was proven, as the profits of the contractors decreased compared to their profits during the First World War. To sum up, the military-industrial complex, during the early 1940s, is defined by the nationalization of the industry as well as controlling the private corporations (75).

After 1945, the military-industrial complex witnessed a critical development. From 1945 to 1947, there were major cuts in defense spending. This reduction in spending was similar to the ones that took place after the Civil War and the First World War. Nevertheless, with the coming of the Korean War, the making of the atomic bomb by the Soviet Union, and with the communists taking over in China, the United States government increased the military spending again (Wilson 75,76). Was the rise of military spending due to international danger and war, or was there another reason?

During this period, there were major concerns about lobbying. In other words, some policymakers were pressured and influenced by defense lobbyists to make decisions in favor of the lobbyists. On one side, there were geopolitical threats such as the Korean War, which justified the rise in military spending. On the other side, many claimed that government

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members dramatized the geopolitical situation in order to serve their interests. This was particularly evident in the aerospace industry. In the late 1940s, campaigns took place to convince the public that, to keep the United States safe, the government had to be supplied with new weapons (Wilson 76).

One of the new and crucial weapons, at that time, was the ballistic missiles. In the 1960s, the ballistic missiles were used in all the three branches of the U.S. Military. The ballistic missile, among many other weapons made by the military-industrial complex, characterized the military-industrial complex. A term, at the time, was defined as the accumulation of contractors, military facilities, scholars, and universities. It was considered an alliance between money and talent to create deadly weapons. It was indeed a military-industrial complex in its most radical form (Wilson 76).

### **1.1.2. Eisenhower's Warning of the Military-Industrial Complex**

Among many critics and attackers of the military-industrial complex is Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as the United States president from 1953 to 1961. He, in his farewell address, warned of the evils of the military-industrial complex. Eisenhower started his farewell address by pointing at the fact that, during sixty years, the United States had been a part of three out of four major wars<sup>3</sup>.

Eisenhower wanted to warn the government and the public about the rising power of the military-industrial complex. He assured that the influence of the officials responsible for the influence, whether intentionally or unintentionally, is to be prevented. This, according to Eisenhower, was already happening and would continue to happen. This could also mean that Eisenhower attempted to warn about the alliance of the military with the arms industry

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<sup>3</sup> **First World War, Second World War, and the Cold War.**

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contractors. Eisenhower addressed the issue: "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" (YouTube).

Tom Bowman, who is a reporter at the National Public Radio, told the Morning Edition that Eisenhower was concerned about the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, in terms of weapons. According to Bowman, Eisenhower was afraid that the military spending would cut other sectors' budgets. Bowman also said that Eisenhower was worried that the military, along with the arms industry, would have so much power that they would threaten the nation's democracy (NPR).

This is how Eisenhower put it:

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. Nevertheless, we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. (Avalon Project)

Eisenhower continued as follows: "Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations" (Avalon Project).

Eisenhower, here, highlighted that the defense sector had expanded enormously, in terms of employees as well as military spending, which increased drastically. Eisenhower also said:

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This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence -- economic, political, even spiritual -- is felt in every city, every state house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. (Avalon Project)

Here, Eisenhower clarified that the new developments and changes in the defense sector were unfamiliar to Americans. He further warned Americans not to neglect the negative consequences of the military-industrial complex.

Eisenhower concluded by alerting that the combination of the military with the arms industry is threatening to the liberty and the democracy of the nation. He also addressed citizens to seek the appropriate merge of the military and the arms industry to achieve a balance between security and liberty. Eisenhower addressed the issue as follows:

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. 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 may prosper together. (Avalon Project)

One can deduce that Eisenhower was not entirely against military spending. Actually, Barbara Maranzani, who is a New York-based writer and editor, states that some citizens were shocked that someone like Eisenhower, who had a history in the military, would attack the traditions of the military. Indeed, under Eisenhower's leadership, the United States army triumphed in Europe in the Second World War. Also, he was the president of the United States

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when the Korean War ended. He further managed to end some of the critical moments of the Cold War (History).

In a more specific manner, John T. Correll, who was the editor-in-chief of Air Force Magazine, argues that Eisenhower implied that some resources had been granted to the military instead of using them in other sectors like healthcare and housing. Furthermore, Correll states that Eisenhower only warned about the military-industrial complex and demanded attentiveness (Air Force Magazine).

### **1.1.3. Since Eisenhower(1960-present)**

The military-industrial complex, after the 1960s, went through many changes. These changes showed that some components of the military-industrial complex were weak, unlike what was believed. The farewell address of Eisenhower was the turning point of this radical change. Robert S. McNamara, who held the position of Secretary of Defense for seven years, believed that the military-industrial complex must be reformed. First, McNamara and his team started with a policy of shrinking the costs. They then withdrew authority from the military branches. As a result, the power shifted to civilians in the Defense Department. Therefore, the military assets were put into construction and repair. Before McNamara took over, the private contractors were paid for projects' expenses, plus a fixed fee for their services. However, McNamara and his team shifted from relying on the latter policy to relying on fixing prices as well as competitive bidding. They also forced contractors to draft contracts at the beginning of the production of weapons. These contracts had to illustrate all the costs of producing a weapon. Moreover, McNamara's era was characterized by privatizing the industry. McNamara and his team closed many military facilities and sold many others. These changes, logically, shook the military-industrial complex in the 1960s (Wilson 78).

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These changes had both positive and negative impacts. The United States was in a war against Vietnam, and as the war aggravated, McNamara was heavily criticized mainly because of cutting the costs policy. Nevertheless, McNamara's reforms were proven to be positive on the government as a whole. Thanks to his reforms, unnecessary costs were cut, the power of the military-industrial complex declined, and contracts became based on fixed prices. Another negative side of the reforms was the bankruptcy of Lockheed, which was the military's biggest supplier. This was due to the new form of the contracts introduced by McNamara and his team. This supports the idea that McNamara and his team were so determined to reform the defense sector, even though private contractors disliked it. This was evident, as many studies show that the contractors' profits, in the 1950s and the 1960s, had significantly decreased. However, after McNamara left his position, the new Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, worked in order to increase contractors' revenues. This was because he believed that it was private contractors' right to earn more. In the early 1970s, the private sector was obliged to finance the industry, for the government sold several in-house facilities in the time of McNamara (Wilson 78-79).

Experts stressed that the military-industrial complex was lavish with spending. However, when the Vietnam War was over, such claims were rare. This was due to the fact that military spending decreased after the war. However, with the coming of Ronald Reagan into office in the 1980s, he boosted the military budget, supposedly to challenge the Soviet Union. At that time, the media provided the public with the shocking news that proved the waste in spending at the level of the military. The press claimed that the military bought 500 dollars' hammers and 2,000 dollars' toilet seats. This showed the scandals of the military-industrial complex. These scandals show that there were two responsible sides of the situation: contractors and the government. These critiques were not new, as they also existed in the Vietnam War, where the Pentagon was accused of wasting money to profit the private contractors. In contrast to the 1930s, in which the private companies took all the blame when it comes to criticizing the

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military-industrial complex, the media, in the 1980s, condemned the Pentagon for the waste in the military budget (Wilson 79,80).

The 1980s witnessed the invention of a new term, which is the "iron triangle," with Congress being a permanent element. Not only did Congress members make enormous efforts to keep military facilities in their region, but they also attempted to provide a percentage of projects' spending in their local districts. Other Congress members were affected by lobbyists of the defense sector, who were willing to fund complying representatives' campaigns. This relationship between Congress and the defense sector rose many questions. One of which is: did Congress pass laws that facilitated and boosted the defense budget? A military-industrial complex critic would agree that it was the case. However, some political scientists, using different techniques and data, claimed that Congress members, legislators in specific, may have been driven by other factors other than lobbying and personal interests. They suggested that legislators may have voted out of ideology or according to their party's beliefs (Wilson 80-81).

On the other hand, other scientists assure that legislators voted in favor of increasing the defense budget to serve their interests. What is quite sure is that Congress became very engaged and involved in the military-industrial complex. As proof, in the 1990s, the United States government continued its policy of privatization. During the presidency of Bill Clinton, more military facilities and installations were privatized (Wilson 80,81).

In the early twenty-first century, and with the United States engaging in quarrels in Iraq and Afghanistan, the percentage of private contractors increased. This was clearly manifested in the security services sector. In previous times, securing embassies and facilities was the military's mission, but now it is provided by private contractors. This strategy was criticized, for critics believed that it was a move that would weaken military leaders' commands. In addition, even providing logistical services changed from being military-dependent to relying on private companies. For instance, previously, the military itself was responsible for the

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mobilization of troops, goods, and basically, everything needed in military bases; however, since the 1990s, this has become the job of private corporations (Wilson 83).

The military-industrial complex, then, became more privatized and globalized. The military-industrial complex started depending more on foreign supplies, notes Wilson. This includes both weapons and components. Similarly, the government started dealing with foreign nations as far as selling weapons. This was traced back to the 1930s, when the defense sector conducted sales to foreign countries, though these sales were minimal. Moving forward to the Second World War and the 1960s, the United States government sold vast amounts of weapons, especially to its allies. This alerted several people, as it exposed the military-industrial complex, not just locally but also globally (83).

The military-industrial complex, by the early twenty-first century, was not the same as before. Its structure, economics, and politics had changed radically from its different previous forms. One turning point of the military-industrial complex was Eisenhower's warning of it. However, the current military-industrial complex is not at all what Eisenhower had expressed (Wilson 84).

There are, however, good sides of the military-industrial complex. According to Pierre Guerlain, military spending as well as military-related spending is good for the economy, as it creates jobs. In this case, wars are beneficial. In other words, the arms industry creates job opportunities, which leads society to flourish and prosper. To support this claim, the example of the Great Depression period can be used. Many experts claimed that the main reason the Great Depression was over is because of defense spending and war. Furthermore, it is claimed that the Cold War aided the United States economy (Guerlain).

According to Wilson, the military-industrial complex, in the Cold War era, helped to bring many technological advancements. One aspect was in the field of computing, which found a great welcoming from the public. Furthermore, the military budget that was directed to

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research and development increased significantly. Additionally, the military helped to make some of the great inventions, such as the global positioning satellite systems (GPS) as well as the Internet (77).

The advancements brought by the military-industrial complex suggest that the claims made by many politicians and historians were rather inaccurate. In other words, the belief that the military-industrial complex would become a sweeping force to the extent that it would govern the nation was unproven to be correct. Indeed, the fact that the civilian economy increased and at the same time the military spending decreased suggests that the claims of some specialists were false.

Many experts have compared private contractors to mercenaries<sup>4</sup>. This is, to a certain extent, a fair comparison. Tea Cimini points the main differences and similarities between mercenaries and private contractors. According to Cimini, unlike private contractors, mercenaries were directly contracted by the entity that needed them. In addition, unlike mercenaries, private contractors provide several services, not just combat support. This gives private contractors a legal status to operate under the law, which is not the case for mercenaries. Private contractors' professionalism and legitimacy are the main differences between them and mercenaries. However, both private contractors and mercenaries are for-profit entities. Though there are many private contractors whose values are worth billions of dollars, there are small private corporation that function differently, the same as mercenaries (2).

The reason why the distinction between private contractors and mercenaries has to be made is their legal status. The United Nations Mercenary Convention, signed in 1989 and applied in 2001, prevented the use of mercenaries. Making the difference between private contractors and mercenaries meant that private contractors were allowed to function freely; however, in 2006, the United Nations' General Assembly banned private contractors from

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<sup>4</sup>**Mercenary** : one that serves merely for wages.

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intervening in foreign conflicts. Some countries, including the United States neglected both conventions (Cimini 2).

Eisenhower's warning of the military-industrial complex, as well as a brief history of the development of the American defense system, suggest that indeed the military-industrial complex was and still is a rising monster. Therefore, a history of the spending and the budget of the United States military in major wars and even in peacetimes will illustrate how the military-industrial complex gained power over time.

### **1.2. The Budget Developments of the Military-Industrial Complex through Time**

The military-industrial complex witnessed many changes in its economics. Through time, the budget of the military increased drastically in some periods in American history. This increase was accompanied with the United States' reliance on private contractors.

#### **1.2.1. The Increasing Military Budget**

It is quite logical for a country to increase military spending at times of war. The United States kept increasing the defense budget year after year, whether the country was involved in wars or not. The United States has been a part of global wars since declared as an independent nation. This involvement can be seen to be one of the aims of the military-industrial complex.

When the First World War started, the U.S. was undergoing an economic recession. Hugh Rockoff, who is a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and after examining the U.S. mobilization and finance for the First World War, deduced that the greatest achievement of the U.S. from the war was the changing in the ideology in terms of economy. For instance, the United States spent 32.4 billion dollars in the First World War.

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Additionally, in the Second World War, the total cost of the war for the United States was 306.7 billion dollars (Rockoff 36).

The United States government increased military spending. For example, before the Korean War (1950-1953), the military spending was 59.8 billion dollars; however, when the war started, military spending increased by more than a double. Similarly, during the Vietnam War (1964-1973), the U.S. Military spending never went below 150 billion dollars. From a grander perspective, at the time of the Cold War (1947-1991) and especially during heat moments, the military spending exceeded 200 billion dollars (see table 1).

Table 1

The U.S. Military Purchases (in Billions of 1982 Dollars), 1948-1987

Year	Spending	Year	Spending
1948	4.7	1968	209.8
1949	59.2	1969	198.2
1950	59.8	1970	182.9
1951	134.7	1971	166.9
1952	181.2	1972	166.5
1953	189.2	1973	156.6
1954	158.2	1974	153
1955	143.4	1975	151.1
1956	144.8	1976	148
1957	153.3	1977	149.9
1958	155.9	1978	150.8
1959	152.6	1979	155.1
1960	146.6	1980	166.5
1961	153.5	1981	178.2
1962	163.3	1982	192.8
1963	159	1983	206.4
1964	153.2	1984	217.8
1965	150.9	1985	232.7
1966	177.1	1986	243.1
1967	204.5	1987	251.2

Source: Higgs, Robert. "U.S. MILITARY SPENDING IN THE COLD WAR ERA:

OPPORTUNITY COSTS, FOREIGN CRISES, AND DOMESTIC

CONSTRAINTS." U.S. MILITARY SPENDING IN THE COLD WAR ERA:

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OPPORTUNITY COSTS, FOREIGN CRISES, AND DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS,

Cato Institute, [www.sas.upenn.edu/~dludden/USmilitarybudget02a.htm](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~dludden/USmilitarybudget02a.htm).

The United States military spending, during the late twentieth century, kept increasing, though it witnessed some cuts. However, it remained at high values, compared to the spending of previous years. Further to the twenty-first century, the military kept being stable at very high values (see table 2).

Table 2

The U.S. Military Expenditure from 1988 until Present

<b>Year</b>	<b>U.S. Military expenditure (in millions of dollars)</b>
1988	657527
1989	651972
1990	624852
1991	551976
1992	581671
1993	550542
1994	521932
1995	487525
1996	461007
1997	458622
1998	488266
1999	449369
2000	466759
2001	470550
2002	528337
2003	601335
2004	655407
2005	685595
2006	695474
2007	714032
2008	765973
2009	826247
2010	849867
2011	839803
2012	793157
2013	732148

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<b>2014</b>	<b>687112</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>671509</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>669448</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>662550</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>682491</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>718689</b>
<b>2019-current</b>	<b>731751</b>

Source: Sipri.org

### 1.2.2. Reliance on Private Contractors

According to Johnson and Zamparelli, private contractors have been a critical part of the United States military. This can be traced back to the Revolutionary War as well as the Civil War, as private contractors were responsible for supplying the U.S. military with logistics, support, and supplies (qtd. in Cotton et al. 9). The Second World War witnessed a change concerning private contractors' practices. Shrader notes that, during the Second World War, technical representatives of private firms became crucial, as they were to be found in all areas of the military facilities. Often, they even existed in combat zones in order to fix problems related to the supplies of their companies (qtd. in Cotton et al. 9).

According to Donahue, in 1955, a regulation was issued by the former Bureau of the Budget. It supported the idea that all federal agencies were to operate with private companies and non-state-owned enterprises to provide for services and materials (qtd. in Cotton et al. 9). This allowed private contractors to expand their businesses more, especially during the Vietnam War (Cotton et al. 9). Contractors were responsible for "base operations; construction projects; water port and ground transportation operations; petroleum supply; maintenance and technical support for aviation and high-technology systems" (Friedman 5). Friedman also states that the shortage of skilled workers in Vietnam obliged the United States to contract U.S. citizens as well as third world countries citizens. Friedman notes that, by mid-1969, around 52,000 technical representatives were working in different fields. In addition, between 1965 and 1971,

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the congressional construction allocations exceeded 969 million dollars. He further argues that Vietnam was a training prototype of the employment of private contractors. This latter, according to Friedman, brought back some questions concerning the legality, the jurisdiction, and the attitudes of private contractors. The Joint Logistics Review Board, in 1970, assessed private contractors' operations in Vietnam as being very successful (5).

Nichols states that the U.S. Army being inspired by the Vietnam War experience, issued the "Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP)" in 1985 (qtd. in Cotton et al. 9). The Department of the Army notes that in 1985, the LOGCAP's purpose was to depend on contractors to supply particular services to enlarge the military. During the 1990s, the U.S. military became more dependent on contractors (qtd. in Cotton et al 10). Contractors supplied support for operations in Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti under president George H.W Bush. Moreover, when Bill Clinton took office, he prioritized the hiring of contractors (Cotton et al. 10). Furthermore, contractors were heavily involved in bettering the capacities of the armed forces as well as being responsible for operations (qtd. in Cotton et al. 11).

### **Conclusion**

The military-industrial complex has no clear and stable definition, as it developed through time quickly and differently. Each period of history witnessed a military-industrial complex that is radically different from the former, especially in its functions. The military-industrial complex, in its simplest definition, is the alliance between the military and some industries. The United States uses it to fulfill its needs of providing military support, conducting operations, and profiting from wars. However, how it actually functions is beyond the innocent goals of keeping peace and preserving security. So, how does the military-industrial complex function? What are its hidden aims?

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### **Introduction**

Through time, the military-industrial complex has developed radically. This development is mainly political and economic. As all acts that exist, the military-industrial complex has its ostensible interests. It is sometimes disguised under the covers of maintaining national security, boosting the economy, and conducting the war on terror. Even though these goals seem to be righteous and virtuous, some argue that the methods and the manners used in achieving those goals are questionable and somewhat violent and that the military-industrial complex has more masked interests than what is apparent to the public. This chapter aims to explore the different conflicts and wars that the United States was part of as well as identifying the system of the military-industrial complex.

### **2.1. The Hidden Interests of the Military-Industrial Complex**

The agents of military-industrial complex claim that the complex serves the best interest of the United States; however, the facts and the evidence show otherwise. The military-industrial complex has many hidden interests beyond serving the United States' best interests.

#### **2.1.1. Provoking Wars and Interventions**

The United States is known to cause and start wars based on unsubstantial and fabricated grounds (Wright). This is evidently true, especially after the United States' independence.

##### **2.1.1.1. The War of 1812 (1812-1815)**

This war took place between the United States and Great Britain. This war occurred mainly because some U.S. sailors were imprisoned and because the British helped the Indians

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settle in America. Another reason for the war was that the United States was greedy for territories, Canada in particular. Also, when trying to seize Baltimore and New Orleans, the British Army was stopped by the Americans, which proved that American had a high-level army. The 1812 War cost 1.78 billion dollars (2019 dollars). The war ended with the Treaty of Ghent (1814), which allowed the United States to maintain its sovereignty, yet any further expansion was prevented (Harrington and Suneson).

### **2.1.1.2. The Mexican-American War (1846-1848)**

The leading cause of the Mexican-American War was Texas. Texas had already claimed its independence from Mexico, yet it was not an American State. This made The United States annex Texas, which led to the start of the war. The war ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). The treaty allowed the United States to gain several states like California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico. The Mexican-American War cost 2.72 billion dollars (2019 dollars) (Harrington and Suneson).

### **2.1.1.3. The Civil War (1861-1865)**

The war took place between the northern states and southern states. The main reason for the Civil War was the issues of slavery and civil rights. The war left the south destroyed for many years. The Civil War ended slavery in the south. The war cost 22.99 billion dollars (2019 dollars) (Harrington and Suneson).

### **2.1.1.4. The Spanish-American War (1898)**

The United States declared war on Spain, when one of its warships (Maine) exploded in Havana Harbor, Cuba, which was occupied by Spain. Before the beginning of the war, the media, especially journalists, attempted to fuel the Americans against Spain. The war ended

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with the treaty of Paris (1898), by which the United States captured Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam (America's Wars). This war cost 10.33 billion dollars (2019 dollars) (Harrington and Suneson).

There are other wars that the United States took part in. The previously mentioned wars were the ones where the United States provoked. One may ask: Why did the United States provoke wars, or was a part of wars and conflicts, especially that wars are expensive? Is it just a coincidence that the United States finds itself on war?

### 2.2 The Outcomes of Wars on the United States

“War is the malady<sup>5</sup> of nations; the disease is terrible while it lasts, but purifying in its results” (Luce 672). Wars indeed have negative consequences on countries. Casualties like deaths, injuries, economic loss, investment loss, and the Gross Domestic Product<sup>6</sup> decrease, can occur during wars. Nevertheless, the long term benefits of wars are surprising. The United States is a perfect example of benefiting greatly from wars.

In the First World War, the United States was a debtor country. In 1914, the United States' investments outside the country were approximately 5 billion dollars, and the other countries' investments in the U.S. were 7.2 billion dollars. However, by the end of the First World War, The United States became a creditor country, for the U.S. investments increased to 9.7 billion dollars as opposed to 3.3 billion dollars of foreign investments in the U.S. New York, after the end of the war, became the new center of the world capital market as well as the new critical part of the Federal Reserve (Rockoff 20, 21).

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<sup>5</sup> **Malady** : an unwholesome or disordered condition.

<sup>6</sup> **Gross Domestic Product**: the gross national product excluding the value of net income earned abroad

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During the Second World War, the United States' economy boomed. Military spending was one of the reasons to create economic demand. To clarify, military spending can be a way to cause new industries to emerge, which will consequently open the door for new jobs to be available. Progressive taxation<sup>7</sup>, which the Second World War was funded by, led to the fair distribution of the Gross Domestic Product to citizens. Even though investment and consumption in the United States decreased after the Second World War, unemployment was terminated (Economic Consequences of War 18), which is an economic, political and social victory for the United States. Indeed, 17 million civilian jobs were on the market, which increased productivity rates. Wages also increased by almost 50 percent. All of this made the United States' economy go from worse to best (Goodwin).

As opposed to the First World War and the Second World War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War were not of a great benefit to the United States' economy. During those wars, the United States' economy was mainly characterized by the decrease in investment and consumption, the increase in taxes, inflation<sup>8</sup>, periods of recession, and a large amount of debt (Economic Consequences of War 10-14). Nevertheless, the Cold War had slightly better consequences on the economy of the United States compared to the Korean and Vietnam Wars. According to Sykes, during the Cold War, the U.S. economy boosted hugely, which resulted in the United States gaining international power (1).

The American involvement in some wars had its benefits, especially economic ones. A thorough analysis of the previously mentioned wars shows that the economic; thus, the political profits gained by the U.S. were immense. Those wars granted the U.S. lands, wealth, and a strong political stance as being the most powerful country in the world. One would wonder if

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<sup>7</sup> **Progressive taxation:** a tax that imposes a lower tax rate on low-income earners compared to those with a higher income.

<sup>8</sup> **Inflation:** a continuing rise in the general price level.

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the United States' involvement in wars is merely a coincidence, and once involved, is ending wars a priority?

### 2.3. The Role of the Military-Industrial Complex

According to Ismael Hossein- Zadeh, all military fights are to obtain territorial, economic, and political benefits, and to preserve national security. However, after the Second World War, the American military adopted a whole new aspect to this matter. This aspect is manifested in creating wars. The defenders of this method claim that creating war is for protecting the country, yet it is not the case. Wars and conflicts are created to serve their own interests, which are accomplished by encouraging instability, and consequently, wars.

Zadeh points to the fact that as far as the industries are concerned, peace is not profitable; war is. This is due to the vast amounts of profits that industries gain from tax money, the production and the sales of their products. Eisenhower's warning of the military-industrial complex was probably influenced by the direction of the latter to the race of arming the military for the sake of wars.

Zadeh argues that the propensity of creating empires exists forever in the military; however, in the case of the United States, the industries are what makes the military-industrial complex a threat. Zadeh gives the example of the past of militaries. He says that arms production corporations were possessed and managed by governments; the industries were controlled. This forced arms companies to produce and supply weapons only in wartimes, in contrast to how private companies function in the present time.

After the end of the Second World War, some people demanded cuts in military spending. The supporters of military growth and expansion claimed that there was a threat of communism. This and the Korean War revoked the cuts on military spending. Similarly, during the Cold War, the military-industrial complex agents wrecked the negotiations between the U.S.

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and the Soviet Union to cool down the tension. In addition, they reignited the spark of tension between the two countries under the cover of the red scare's threat (Zadeh).

The military-industrial complex agents did not stop there. They invented a new term. Instead of the danger of communism, which was used during the Cold War, "rogue states" was the new term. It was used to prevent the government from cutting the military budget and spending. Additionally, the military-industrial complex representatives started provoking countries to justify their actions. Iraq was the first victim. Before 9/11 took place, opportunists were searching for new excuses and justifications to increase the military budget. The 9/11 attacks were the perfect justification, for 9/11 were seen as terrorist attacks rather than crimes (Zadeh).

Consequently, the U.S. declared war on Iraq, which, as a result, increased the military budget. Following this, the war on terror, as the Bush administration declared, was permanent (Zadeh). This made the military budget increase year after year.

These examples are proof that some personnel side with the military-industrial complex's principles to keep tensions and, therefore, wars, to serve their own interests. This suggests that the military-industrial complex is a monster backed up by powerful government employees and wealthy corporations.

### **2.4. Corruption and Influence in the American Defense Sector**

The United States' defense sector has witnessed many incidents of corruption and unwanted influence. The representatives of the military-industrial complex have influence in the politics of the United States. This influence affects the laws and the regulations in the favour of private contractors.

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### 2.4.1. The Revolving Door

Jonathan Turley, who is a professor of public interest law at George Washington University, says: "Our economic war-dependence is matched by political war-dependence. Many members represent districts with contractors that supply homeland security needs and our on-going wars." This highly supports the idea that there is a strong relationship between politicians, agencies, and private contractors to expand the military budget to fund wars they started.

In politics, one needs to be aware of the term "the revolving door" in order to understand how the military-industrial complex functions. Will Kenton, the editor-in-chief and lead contributor to Cultural Capitol, defines the revolving door as: "The movement of high-level employees from public-sector jobs to private-sector jobs and vice versa." The majority of these government officials head to the private sector to become lobbyists. For example, in a survey done on 18,000 lobbyists by the Lobbyists.info and George Washington University, it was found that 80.2 percent of those lobbyists were government officials.

Jodi Vittori, who is a defense industry researcher and policy manager for Transparency International's Defense and Security Program, argues that the military-industrial complex has control over the government officials' career. As a result, the military-industrial complex can direct those officials in any direction. (24,25). This means that ex-policymakers, as well as high officials in the government can be hired in private companies after they retire. This can be dangerous because of the amount of information these workers may hold, which can be a threat to national security, in the case of bad use.

The revolving door brings a risk of corruption. Actually, several officials in the Department of Defense work in two directions: government work and private contractors work (Vittori 26). This can help policymakers to pass policies and laws in favor of private contractors, which will likely hire them in the future. Jack Abramoff, who is a former lobbyist, says:

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I would say or my staff would say to him or her at some point, ‘You know, when you’re done working on the Hill, we’d very much like you to consider coming to work for us.’ Now the moment I said that to them or any of our staff said that to ‘em, that was it. We owned them. (qtd. in Vittori 26)

This is a proof that many government and Congress officials and members consider working for the private sector. It is known that the private sector pays better than the public sector. Indeed, according to Vittori, government workers' salaries combined with the advantages that the private sector offers are tempting to officials (26).

The revolving door also provides opportunities overseas, especially with Middle East governments. James Jones, a retired general, had a contract by which he was to help Saudi Arabia, depending on his company, with services related to its military. Another example is James Mattis, who was the Secretary of Defense in 2015. He was allowed to conduct military consulting work for the United Arab Emirates (Vittori 27).

Though all of these acts are legal, they can compromise the American government. These acts can produce corruption and conflict of interest<sup>9</sup>, especially if the hired private sector personnel hold critical positions. The information obtained from working in the public sector can harm the national security of the country if it is poorly used. Similarly, the decisions made by government officials, in favor of the private contractors, for the sake of potential jobs can very likely harm the country (Vittori 28).

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<sup>9</sup> **Conflict of interest:** a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust.

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### 2.4.2. Lobbying

In simple terms, a lobbyist is a connection between a group's own interests and Congressmen. A lobbyist's main job is to offer funding to members of Congress to accomplish the interests of a particular group (Vittori 21). Elizabeth Warren, who is an American senator, explains the relationship between the elements of the revolving door as follows:

But today, the coziness between defense lobbyists, Congress, and the Pentagon — what former President Dwight D. Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex — tilts countless decisions, big and small, away from legitimate national security interests, and toward the desires of giant corporations that thrive off taxpayer dollars. (Medium)

This implies that the military-industrial complex has the power to influence politicians to make decisions and pass laws in favor of interests groups that get wealthier from Americans' tax money. This means that the funders of wars are unaware Americans. So, it is a system designed to make private corporations rich.

According to Kenton, the money allocated to lobbying between 1988 and 2018 was around 3.42 billion dollars. This generated some concerns that the groups hiring these lobbyists can approach and control politicians. Furthermore, Warren argues that giving the relationships that these officials have, they manage to obtain profitable deals for private companies successfully. In 2018, 645 ex-high government officials were recruited in high position jobs by American top private contractors. Vittori notes that lobbyists make sure that private companies are given some advantages like tax relief. Also, politicians are supposed to aid private companies, have they faced some troubles. Additionally, any inconveniences, questions, or inquiries about the work of private companies are to be terminated (22).

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The following table illustrates the total spending on lobbying from 1998 to 2019:

Table 3

The Total Spending on Lobbying from 1998 to 2019 (in millions of dollars)

<b>Years</b>	<b>Total spending (in millions of dollars)</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>55.32</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>58.5</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>66.01</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>69.59</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>72.09</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>84.51</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>97.75</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>103.79</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>118.42</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>125.71</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>153.34</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>140.09</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>148.38</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>138.14</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>135.98</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>137.9</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>128.7</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>128.94</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>127.54</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>126.61</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>126.66</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>112.31</b>

Source: "Defense: Lobbying, 2019." *OpenSecrets.org*,

[www.opensecrets.org/industries/lobbying.php?cycle=2020&ind=D](http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/lobbying.php?cycle=2020&ind=D).

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The table shows that enormous amounts of money are spent on lobbying annually. This implies that, indeed, corporations and interests groups recruit several lobbyists to pressure and influence politicians to sway legislations to specific directions.

One example of the threat and influence of lobbyists is the former Homeland Secretary, Michael Chertoff, who initiated the buying of airport scanners without conducting sufficient testing. It was discovered later that the producer of those scanners was a client of Chertoff's firm (Turley). This is a shred of substantial evidence that neither government officials nor private companies have the nation's interests as a priority. Their only interest is lucrative contracts.

### **2.4.3. Campaign Financing**

Running for a political seat in Congress or the House of Senate is expensive. For instance, in 2016, a seat winner in the House of Senate would spend 1.5 million dollars on his/her campaign. In 2012, the candidates of the House of Senate spent a total of 1.8 billion dollars (Vittori 22). This means that these candidates need fundraising in order to attain the required funds to run their campaigns. According to Vittori, the advantages of being elected are manifested in the ability to affect the law-making process, the endorsement of a particular plan, the rejection of opposing ideas, and the diversion from focusing on policymaking. Research has shown that the number of non-money related meetings has declined. This means that lobbyists and the staffers are conducting the work that the elected politicians are supposed to do, which consequently empower lobbyists and staffers (22).

Vittori notes that the groups who donate large sums of money to political candidates are the very minority of wealthy and influential groups of people and corporations. These people and private corporations, then, will have control and influence over the winning candidates whom they supported by the donations. They pressure policymakers into ratifying laws and

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regulations into their favor. These laws and regulations are very likely to be harmful to the majority of Americans (23).

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, in 2008, both political action committees<sup>10</sup> and individuals contributed around 26.5 million dollars to Congress both political parties. In the 2018 election cycle, the total contributions to political candidates reached 30 million dollars. Furthermore, Congress political parties allegedly received nearly 150.8 million dollars in the last 20 years (Military-industrial complex). In 2020, six private corporations contributed around 13 million dollars to candidates, parties, and outside groups (Center for Responsive Politics).

Another way that private contractors use to contribute to politicians' campaigns is "Dark Money." Kenton defines dark money as follows:

Dark money refers to the funds donated to nonprofit organizations that are in turn spent to influence elections. These nonprofit organizations can receive an unlimited amount of donations, and they are not required by law to disclose their donors. The opacity of this donation process often allows these organizations to significantly influence the election process. (Investopedia)

Basically, this allows non-profit organizations to influence the direction of the election, especially if they are allowed to do so legally. Besides, they have unlimited funds to use to affect the election, such as advertising to a particular candidate. In Addition, even political action committees<sup>10</sup> can be dark money groups in some cases. For example, if a political action

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<sup>10</sup>**Political action committee:** a group formed (as by an industry or an issue-oriented organization) to raise and contribute money to the campaigns of candidates likely to advance the group's interests.

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committee received donations from a non-profit organization that did not give away its contributors list, this political action committee is considered a dark money group (Dark Money Basics).

Good examples of using dark money are Lockheed Martin and Boeing Corporation, which are the top private contractors of the United States defense sector. Between 2012 and 2016, Lockheed Martin contributed around 50,000 dollars to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, while Boeing Corporation donated 250,000 dollars to a group supporting Republicans (Vittori 24). The results of these actions can be rather harmful, for the accomplices in these acts are putting their own interest first, while they should protect and secure the needs of the voters (24).

Vittori explains the cycle of influence between the U.S. Defense establishment, the federal elected officials, Middle East governments, and the U.S. defense industry as follows:

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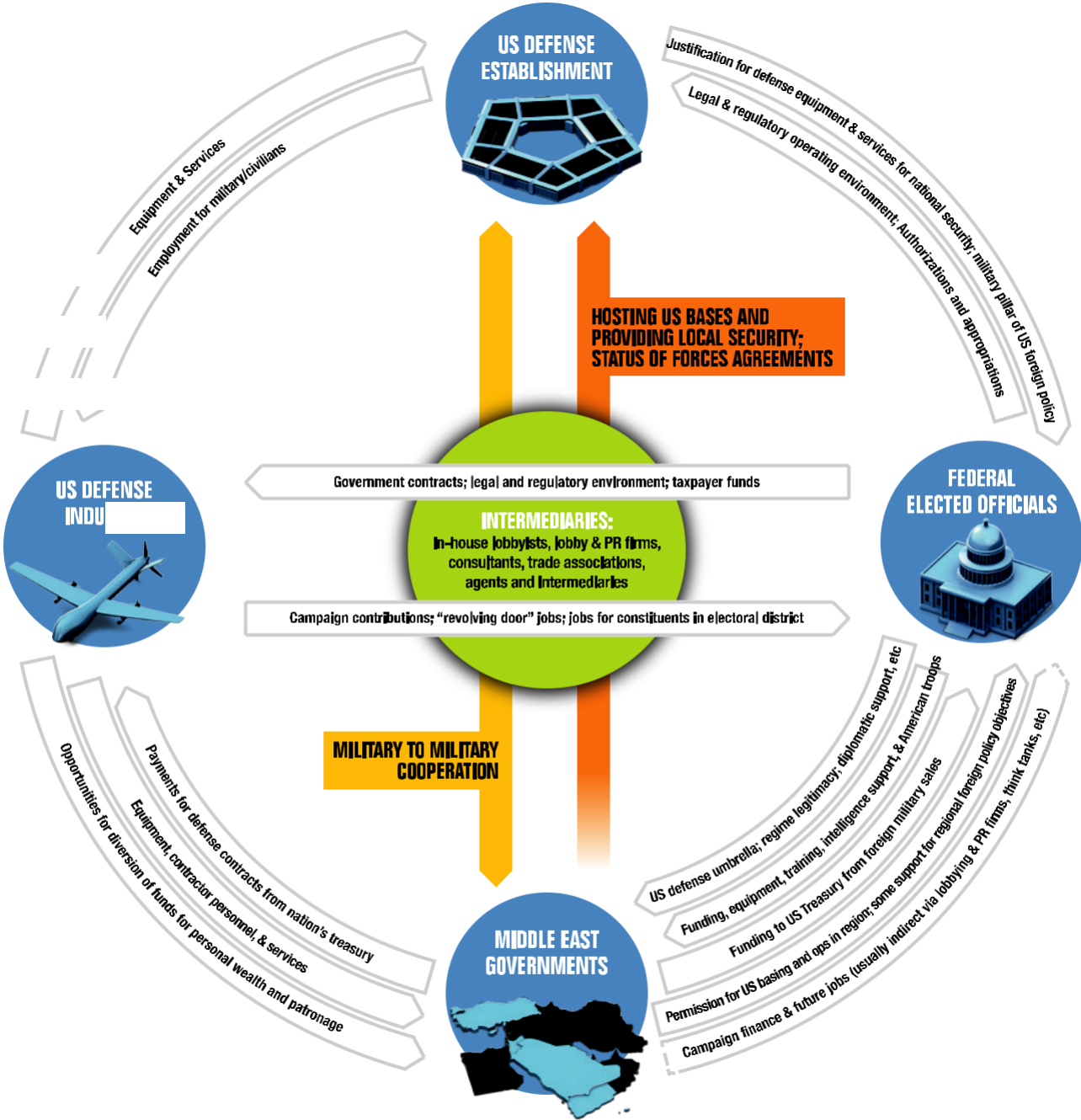


Fig. 1. The Cycle of Influence: Vittori, Jodi. "A Mutual Extortion Racket: The Military Industrial Complex and US Foreign Policy – The Cases of Saudi Arabia & UAE." *Transparency International Defense and Security Program*, November 2019, p.8.

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The picture illustrates that each element of the cycle of influence possesses something to offer to the other parts of the cycle, provided that each part in return has something the other part does not possess.

### **Conclusion**

The military-industrial complex is a well-organized and robust system. Its constituents exist in sensitive jobs inside the United States government. The Pentagon, Congress, and private military contractors are its principal agents. Each one of these establishments has its methods in functioning to profit mostly from lucrative contracts. These three bodies work together to justify major increases in the military budget by financing provoked wars and interventions. The Pentagon high-ranked officials, who offer years of expertise and personal relationships with Congress members, move to work for private military contractors as lobbyists. These lobbyists, backed by generous campaign financing and contributions to Congress members, sway legislations in favor of private military contractors.

**Chapter Three:**  
**The Military-**  
**Industrial Complex in**  
**Afghanistan**

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### **Introduction**

The military-industrial complex has become more and more corrupt through time. This is due to the power given to both decision-makers and private contractors. Wars and interventions, justified or unjustified, are usually provoked by the alliance of the two entities: the government and private contractors. As it may be known, war is probably the most profitable business. Thus, the United States government spend countries-like budgets to finance the war. This includes offering contracts to private corporations. In return, the government and private contractors profit greatly. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore the different reasons for the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, its cost, and the function of private contractors in the region.

### **3.1. The Origins of the War**

Americans, in general, have too little understanding of how and why the Afghanistan war began in the first place. At first glance, the Afghanistan war started after a terrorist attack by an Afghan organization had taken place in the United States. As a result, the American government invaded Afghanistan in order to requite those attacks and to prevent similar attacks from happening. Vaguely enough, the Arabs who attacked the United States and the organization's location being in Afghanistan, raises several questions. (Reynolds 21). In order to properly understand the Afghanistan War, a brief history of the events of the region in relation to the United States must be presented.

#### **3.1.1. The Secret War**

According to Reynolds, the United States, during the Cold War, allowed itself to serve as a peacekeeper in the Middle East. However, after the end of the Vietnam War, the United States had no interest in being present in the Middle East, but Richard Nixon, the United States

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president at the time, suggested via his “Nixon’s Doctrine” to nominate allies in the region to play the role of the United States as gatekeepers. Saudi Arabia and Iran, being the top oil exporters countries, were chosen. The fact that the oil prices rose significantly meant that Saudi Arabia and Iran’s treasury rose in return. This allowed them to spend millions on American weapons to supply themselves (24).

The continuous presence and involvement of the United States in that region raise several questions about the matter. The fact that the United States, by itself or using other countries, attempts to be always present and knowing everything about countries, may imply that America has some hidden interests other than achieving and keeping world peace.

After the Cold War had ended, the passion expanded to play the same role universally (Reynolds 23). In his book *Planning to Fail: the US Wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan*, James H. Lebovic note that the origins of the Afghanistan war can be traced to December 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. This move made the Americans discontent with the situation, as they were not part of the conflict. This was primarily because of the potential threat that the Soviet Union could impose on the interests of the United States in the region. Thus, having cut support to Pakistan in 1977, the United States, in 1979, provided all kinds of support to Pakistan to fight the Soviets out of Afghanistan. Moreover, the United States went further to ally with Great Britain and Saudi Arabia to force the Soviet Union to surrender. What the United States did not understand is that providing rebels with different kinds of support could affect the path of Afghanistan’s future as well as affecting the stability in the area, which may cause a danger to the United States (119,120). The United States seemed to refuse the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan and even fought it. This leads to the question: Did the U.S. fight the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan for humanitarian reasons or because it has interests in the region?

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According to Ballard et al., the United States provided the rebels with millions of dollars as well as military support manifested in weapons. This raised many worries among Reagan's administration. Among these worries are the rebels' doctrine and the international reaction towards these actions, if uncovered. Providing rebels with American-made arms increased the chance of blowing up its cover, so the United States paid arms' costs provided by other countries in order to keep its complicity a secret one (qtd. in Lebovic 120).

According to Reynolds, the United States had an interest in Afghanistan for two main reasons: worries about Iran and its potential access to oil in that area. In 1973, the Arab prevented oil from the West. This caused a significant economic crisis in the West. This was enough enough that the Gulf oil was pivotal to the United States, and excluding the oil field in the region from the hands of the Soviets was necessary (24). This highly suggests that the United States refused and fought the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan mainly because the U.S. was interested in the region's oil.

President James Carter's way to deal with the situation in Afghanistan was somewhat controversial. Bruce Riedel in his book *What We Won: America's Secret War in Afghanistan, 1979-89*, notes that James Carter was supportive of the idea of arming the mujahedin<sup>11</sup> In Afghanistan, so he commanded the order to the Central Intelligence Agency to provide the mujahedin with weapons. Indeed, in 1980, Congress agreed on 50 million dollars' funds to arm the mujahedin in Afghanistan. Carter, also, created the alliance between the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, to allocate money as well as arm a portion of the Afghans, while using Pakistan as the mujahedin's base (93-103).

Carter, then, launched a project to aid the mujahedin. This project consisted of publishing misleading information; it was a psychological war. This was the start of the alliance

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<sup>11</sup>**The mujahedin:** Islamic guerrilla fighters, especially in the Middle East.

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between the Central Intelligence Agency and Inter-Services Intelligence<sup>12</sup>. This alliance was mainly to aid the mujahedin in Afghanistan (Riedel 99).

Once in office, Ronald Reagan's administration started working on a 3.2-billion-dollar deal to Pakistan. The package consisted of both economic and military aid (Riedel 115). On Reagan's second term, and especially in the mid-1980s, the Americans, Pakistanis, and Saudis were determined to push the war further, to put more pressure on the Soviets, and to support Afghanistan even more than before (117). The president of Pakistan ordered his intelligence to conduct several operations, risking that the Soviets might have found weapons of British or American nature (118). Also, the president of Pakistan asked the United States to send missiles in order to put more pressure on the Soviet Union. The United States agreed (119).

Furthermore, Charlie Wilson, who was a congressman, successfully proposed a 40-million-dollar increase in the budget of the secret Afghan war. The United States, then, asked Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to raise the allocated budget of the secret war to 250 million dollars. Saudi Arabia agreed (121). In 1987, the United States allocated 500 million dollars to back the Central Intelligence Agency's program of the secret war, which is ten times the budget allocated in 1980 (122).

The Soviet Union president, Mikhail Gorbachev, was not involved in the decision of invading Afghanistan. Additionally, he was knowledgeable of the imperfections of the Soviet Union's system. Consequently, he considered the war as a source of weakening the country's military and economic resources. In 1987, Gorbachev declared that the Soviet troops would withdraw from Afghanistan within one year (Riedel 122-123).

Riedel notes that following the Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan, the war continued with both the Soviet Union and the United States assistance by providing weapons for another three years. Afghanistan, then, was in a brutal and bloody civil war between the

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<sup>12</sup> **Inter-Services Intelligence:** the premier intelligence agency of Pakistan.

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different portions of the mujahedin. Later, the Taliban<sup>13</sup> took most of the country's territories, yet with no precise war closure. The 9/11 attacks marked the United States return into Afghanistan (128). The United States continuation for providing arms to some fractions in Afghanistan, even after the Soviet Union had withdrawn from the area, may suggest that the U.S. did not only intend to kick the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan.

### 3.1.2. The War after 9/11

On September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorists hijacked three airplanes and attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon. On September 20, President Bush condemned Al Qaeda<sup>14</sup>, with its leader Osama Bin Laden, as the masterminds of the attacks. In his speech, Bush launched the campaign "the war on terror", in which he stated that the United States would go after terrorists and those who aid them. Following that, the Bush administration asked the Taliban in Afghanistan to turn Bin Laden in. The Taliban refused; thus, Afghanistan became the United States target (Anderson 54-55).

Anderson notes that three days after the attacks, the Senate and the House voted with the vast majority to allow the president to take the necessary actions to respond to the attacks. On September 17, Bush and his security team orchestrated a plan for the war. In addition, Bush authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to carry on different secret operations to find, defeat, and even kill Al Qaeda terrorists. With the assistance of twenty-five nations, the United States organized an attack on both Al Qaeda and the Taliban (57).

At first, the administration feared to act militarily in Afghanistan, for previous experiences of other powerful nations were considered the worst; Britain and the Soviet Union,

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<sup>13</sup> **The Taliban:** a fundamentalist Islamic militia in Afghanistan.

<sup>14</sup> **Al Qaeda:** a transnational extremist Salafist militant organization.

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at the peak of their military powers, witnessed big failure in the soil of Afghanistan. Some officials in the United States doubted that the 9/11 attacks were some sort of incitement from the Afghans so that the United States would invade Afghanistan. Therefore, the U.S. put much effort in having military advantages. The invasion of Afghanistan by the U.S. was marked by Operation Enduring Freedom (Lansford 41).

According to Lebovic, after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration decided, without proper evaluation of the situation, to depend on military invasion (119). Lebovic states, “Once engaged, the administration defined the U.S. mission in Afghanistan broadly to include military training, stabilization, and development” (119). This, according to Lebovic, proved to be far from realizing, given the reality of the situation (119).

The fact that the United States fought two different wars in the same country, taking two extremely opposite stands, is contradictory. In thirty years, the U.S. fought in favor of Afghanistan, yet 30 years later, it invaded Afghanistan. Additionally, the U.S. mission of training, stabilization, and development was proven to be just a reason to invade Afghanistan. For the purpose of analyzing, even if the U.S. mission in Afghanistan was as claimed, it is not the United States' decision whether Afghanistan requires assistance or not.

Through the presented data, one may conclude that a response and an action against the 9/11 attacks by the United States might be justified; however, the invasion itself had, to a large extent, no founded grounds whatsoever, which was manifested in the reluctance of some officials within the United States government.

### **3.2. The Cost of the Afghanistan War**

In his report, *The Afghan War: Key Developments and Metrics*, Anthony H. Cordesman, notes that the United States Government has failed to provide official data about the exact cost of its wars, and Afghanistan is no exception (4). According to the Reality Check Team of BBC

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News, and depending on official data from the U.S. Department of Defense, the military spending in Afghanistan reached 778 billion dollars. This amount of money was mainly devoted to the different U.S. troops' needs. Additionally, 44 billion dollars were allocated to reconstruction projects. Moreover, 86 billion dollars were spent on developing the Afghan forces. Nevertheless, Brown University claims that the data presented by the government are lower than the actual funds, and that Congress allocated one trillion dollars to fund the war (BBC News).

According to Kimberly Amadeo, who is an economic analyst, the Afghanistan War is the second expensive war for the United States after the Second World War. Up until 2019, the war had cost the U.S. a total of 975 billion dollars, without considering the enhancement of the budget of both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. For instance, “the budget of the Department of Defense has increased by about 250 million dollars, while the budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs has increased by more than 50 billion dollars” (Amadeo). Amadeo provides research done by Brown University concerning the Department of Defense's allocated budget to overseas contingency operations<sup>15</sup> (see table 4).

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<sup>15</sup> **overseas contingency operation:** a separate pot of funding operated by the Department of Defense and the State Department, in addition to their "base" budgets.

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Table 4

The Funding of Overseas Contingency Operations (in billions of dollars) in Afghanistan by the United States from 2001 to 2019

<b>Year</b>	<b>Spending</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Spending</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>94</b>		

Source: Amadeo, Kimberly. “The Ongoing Costs of the Afghanistan War.” *The Balance*, 8 Apr. 2020, [www.thebalance.com/cost-of-afghanistan-war-timeline-economic-impact-4122493](http://www.thebalance.com/cost-of-afghanistan-war-timeline-economic-impact-4122493).

The table shows that the allocated budget has increased over the years to reach its peak in 2011, then it went up and down after that.

Rod Nordland, a journalist in the New York Times, notes that over 18 years, the United States spent more than 2 trillion dollars on the Afghanistan War. She also sheds light on the human casualties of 2,400 American soldiers and more than 38,000 Afghan civilians dead. 1.5 trillion dollars was allocated to wage the war; however, this amount is still non-transparent. Ten

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billion was devoted to eradicate narcotics, yet the fight against narcotics failed, as Afghanistan provides the world with 80 percent of opium. Interestingly, before the war, Afghanistan was about to end the opium industry and distribution. Moreover, 87 billion dollars was spent on improving the Afghan military and police forces. Furthermore, 24 billion dollars was allocated to develop Afghanistan's economy. Following that, 30 billion dollars was spent on reconstruction projects; nevertheless, 15.5 billion dollars went into waste because of corruption (Nordland). The conflicting data about the budget of the Afghan war imply that perhaps it was the Department of Defense's aim to hide such data. The disappearance of a large amount of money raises the question: Where did all that money go?

### 3.3. The U.S. Military-Industrial Complex in Afghanistan

George C. Lovewine, in his book *Outsourcing the Global War on Terrorism: Private Military Companies and American Intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan*, notes that since the war started, the United States has conducted several combat operations in Afghanistan, which means that the U.S. military needed different types of resources and support. The United States government, and the Department of Defense, in particular, started relying on private contractors to provide assistance. Lovewine asserts that private companies are likely to impact the U.S. aims and goals in the country (ix).

According to Fortaine and Nagl, there are three categories of private contractors: private security contractors, private military contractors, and reconstruction and support contractors. These three types of contractors can be put in a single category: expeditionary stabilization and reconstruction contractors. The term encompasses the stages that these companies operate upon. It starts with providing assistance to the military during and after armed operations. Then, the contractors help in preserving stability. After that, contractors have the responsibility to reconstruct what was demolished (7). Private contractors became so involved that they provide

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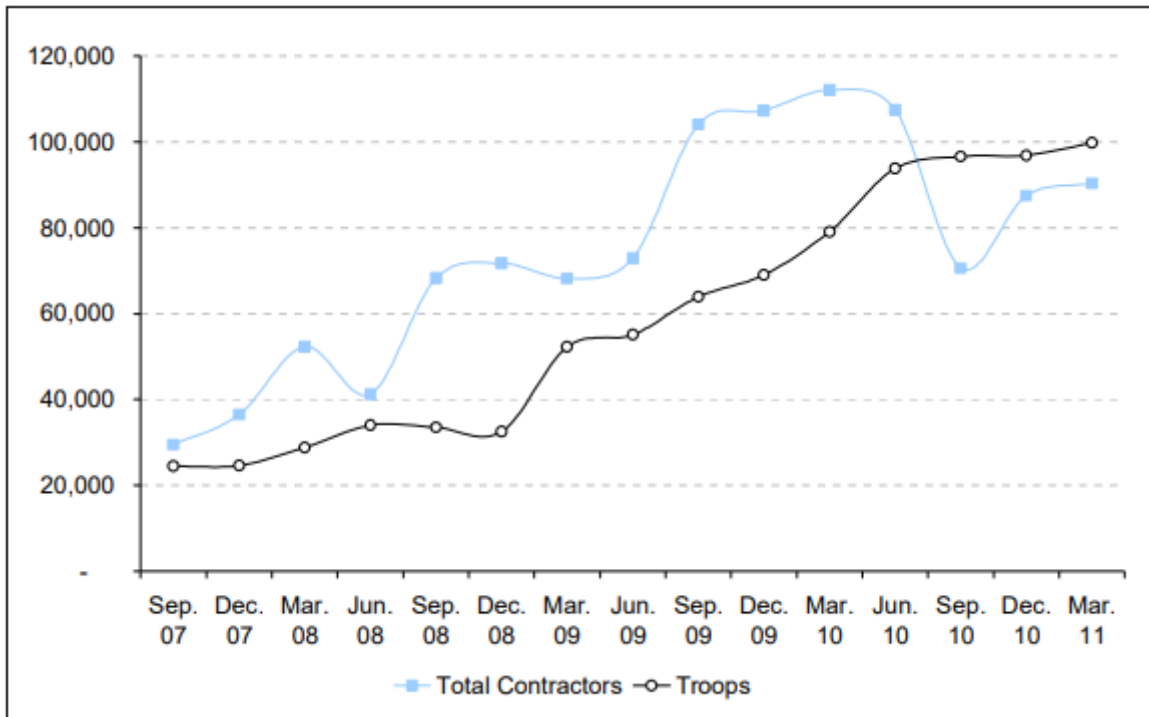
all types of assistance from the beginning of the war until its end. The massive development in the private sector through time implies that this industry, being present at wars, is lucrative.

### **3.3.1. Contractors in Afghanistan**

As mentioned before, the United States became more and more dependent on private contractors' different types of services. In 2008, the Department of defense's contractors represented 68 percent of the United States' troops in Afghanistan. Then, in 2010, there were 90,339 contractors and 99,800 uniformed personnel (Schwartz and Swain 9). Fortaine and Nagl show the increase of the number of private contractors and the complexity of the services provided. For example, in the Gulf War, the ratio of contractor to soldier was 1:60, and the services provided were simple, like providing food and laundry. However, in the Afghanistan War, for each soldier, there was a contractor. Besides, the services developed to include transportation, maintenance, construction, and security (9). Figure 1 shows how the number of private contractors exceeded uniformed military personnel in Afghanistan.

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Figure 1. Number of Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan vs. Troop Levels



Source: Schwartz, Moshe, and Joyprada Swain. *Department of Defense Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq: Background and Analysis* (CRS Report No. R40764). Retrieved from Congressional Research Service: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40764.pdf>, pp. 10.

The figure shows that from 2007 until the end of 2010, the number of private contractors was more than the actual uniformed troops. This shows the over-reliance on private contractors by the U.S. in Afghanistan.

Private contractors in Afghanistan vary. In 2011, near 90,000 private contractors were operating in Afghanistan. 23 percent were Americans, 26 percent were from third-world countries, and 51 percent were Afghans. These contractors provided mainly logistics, construction, linguistic services, and transportation; however, the Department of Defense reports only some services, while anonymous services are not reported. (Schwartz and Swain 10-11).

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Hiring mostly Afghans and third-world countries contractors may imply to the policy of minimizing employees' salaries while maximizing corporates' profits margins. Evidently, this has been proven to be true. Moreover, the decision of the Department of Defense to not report some private contractors' services raises some ambiguity about the matter.

### **3.3.2. Private Contractors Misconduct and Abuse**

Private corporations are profit-driven organizations. This means that all they care about is winning profitable contracts, which indicates that they can provide services to both governments and rebels. This also implies that these corporations do not always represent the values of their clients (Cimini 4). According to Schwartz and Swain, the mismanagement of private contractors can lead to a lack of assistance to military troops and corruption. The Secretary of Defense, Roberts Gates stated in 2009:

Without any supervision or without any coherent strategy on how we were going to do it and without conscious decisions about what we will allow contractors to do and what we will not allow contractors to do... We have not thought holistically or coherently about our use of contractors, particularly when it comes to combat environments or combat training. (qtd. in Schwartz and Swain 3)

This statement shows that the government failed in controlling private contractor. This means that contractors can do whatever they want without supervision. This is evidently true. According to Lovewine, ArmorGroup, which is a private firm, was awarded a contract to secure an airbase in Afghanistan. In order to keep its employees' income low and at the same time increasing its profit, ArmorGroup hired Afghan warlords, who in return hired Afghan

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personnel, because their salaries were low. Investigations revealed that there were relationships between the warlords, the Taliban and Al Qaeda. In other words, ArmorGroup was financing a group of people who were fighting against the United States (36). This is just an example of private companies' misconduct in Afghanistan. It proves that private companies, if not supervised and appropriately guided, which is actually the case based on the presented data, can perform operations that could harm and influence their employers.

In the grand perspective of the matter, from 2005 to 2010, the Department of Defense spent 33.9 billion dollars on contractors operating in Afghanistan and the surrounding countries. In 2010 alone, the Department of Defense allocated 11.8 billion dollars to contractors that conducted operations in the area (Schwartz and Swain 13).

The Pentagon's Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, which helped giving companies contracts to conduct construction projects in Afghanistan, was put off work due to the incompleteness of its projects. Indeed, more than 675 million dollars' worth of contracts was allocated. More than half was not used on the planned projects. Besides, only 22 percent of the 316.3 million dollars allocated to direct support did not meet the expectations (Clark).

Private companies proved to be a useful asset to the United States, especially to its military. However, these private companies became so involved that they started conducting operations that were supposed to be the government's responsibility. As a result, the government will be held accountable for the action of private companies. It is also apparent that several private companies' actions are suspicious, which shows the government's weakness in managing these private companies. This, along with the pursuit of more profits by corporations, without implementing any proper plans to achieve expectations, resulted in professional negligence by employees to acquire more profitable contracts (Lovewine 149).

The data presented prove that private contractors were wasting the government's money, and thus threatening the accomplishments of the government's aims in Afghanistan. It is also a

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proof that private contractors are out of control, since the government, and the Department of Defense, in particular, failed to control and restrain private contractors. Nevertheless, the question is: Knowing the actions and misconducts of private contractors, why didn't the U.S. government stop them from operating?

### **3.3.3. Oil and Drugs in Afghanistan**

The U.S. Army, in a way, functions mainly because there exist conflicts and threats to the American national interest (Cimini 4). In addition, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski point to the fact that private contractors stay in business because there are threats toward a potential employer (qtd. in Cimini 4). In his book *Drugs, Oil, and War*, Peter Dale Scott notes that from 1961 to 2002, the United States were involved in four wars: The Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, the Colombian War, and the Afghanistan War. All of which were in areas where oil was produced. Moreover, in these wars, the U.S. depended on representatives who were drug traffickers. The U.S. fully supported these drug traffickers by all means possible. This contributed to the universal drug trafficking, which is obviously illegal (27).

#### **3.3.3.1. Oil**

The United States showed increased interest, commitment, and domination on oil with time. This was due to two main reasons: to procure its oil needs and to prevent it from passing to anyone else. Generally, the U.S. interventions are usually justified by the interest in oil (Scott 28). When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan Newsweek wrote: "Control of Afghanistan would put the Russians within 350 miles of the Arabian Sea, the oil lifeline of the West and Japan" (qtd. in Scott 30). Indeed, in 1997, Sheila Heslin told Congress that the United States aimed at ending the Soviet Union's oil's domination (qtd. in Scott 31). This proves that the

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United States had long been interested in the area's oil, fearing that it would be occupied by another nation, which would threaten its interest in the region.

According to Alex Jones, Central Asia is the second largest oil reserve in the world, with Afghanistan being the center of this reserve. It was almost not exploited. In 1997, representatives of the Taliban met officials from Halliburton and Unicol in order to agree on a deal that would allow Halliburton to construct a pipeline in Afghanistan. It is important to note that the chief executive officer of Halliburton was Dick Cheney, who was the vice president of the United States. In addition, in 2002, a corporation named World Bank declared that it would sponsor the installation of another pipeline in Afghanistan. (47).

Zbigniew Brzezinski, an ex-security advisor, explicitly stated that the region is vital to the United States because of its resources, mainly oil and gas. He further pointed to the fact that these resources would be even more critical when there will be an increase in demand for them (Scott 30). An article published by the Foreign Military Studies Office of Fort Leavenworth stated:

The Caspian Sea appears to be sitting on yet another sea-a sea of hydrocarbons. Western oilmen flocking to the area have signed multibillion-dollar deals. U.S. firms are well-represented in the negotiations, and where U.S. business goes, U.S. national interests follow. . . . The presence of these oil reserves and the possibility of their export raises new strategic concerns for the United States . . . As oil companies build oil pipelines from the Caucasus and Central Asia to supply Japan and the West, these strategic concerns gain military implications. . . . The uninterrupted supply of oil to global markets will continue to be a key factor in international stability. (qtd. in Scott 31)

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This supports the idea that the interest in oil was the main reason why the United States wanted to preserve the region, especially Afghanistan. The excerpt shows that private companies agreed on billions of dollars' worth of contracts to extract oil from the region. It is also obvious that it was expected to witness a military intervention in the region. It was only a matter of time.

As a matter of fact, several American oil companies were part of a private Foreign Oil Companies group in order to pressure the government to pass laws, so that these companies could be active in the region. A former Central Intelligence Agency official claimed that the mentioned group was a cartel of oil companies that functioned in the Caspian. He further claims that the Deputy National Security Advisor received 90.000 dollars' worth of stocks in a major oil company (Scott 31).

### **3.3.3.2 Drugs**

According to Jones, the Bin Laden and the Bush family have strong ties, for they are the major shareholders of the Carlyle Group, which is a private corporation. The two families were profiting billions of dollars from the war in Afghanistan. To support this, Jones asserts that the Carlyle Group value was increasing, whereas all major companies' values in all branches were decreasing (46).

Just when the United States started growing interest in Afghanistan, the latter was the world's biggest heroin provider. There was proof that Al Qaeda managed to finance itself mainly by drug trafficking. For instance, Bin Laden used drug money profits to finance his campaign. Interestingly, this evidence was buried. The United States used its allies as drug traffickers agents in order to defeat the Taliban (Scott 32). By that time, the Taliban banned opium production in Afghanistan, so the only producers of opium were the United States' allies,

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whom they occupied some opium-planting areas. It is fair to say that the United States' invasion of Afghanistan was followed by the availability of opium in the global market (33).

The United States, as stated previously, spent much money on fighting narcotics in Afghanistan; nevertheless, it is clear that once present in Afghanistan, the United States used drugs to finance a war against the Taliban. This is, in no small extent, a contradictory and therefore a misleading approach. Moreover, through simple analysis, one can deduce that the United States "war on drugs" was only to cut the Taliban's most significant source of money.

Another example of the United States' policy of using drugs is Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was a drug trafficker. Between 1979 and 1991, he was contracted by the Central Intelligence Agency to support the mujahedin by drug trafficking (Scott 27). The money gained from drugs' profits was used to assist the mujahedin. Scott notes that Hekmatyar became one of the most important heroin trafficker in the world, thanks to the United States (27).

As discussed previously, the United States provided Pakistan with different types of support, and in return, Pakistan provided assistance to rebel in Afghanistan. Scott notes that the cultivation of heroin in Afghanistan increased from 400 tons in 1971 to 1,200 tons in 1978. This took place at the same time Pakistan was funding rebels in Afghanistan (40). This suggests that there is a possibility that the United States increased the heroin's production, and the profits were allocated to arm the rebels through Pakistan.

#### **Conclusion:**

The presented data show that the relationship between the U.S. government and private contractors is quite complicated. However, this has not made the government stop the function of private contractors. In fact, the government has relied on them more and more. This is possibly due to the fact that both the government and private contractors win. As discussed in the chapter, the Afghanistan War started mainly because the United States was and still is

### **Chapter 3: The Military-Industrial Complex in Afghanistan.**

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interested in the region. The war cost the United States a large amount of money; however, the resources in Afghanistan recuperated the losses. A lot of the money provided to private contractors by the U.S. government was lost. This indicates corruption and misconduct among private contractors, who proved that they are only interested in profits.

# **General Conclusion**

This study aimed at manifesting how the military-industrial complex operates, while it causes conflicts and wars across the world, which is considered an illegal act both locally and globally. This study also aimed at showing and analyzing the ostensible and the hidden roles of the military-industrial complex. Moreover, this study aimed at providing and illustrating how the military-industrial complex has operated in Afghanistan.

Based on the data presented, the main objective of the military-industrial complex is to provoke wars and conflicts, for they assure the military and the industries a large margin of profits. The military-industrial complex achieves this goal by neglecting and stepping over national and international laws, affecting the United States' policy-making.

In its simple form and explanation, the military-industrial complex is mainly the informal alliance of the military and certain industries. As claimed, the military cannot cover all its needs, so it depends on several different industries that provide a wide range of services. The military, when in need, offers generous contracts to private contractors.

The military-industrial complex functions from the inside of the government. Its employees are rooted in the most important political branches of the United States. Congress members, Pentagon officials, and private contractors ally in order to create a circle of influence. Laws passed in favor of private contractors, campaign contributions, and government contracts are all to be assured during the process.

Although the collaboration between Congress members, Pentagon officials, and private contractors is not illegal, one can deduce that it is unethical. The military-industrial complex has shown several incidents of corruption and misconduct. For instance, in Afghanistan, private contractors, at some point, did not abide by the contracts' principles. Additionally, the military-industrial complex overstepped many laws in its way to achieve its objectives. As a result, private contractors have become more powerful than the government itself.

The military-industrial complex is probably worse than better. Even some government officials are aware of that; however, it still functions uninterrupted. As a matter of fact, it is getting more powerful. This is due to the profits it offers to the military, to the government, and to the industries. Lucrative contracts and foreign countries' resources are the main motivations for the military-industrial complex's agents.

The military-industrial complex impacts the United States in two different extremes. It is positive for the government itself, as it gives the government new territories to explore, to exploit, and to benefit from. This gives the government the access to other lands' resources. Nevertheless, the military-industrial complex harms Americans, for they fund non-stopping conflicts through taxes, while the money can be used to improve many broken systems in America.

Internationally, the United States' military-industrial complex does not cause much harm to first tier countries, especially the U.S allies. However, third-world countries, especially the ones with high-value resources, are in a constant danger and threat. Iraq and Afghanistan are perfect examples of this act.

This study has tried to examine the United States military and its alliance with different industries, and explore their relationship in regard to conflicts. The complexity of the military-industrial complex prevents us from giving a clear and direct definition. It emerged so that industries, especially the arms industry, would provide the military with different services. However, it gained much power and dominance. Based on qualitative analysis of the data presented, it can be concluded that the United States military and private contractors, to a large extent, cause conflicts across the world, while influencing local and foreign policymaking. It is quite hard to assume that the military-industrial complex aims to do more good than harm, especially when its actions prove otherwise.

Observing the evolution of the military-industrial complex shows that it goes beyond any other organization. Indeed, at some periods of history, it proved to be even more robust, more solid, and more powerful than other governments. When judging a specific matter, one usually evaluates its pros and cons. The military-industrial complex indeed has a few positive aspects; nevertheless, its negatives and misconducts almost overshadow its good sides. Therefore, the evidence largely indicates that the military-industrial complex is mostly evil. As most corrupt organizations, the military-industrial complex disguises under the cover of serving the best interest of governments, while at the same time breaches and violates international laws and regulations, besides the fact of totally neglecting human rights. The agents of the military-industrial complex aim to create a world full of conflicts. In other words, the military-industrial complex's main objective is to provoke conflicts and wars, increase military spending, and outsourcing. Consequently, both the military and industries profit greatly.

If more people put the military-industrial complex into question, they would discover its dangers. People should understand the power of the military-industrial complex and its consequences on the world, as it grows more powerful and dangerous. Having enough knowledge about the matter may lead to the eradication of the military-industrial complex, or at least placing it in an enfeebled state. Otherwise, its existence may lead to the non-stopping war status that the world has been in for a long time. Further in-depth research examining the military-industrial complex in other contexts are advised.

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