

Measuring the influence of think tanks and the military industrial complex on US foreign policy (Comparative study).After 9/2001

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الملخص:

تناقش الدراسة دور الفواعل غير الحكومية في السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، في مقارنة بين تأثير "رأس المال العلمي" مع "رأس المال المالي"، اذ بعد الحرب الباردة، أتيحت الفرصة للاعبين سوسيو-سياسيين مثل المنظمات غير الحكومية، وجماعات الضغط، هذه الجماعات اكتسبت فرصة كبيرة لتكون جزءا من عملية صنع القرار وصنع السياسات العامة للدولة، فضلا عن الانخراط في النقاش العام بشأن الأمن والتعليم والقانون والاقتصاد، الدراسة تبرز دور اثنين من الجهات الفاعلة غير الحكومية الرئيسية في صنع السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة إلا وهما المركب الصناعي العسكري ومراكز الأبحاث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياسة الخارجية - المركب الصناعي العسكري - مراكز الأبحاث - الإنفاق العسكري.

Introduction:

After the globalization era, the world is affronting a huge complex relations, interference, and interactions, in which the environment is characterized by danger and opportunity. The genre of the Nation-State has shifted and policy making process has given the opportunity to other socio-political players to be more interacted and influential, those socio political players are NGOs , Think tanks, lobby groups... those groups gained a great opportunity to be part of decision making process, engaging in the public debate concerning security, education, law, economy..etc this study highlights the role of two major non-governmental actors in the US foreign policy making.

The US foreign policy has been affected by different governmental and non-governmental actors, which compete with each other in order to have a deep influence on US decision making regarding different issues in different regions. Therefore, the US foreign policy reflects the interests of many actors; this study focuses on two main actors, which are the think tanks and the military industrial complex, because for a long time these two actors tried to influence the US foreign policy by various means and mechanisms. Moreover, each of them has distinct mechanisms and varying degrees of influence, therefore, the study aims to identify and to measure the power of think tanks and the military industrial complex on this process.

The problematic question: To what extent non-government actors are influential in the US foreign policy?

The theoretical framework: The study adopts two theories Structural Marxist and constructivism theory

- The structural Marxist theory: The study focuses on the Marxist theory to explain the role of military industry complex in US foreign policy, through the elite power theory that focuses on the relationship between the capitalist class and the state instrumental. In addition, Marxists inspected the competition between capitalist groups for influence on foreign policy process, or what is called the **permanent arms economy**, in order to explain the dependence of US state and military spending.¹
- The constructivism theory: The study adopts **the constructivism theory** to analyze the influence of think tanks on US foreign policy,

¹ Ronald W. Cox, **The Military-Industrial Complex and US Military Spending After 9/11**, Class, Race and Corporate Power, vol.2(2014).

through measuring the ideas effect on foreign policy, and how these ideas are translated into political behavior.

The outlines:

***Introduction** (problematic question, theoretical framework).

1 - The-conceptual framework of study:

- The definition of foreign policy.
- The definition of Think tanks.
- The definition of military industrial complex.

2 - The importance of Military industry complex and think tanks in the US.

- The importance of think tanks in the US.
- The importance of military industry complex in the US.

3 - How the think tanks and military industry complex influence the US foreign policy.

- The influence of think tanks in the US foreign policy.
- The influence of military industry complex in the US foreign policy.

***Conclusion.**

1 - The-conceptual framework. (The definition of foreign policy, Think tanks, military industrial complex)

1. The definition of foreign policy:

Foreign policy is a behavioral type that states adopt to manage foreign and diplomatic relations with other states in the international system. It is explained according to well-defined national interests. There is a harmony among different foreign policy scholars that state's policies turned around

national interests, which are to be reached by putting in application several tools and policies, it could be coercive or peaceful. These national interests have different faces like protection of territory, economic development...etc.¹

Many scholars gave a different definition for foreign policy concept one of them is **William Wallace**, defined foreign policy as “**a stable set of attitude towards the international environment, an implicit or explicit plan about a country’s relationship with outside world**”. Furthermore, it is defined by k.Hoslti “**as a behavioral pattern of a state which is adopted to respond the international environment in which a state exists**”².

2 . The definition of military industry complex:

The term military industry complex was adapted by U.S. president **Dwight D. Eisenhower** (1890–1969) on January 17, 1961, in which he alerts the American people against “the possession of unjustified influence, by the complex” and the threat it poses to democracy.³

The MIC is an informal phrase used to describe the good relationship that can develop between government entities (namely defense) and defense minded manufactures/organization, which can increase benefits from both sides.⁴

3. The definition of think tanks:

¹ Sadia Mushtaq, Conceptualization of Foreign Policy An Analytical Analysis, **Berkeley Journal of Social Science** Vol.3,(Spring 2013)

<http://www.berkeleyjournalofsocialsciences.com/spring4.pdf> visited on 14-12-2016.

²Loc.cit.

³ Encyclopedia of Science, **Technology, and Ethics**, MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX,

http://www.gpisd.org/cms/lib01/TX01001872/Centricity/Domain/1156/Military-Industrial_Complex%202.PDF visited on 14-12-2016.

⁴What is the Military-Industrial Complex?<http://www.militaryindustrialcomplex.com/what-is-the-military-industrial-complex.asp> visited on 13-12-2016.

A Think Tank (or policy institute, research institute etc) is an organization which implements research and support different topics like social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology, and culture, think tanks are non-profit organizations, on the other hand other think tanks are funded by governments, advocacy groups or businesses.¹

The term „think tank comes from the U.S. - based RAND Corporation, which worked as a locked and ensures an environment for U.S strategic thinking after World War II. Common usage after 1960s for a group of scholars who promises thick study of important policy issues.²

UNDP also gave a definition for the think tanks, organizations engaged on a systematic basis in research and support for any problem related to public policy. They (think tanks) are the bridge and the link between knowledge and power in modern democracies³.

2 - the importance of the military industry complex and think tanks in the US

***The importance of Military industry complex in the US:**

- **The amounts of military spending:** The US citizens depend on the MIC due to the massive amounts and spending of it, this dependency creates an economic reliance, thus the citizens who might be totally against militarism on philosophical or ideological grounds often find themselves supporting domestic military spending.⁴

¹ Think tank organization by category, https://careers.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/971131/Think_Tank_Orgs_by_category.pdf visited on 15-12-2016.

² Think tank organization by category, **op.cit.**

³ Martin Thunert, Organization/Structure of Think Tanks, Heidelberg Center for American Studies Heidelberg University, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_14157-544-1-30.pdf visited on 16-12-2016.

⁴**Loc.cit.**

- **The implication of MIC in domestic issues:** One of the major privileges of MIC is the rising power and influence at the expense of representational governments. Furthermore, the damaging penetration of military ways into civilian affairs led slowly to restrict civil liberties and influence the national policies on both the domestic and the international affairs. Thus, the rising political marriage between civil authorities and MIC effected the division of responsibilities.¹
- **The external threat:** The presence of «threat» push the MIC to maximize its power and to be very important for us security, so the threat will justify the expansion of military spending.
- **The domination by media:** The MIC gives a big importance to Media and its influence on reconstructing the public opinion, The military complex concentrates on news media and entertainment industries generally it utilizes this functional culture-molding for many purposes like justifying, sanitizing.etc., especially in Bush mandate the media played an important role in influencing people views and positions.
- **The civilian military culture:** The MIC has succeeded in penetrating inside the American society through different means. It has systematically encouraged a strong strategy of cultivating militarism into the civilian ways of thinking. This strategy has covered active enlistment of support and collaboration of «**veterans’ organizations, of trade associations and chambers of commerce, of some of the fundamentalist wings of the church, of the news media, of the**

¹Loc.cit.

entertainment industry and of the institutions of education, especially of higher education.”

- **Research and academia:** the IMC is funding many academic institutions, therefore these institutions become dependent to the MIC, many scholars and politicians are against the IMC funding for academic institutions and worried about the rise of the military industrial academic complex.¹

***The importance of think tank in the US:**

The emergence of United States to global leadership and international influence parallels the emergence of modern think tanks and become important for making policies and strategies through different means like:

- **The idea factory(New ideas)** the think tanks today are seen as the producers of ideas, they are able to shift the way of thinking of decision makers and reconstruct a new one, moreover, from the opinion of U.S. policy-makers think tanks provides five principal benefits:
 - Generating new thinking that changes the way that U.S. decision makers understand and respond to the world. It can also change conceptions of U.S. national interests.
 - Effect the ranking of priorities and policies and offer roadmap and plans for action.

¹ Ismail housseinzadeh, political economy of US militarism, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, ed.1(2006).p.25

- It mobilizes political and bureaucratic coalitions and blocs; furthermore, it forms the design of permanent institutions.¹

- **Providing talent and Convening Professionals :(New experts)** think tanks supply a fixed group of experts and scholars and integrate them in the new administrations and on congressional staffs. Think tanks help presidents and cabinet secretaries in choosing experts. For example, Jimmy Carter staffed his administration with numerous individuals from **the Brookings Institution** and the **Council on Foreign Relations**, another example Ronald Reagan. During two terms in office, he drew on 150 individuals from Heritage, the Hoover Institution, and the American Enterprise Institute. Moreover, think tanks help in building consensus and shared understanding among policy makers.²
- **Engaging the public and bridging differences:** think tanks in the US plays an important role in enhancing civic culture through education US citizens and informing them about what is happening in the world. For example, in 1999, the Aspen Institute started a Global Interdependence Initiative, "**a 10-year effort to better inform, and more effectively motivate, public support for forms of U.S. international engagement that are appropriate to an interdependent world.** Furthermore, the think tanks bridge differences by promoting dialogue, participating in preventive diplomacy, suggestion solutions for conflicts for example in the mid-1980s, the Carnegie Endowment arranged a series of meetings in Washington, bringing together leading South

¹Richard N. Haass, **Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Policy-Maker's Perspective**, US department of state, (January.2009) <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/15506.htm>, visited on 18-12-2016.

²Loc,cit.

African businessmen, labors representatives, civil society activists, etc., as well as -members of Congress and executive branch officials. Which lasted more than eight years; it succeeded in bridging differences and establishing the first dialogue in South Africa.¹

For these aims think tanks are using different tools like multiple channels, marketing strategies, publishing articles and books, occasional papers, television debates...etc.

3 - How the think tanks and MIC influence the US foreign policy:

1.The role of think tanks in the US foreign policy after 9/11

The think tanks in the US are trying to develop and improve their means and influence directly and indirectly, through increasing the number of activities and exercises. **Abdelson** defined what a direct and indirect means of think tanks is, he claimed that seminars, meetings, publications are indirect means, but the direct means are about connecting with important politicians, therefore the think tanks are seeking for guarantying the participation in decision-making process. Here, we should underline the fact that the process of bi-directional influence guarantees think tanks the opportunity to participate in decision making, regulating the political agenda and contributing to the main important discussion.²

The most modern genre of think tank to appear in the foreign policy-making community is what some have referred to as “**legacy-based.**” think tanks, like the Carter Center the Washington, D.C.-based Nixon Center for

¹Rechard N. Haass,**op.cit.**

²James G. McGann, **Think Tanks and Policy Advice in The US**, Thank Tanks and Civil Societies Program Foreign Policy Research Institute Philadelphia, Pennsylvania(August, 2005).<http://www.fpri.org/books/think-tanks-and-policy-advice-in-the-us-academics-advisors-and-advocates/> visited on 19-12-2016.

Peace and Freedom, are think tanks established by former presidents' which aim to let an influence on foreign and domestic policy. They use different means to influence the public through holding seminars, a wide range of publications, also writing research in different policy issues areas.¹ Think tanks are considering as “**the business of developing and promoting ideas**”, they consecrate large resources to vending and marketing their product, however, think tanks size success not by profit margins but by how much effect they have in changing and influencing public opinion and policy. Therefore, think tanks resemble pressure groups that compete for each other's seeking for political power and influence.² the think tanks that are most politically influential in shaping U.S. foreign policy have been based in Washington DC for many years, all of them have a significant interest in research, and most also have a public existence many of them are rising and having influence, like the Carnegie Endowment, RAND, and the New York based Council on Foreign Relations.³

Two characteristics of the American foreign affairs think tank is especially important:

- **The mobilization ability:** discussing ideas and policy option through bringing people together with different disciplines like politics, business, and academia, even people from both the administration and Congress. Furthermore, these activities and events are not only organized to share information or to improve the best ideas and thoughts, but they are also prepared to provide support for policies and

¹ Donald E. Abelson, **THINK TANKS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**, Department of Political Science University of Western Ontario, us foreign policy agenda, vol.7.n.3(November.2002).

² **Loc, cit.**

³ Abelson, Donald E., **A capitol idea: think tanks and US foreign policy** (Montreal; Ithaca [New York] : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.), p.207.

to help in setting up a harmony and consensus about the most important topic, moreover they determine differences of viewpoint and what process the United States should pursue.

Therefore, the foreign affairs think tank is described as “**secret weapon.**” It connects people with multiple perspectives and roles in the total U.S. political way, from congress and out of government and from the administration. Where this mix of people ideas interact and work, also it helps to enhance the main element in the making of U.S. foreign policy **managing the bipartisanship**, because when a bipartisan way to a policy can be maintained the policy has a high chance of being achieved both at the domestic and international level.

- **In and out movement:** think tanks provide experts and scholars in many domains changing jobs with counterparts in think tanks, is a basic element in obtaining new ideas into government, and it plays an important role in structuring support and advocacy among leaders and politicians from different public-policy professions concerning the main way for the nation foreign policy. In addition, most people in foreign policy and national security offices had an experience in think tanks despite the position.¹

Sometimes scholars at think tanks aim to become engaged in foreign policy by different ways like accepting cabinet, subcabinet, or other status in the government or working as consultants during presidential elections, or sometimes as transition teams inviting selected policy-makers from the Department of Defense, the State Department, the National Security Council, the CIA, and other intelligence gathering agencies to be part of private workshops and seminars. Also by helping and providing policy-

¹ Robert E. Hunter, **THINK TANKS: HELPING TO SHAPE U.S. FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY**, AN ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1, (2000)

<https://www.ait.org.tw/infousa/zhtw/DOCS/ijpe0300.pdf> visited on 19-12-2016.

makers in Congress, with policy briefs and analysis and important studies on actual foreign policy issues.

The influence of think tanks has emerged as significant and remarkable players in the policy-making community. Furthermore, they have increased in considerable numbers tells us more about the **culture, society, and politics** of the United States than about the range to which these different organizations influence the policy-making issues and particular policy decisions. There is no doubt that think tanks can and have made useful assistance to both foreign and domestic policy.¹

After 9/11, Bush administration refused to establish more open foreign policy making milieu in the white house. Furthermore, the hard and complicated nature of the war on terror has been a major bar for think tanks looking to influence policy at the highest level of government. On the other hand, various think tanks were been capable to participate in public debate and discussion especially about terrorism and national security.

Ivo Daatler and James Lindsay remarked in their study that the capability of think tanks to affect both policymaking and actual policy decisions is related to a multiple factors of which are behind their control and influence. After 9/11, many think tanks scholars became constant figures in the most important television networks and in main paged of America s most famous newspapers, but having influence on the media is only one of the tools think tanks have used in the world of ideas. They also published articles, recommendations, prepared for many conferences, seminaries and workshops, to policy making, therefore they enhance discussion and provide

¹ Donald E. Abelson, THINK TANKS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, Department of Political Science University of Western Ontario, **usforeign policy agenda**, vol.7.n.3(November.2002).

a forum for scholars, journalists and policy makers to interact in order to explore and to develop policy options.¹

The influence of MIC in US foreign policy after 9/11:

Military industry² complex has a strong relationship with key US foreign policy bureaucracies and administrations, particularly the Defense Department, but also with others departments and agencies which use military tools and adopted strategic or tactical deployment of such equipment and tools.

The scope to which military entrepreneur are established within the decision-making framework of clear bureaucracies within the US federal government makes their profit-making margins a function of the political process by which the different administrations and agencies determine long-term strategic threats and national security determinants. Therefore, the most important role of MIC is being a key factor in US foreign policy by being part of the determinant actors of US threats and national security. Furthermore, they are a major actors in strategic planes and development, therefore we can observe the extent to which both MIC and bureaucracies work together to determine threats to US security in a manner that maximizes access to government revenues and tax dollars and in determining US foreign policy options.

. The attacks of 9/11 was another chance for MIC to be involved in foreign policy due to the huge threat of terrorism. The military spending highly increased in the aftermath of the attacks of 9/11, including the

¹[Abelson, Donald E.](#), A capitol idea: **think tanks and US foreign policy** (Montreal; Ithaca [New York] : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.)p.207.

² Ronald W. Cox, **op.cit**

wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US was spending more on its military by 2008 than it did at the height of the Cold War.¹

The U.S. government's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 hugely raised the Pentagon budget, furthermore; it was remarkable that **the nature of the military budget debate** changed; also, the raise in U.S. military spending from 2001 to 2003 was more than the completely military budget of most countries, including main powers like China and UK.² Therefore, the budget of the military does not mean only a financial issue but also the raise of the military actor's role in domestic and foreign policy.

After 9/11, Bush administration adopted a doctrine based on three main aspects, which are:

- The first doctrine is the global **militarization** process, which promoted strong increases in all aspects of military spending and budget it led to a large military intervention in many states.
- The second was a **preventive war approach, which was an explanatory factor of US strikes** on states through connecting the long-term threat posed by these states.
- The third factor is the **rollback strategy**, which pushes to the transformation of rogue states and promotes the structuring of pro-US states.

¹Loc.cit.

² William D. Hartung, The Military-Industrial Complex Revisited: Shifting Patterns of Military Contracting in the Post-9/11 Period, <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2011/The%20Military-Industrial%20Complex%20Revisited.pdf> visited on 20-12-2016.

Conservative and New conservative think tanks were connected with the MIC and played an important role in supporting it. Also, the military spending raised, therefore a growing lobbying network became influential, Post-9/11, military entrepreneur were mainly implicated in working with Defense Department officials to justify, encourage and expand a range of weapons arrangement, and weapons workout. Thus, the MIC influences the foreign policy in order to maximize its benefits from war for example “Rogue Doctrine” they utilized in two wars strategy Afghanistan and Iraq.¹

The US foreign policy became aggressive, and the huge Pentagon appropriations, acceptable to the American people, the military industrial complex works permanently to affect their way of thinking. This policy is adopted to engrave militaristic feeling into the cultural and/or intellectual view of the society. Such values contain aggrandizement and glorification of the military and its ideals, unquestioning loyalty, and fidelity, commitment to faith and tradition.²

We conclude that the military-industrial complex impact has indirect impact on US foreign policy through indirect tools. In addition, structural reasons were behind the influential role of MIC including the high budget, which allows MIC to play a significant role in domestic, and foreign policy due to its size as an actor in US policies. In addition, the good relations with bureaucracies and administration network was another facility for MIC and for the implementation of its strategies.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that the think tanks and the military industry complex have a significant role in US foreign policy. They influence

¹Ronald W. Cox, **op.cit.**

²Ismail hocin Zadeh, **op.cit.**

political choices, decision making and they also interact with each other, and cooperate in order to achieve their main purposes, because think tanks are main weapon in the war of ideas they guaranty the idea support on the other hand the MIC is granting the physical support. Thus, the two actors are important in term of mobilization and polarization.

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