

Enhancing Synergy in R&D Towards a Robust Military Industrial Complex in Nigeria

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Abstract

The military–industrial complex (MIC) is a phrase originally coined by U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower to describe the relationship between the military and the defense industry that supplies it with weapons, equipment, and services. The recent admonition by Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo that the Nigerian military should revitalize its capacity to manufacture arms and ammunition is both a wake-up call and a sad reminder of how the country has misplaced its priorities and missed opportunities to achieve greatness. In the context of current security challenges and the “arms race” it has provoked, and the state of the national and global economy, this resonates. Without further delay, Nigeria must radically restructure its crawling military industrial sub-sector to meet domestic demand and for export. This will require according to the Vice President a complete overhaul and massive private sector investment in the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria and in start-ups, with the objectives of reducing dependence on foreign armaments, building a regional and global arms manufacturing and export hub, and promoting skills acquisition, technology and innovation, and creating jobs.

Originally, the military-industrial complex referred to the nexus of defense contractors and policymakers that existed in the USA during the early cold war, but it has since been applied to similar arrangements in other countries like Nigeria and time periods. The phrase implies a commonality of interest and action between MIC actors that influences public policy, and it is often applied in a critical or pejorative sense. Conceptually, it is closely related to the ideas of the iron triangle (the three-sided relationship between Congress, the executive

branch bureaucracy, and interest groups) and the defense industrial base (the network of organizations, facilities, and resources that supplies governments with defense-related goods and services).[1][2]

At the 32nd convocation of the Nigerian Defence Academy, Osinbajo rightly pointed out that with Nigeria's size, population, current security challenges and threats to its citizenry and sovereignty, it is "absolutely imperative that we build our indigenous national defence capabilities. This means revitalizing our local military-industrial complex and investing in the local capacity to manufacture armaments."

Attempts to conceptualize something similar to a modern "military-industrial complex" did exist before 1961, as the underlying phenomenon described by the term is generally agreed to have emerged during or shortly after World War II [3][4]. For example, a similar phrase was used in a 1947 Foreign Affairs article in a sense close to that it would later acquire, and sociologist C. Wright Mills contended in his 1956 book *The Power Elite* that a democratically unaccountable class of military, business, and political leaders with convergent interests exercised the preponderance of power in the contemporary West.[5][6][7] Some sociologists have also connected it to Harold Lasswell's concept of the "garrison state" and James Burnham's notion of the "managerial revolution." [8]

With emerging global threats, shifting alliances and disruptions to international trade, wise nations do not totally rely on imported armaments for their internal and external security. Besides, it is established that military investment drives innovation and IT, and economic development. During the early 1980s, the military-industrial complex accounted for 28.9 percent of all Research and Development spending in the United States. In Israel, over 150 firms are engaged in the defence industrial sector, and they export 70 percent of their products.

Nigeria, today relies on others for basic equipment and weapons and ammunition from a multiplicity of countries. Police, military, and other paramilitary units have the standard foreign-made Ak-47 assault rifles; and tanks, armoured vehicles, tanks, artillery to ships and airplanes are imported. This also creates dependence on others for parts, ammunition, and technical expertise.

U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower originally coined the term in his Farewell Address to the Nation on January 17, 1961:[3]. The phrase was thought to have been "war-based" industrial complex before becoming "military" in later drafts of Eisenhower's speech, a claim passed on only by oral history.[4] Geoffrey Perret, in his biography of Eisenhower,

claims that, in one draft of the speech, the phrase was "military–industrial–congressional complex", indicating the essential role that the United States Congress plays in the propagation of the military industry, but the word "congressional" was dropped from the final version to appease the then-currently elected officials.[5] James Ledbetter calls this a "stubborn misconception" not supported by any evidence; likewise a claim by Douglas Brinkley that it was originally "military–industrial–scientific complex".[5][6] Additionally, Henry Giroux claims that it was originally "military–industrial–academic complex".[7] The actual authors of the speech were Eisenhower's speechwriters Ralph E. Williams and Malcolm Moos.[8]

The MIC and the Cold War

Attempts to conceptualize something similar to a modern "military–industrial complex" did exist before 1961, as the underlying phenomenon described by the term is generally agreed to have emerged during or shortly after World War II [10]. For example, a similar phrase was used in a 1947 Foreign Affairs article in a sense close to that it would later acquire, and sociologist C. Wright Mills contended in his 1956 book *The Power Elite* that a democratically unaccountable class of military, business, and political leaders with convergent interests exercised the preponderance of power in the contemporary West.[5][11][12] Some sociologists have also connected it to Harold Lasswell's concept of the "garrison state" and James Burnham's notion of the "managerial revolution." [13]

However, following its coinage in Eisenhower's address, the MIC became a staple of American political and sociological discourse. Many Vietnam War–era activists and polemicists, such as Seymour Melman and Noam Chomsky employed the concept in their criticism of U.S. foreign policy, while other academics and policymakers found it to be a useful analytical framework.

India, Brazil, Turkey, Iran and others succeeded by the persistent pursuit of long-term policies and objectives, irrespective of administration, or external and internal political and economic trajectories. In September, India launched its first home-built aircraft carrier, in addition to other milestones. Singapore's domestic arms industry started in 1967 is recognized globally despite focusing on small and mid-range armaments

The MIC was often advanced as both a symptom and a cause of broader dynamics such as militarism, economic centralization, and the influence

of the private sector over public policy. Writing in 1968, for example, one economist argued that, in the case of the MIC:

Government not only permits and facilitates the entrenchment of private power but serves as its fountain-head. It creates and institutionalizes power concentrations which tend to breed on themselves and to defy public control... Lacking a network of government-owned arsenals, such as produced the shot and cannon in the days of American innocence, or having dismantled the arsenals it did have, the government is forced to buy what it no longer can make. It becomes a monopsonistic buyer of products which are not yet designed or for which production experience is lacking. It buys at prices for which there is little precedent and hardly any yardsticks. It deals with contractors, a large percentage of whose business is locked into supplying defense, space, or atomic energy needs. It confronts powerful oligopolists in a market where technical capability rather than price is the controlling variable in an atmosphere shrouded by multilateral uncertainty and constant warnings about imminent aggression.[14]

Although the MIC was bound up in its origins with the bipolar international environment of the Cold War, some contended that the MIC might endure under different geopolitical conditions (for example, George F. Kennan wrote in 1987 that "were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial complex would have to remain, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented").[15] The collapse of the USSR and the resultant decrease in global military spending (the so-called 'peace dividend') did in fact lead to decreases in defense industrial output and consolidation among major arms producers, although global expenditures rose again following the September 11 terror attacks and the ensuing global war global war terror, as well as the more recent increase in geopolitical tensions associated with strategic competition between the United States, Russia, and China [16]. Through to the present, the military-industrial complex has continued to be seen by many as an analytically sound and important concept.

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