

A Paper Assigned by King Kropf: America

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Abstract

The United States political system is very complicated and convoluted. It is even more difficult to classify the system that the government runs on. There are four theories that the United States is supposedly based on: traditional democracy theory, pluralism, hyper pluralism and elite class theory. Traditional democratic theory is what the United States was originally based on.

However as time went on and corporations snowballed into massive super powers, the elite started to rule the government. They were able to manipulate politicians, the media and even the American people. In this research paper, the relationship between capitalism and democracy, the mass media, and the military-industrial complex are all explored in order to discover the theory in which America is operated. This paper reflects research using various books and articles regarding the relationship between capitalism and democracy.

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Introduction

*Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth.
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
Giving me strength erect against her hate,
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
Yet, as a rebel fronts a king in state,
I stand within her walls with not a shred
Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.*

*Claude McKay
"America"
December, 1921*

The United States of America is advertised as a free country where free enterprise allows people to rise from rags to riches and everyone has a say in the democratic government. The Founding Fathers risked their lives to rebel against the tyrannical British rule for a set of ideals. They wanted to be free politically and economically. They fought for representation in the government so that the people's voice can be heard. No longer can a lone king control and order around his citizens. Instead, the citizens control and vote for their representatives and the laws that Congress put out. After the Revolutionary War, the United States evolved toward its goal of equality and freedom. African Americans and women were allowed to vote. America became a world super power. The United States has become a Mecca for immigrants to pursue the American dream. America has influence all throughout the world, whether it is through popular culture, economics or politics (Kennedy, Cohen, Bailey, 2010). The United States is the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The history of the United States has not always been a pretty story. There was rampant racism and sexism that plagued America since its birth. Economic problems have occurred in cycles throughout the twentieth century and are happening again. The wars that the United States fought in have motives that are often questioned. Corruption and lying is as common in the government as the number of flies on road kill. Even presidents have been caught with scandals, ranging from sabotage to sexual acts. Through all this, the United States has managed to bounce back up into glory and world supremacy (Kennedy, Cohen, Bailey, 2010).

To discover why America has fallen short in many events, one must investigate its government. The government makes all the final decisions that affect the country as a whole. The United States claims to be a true democracy, one where the people have a voice in the government. Unlike monarchical rule, normal citizens elect leaders and vote on laws that their representatives write. But now with major corporations being considered people, this freedom and right to government is being challenged. There are four major theories on what type of government the United States is classified. The four theories are the traditional democratic theory, pluralism, hyper pluralism and the elite class system.

The traditional democratic theory is based on a country governed by the influence of citizens on policy makers. Every citizen has an equal vote no matter how powerful or rich they are. All citizens should be able to participate fully with all the information needed provided the government. Citizens also control the agenda and are included in all government decisions. Democracies are based on majority rule and minority rights. The relationship between the few leaders and many followers is one of representation (Dahl, 1956).

Pluralism focuses on groups of influence vying for power and control. They compete with one another for control over public policy. Bargaining, compromise and trading are all

important parts in a pluralist system. There is no one group with overall power. There are great inequalities in power and wealth but are heavily distributed among the groups. Instead of a hierarchy, the government is a polyarchy where different groups have power on different issues. Pluralism is based on the free market system where politicians compete for voter support just as corporations vie for consumers to buy their product. With the relationship between elected officials and voters the government is neutral in group disputes, much like an umpire or judge (Domhoff, 2005).

Hyper pluralism is pluralism gone haywire. Too many groups with too much power compete with each other. Their competition causes the government to become ineffective and destroys the government's ability to govern. The fragmentation of government leaves the country deadlocked and rigid.

Elite class theory is where modern societies are run by the leaders of gigantic bureaucratically structured organizations, whether those organizations are corporate, nonprofit, or governmental. All societies are divided into socioeconomic classes. That upper wealthy class has much more power than the masses. When that happens and equality fails to exist, the government is not a true democracy (Domhoff, 2005).

The United States is supposed to be a traditional democratic society where the people have a voice and a say in government. However, the greed of people in government jobs and in corporations leaves citizens with a lesser say in politics. When the elected representatives start working for big money corporations instead of the common citizen, democracy has failed. Instead, the government becomes more of an elite class. The elected representatives in order to be in that elite class, work for the top one percent and are rewarded with campaign donations and money. The average citizen still has a voice in government during elections and by writing to

their representatives. But when their votes are bought in order to appease corporations and the elite, the people lose their say. The United States government is a traditional democracy, however the greed of politicians and corporations corrupt this system to be classified as elite class.

Capitalism and Democracy

While the progression of economic ideals, like capitalism and communism, have advanced rapidly, systems of government have developed at a much slower pace and come in few forms; currently they vary from democracies, theocracies, monarchies and dictatorships. These same establishments existed before the rise of capitalism in the fifteenth century during the end of European feudalism and the commencement of the age of exploration. Capitalism emerged in societies around the world over one hundred years before their transition toward democracy. It is only in the United States where both capitalism and democracy started at approximately the same time (Cohen, 2007). However there is a debate on whether democracy can thrive within a capitalistic system in a positive relationship for the people in the United States. In theory both proclaim freedom and participation by the public and therefore should mold well with one another. In spite of this, corruption, selfishness and lust for power cause the government to be counter-productive and stagnant because of enticing economic opportunities that capitalism offers. In addition, the growing power of corporations infringe on the voice of the people and manipulate the government. This is why the capitalist system cannot cooperate with the current American democracy.

Democracy dates back to the time when Greek was a dominant civilization and not in economic peril relying on the Germans to bail them out. The ancient Greeks had successful democratic societies in some city-states. The most notable city-state to run government through

democracy was Athens. The Athenian Assembly, also known as the Ecclesia, was made of all male citizens, met more than forty times each year to debate and decided all public issues. Officials were chosen by their constituents and had terms that were less than one year. Like modern American democracy, political equality, citizen participation, the rule of law, and free and open discussion and debate were all part of Greek democratic practice. American democracy rose during the Enlightenment where liberty and equality were issues that were fought for by political activists. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed a liberal doctrine and called for a democratic revolution.

We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness (Hudson, 2006).

These liberal ideas helped to fuel the Revolutionary War by displaying their want for civil participation, and what the purpose of government should be. After the Revolutionary War, the United States was finally able to set up a democratic style of government that worked through popularly elected assemblies. During the next two centuries, the American government would develop political parties and change the way it operates. Certain branches of government would gain or lose power such as the judiciary branch with gained power with the process of judicial review. The executive branch would face almost no opposition during the reign of Franklin

Delano Roosevelt. The American government, whether it is conservative or liberal, fluctuates as well. The way the government should operate is when voters vote for their representatives who in turn vote in congress to pass or deny bills in the perspective of their constituents.

There are four basic models of American democracy: protective democracy, developmental democracy, pluralist democracy and participatory democracy. Protective and pluralist democracy both promotes liberty and invokes a passive role by citizens. On the other hand, developmental and participatory democracy nurture citizenship and call for active participation. All of these promote political equality. However, the latter two encourage social equality as well. Protective democracy relies on the separation of powers and representations from common citizens. Developmental democracy encourages heavy citizen representation. Pluralists are based on interest group vying for political influence. Finally participatory democracy is based on a more local participation, involving neighborhood assemblies and worker's councils. The United States government is not settled and can any one of these models because of the government's fluidity; at times the government can overlap the models (Hudson, 2006).

Capitalism means private ownership of the means of production, a social class structure of private owners and free wage-earners, and producing commodities meant for sale. To have capitalism, certain criteria must be filled such as a division of labor, a steady supply of laborers, a productive society, having laws that protected private property and a certain tolerance for new ways of making a living. It was only until 1900 that the United States exceeded or matched the economies of industrial capitalist countries around the world (Weinberg, 2003).

Francis Fukuyama, an American political scientist and economist said:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government (Iversen, 2005).

He argues that the failure of communism and the disappearance of the Soviet Union have resulted in liberal democracy and capitalism being the final form of the way to run society (Fukuyama, 1992). This counteracts Marx's view on how communism would be a more advanced economic system. Both, however have their flaws. Capitalist democracies often involves inequality, social spending, redistribution, and the structure of social protection.

According to Wilson and Dilulio, liberty is important in the United States economy yet the American people support government regulation of business to keep them from becoming too powerful. Americans would also rather tolerate economic inequality than political inequality. They are also willing to help those in dire need such as the disabled and elderly but not people who could "take care of themselves" like those on welfare. The core belief in the economic system is individualism and personal responsibility. In 1924, students at an Indiana high school stated, "it is entirely the fault of man himself if he cannot succeed" (Wilson & Dilulio, 2006). This description of the American economy through capitalism is one of competition and survival of the fittest. However there is some sympathy for those who cannot help themselves and for the threat of rise of the uncontrollable power of businesses. With this economy, democracy should be able to work cohesively with capitalism because of its emphasis on liberty and responsibility. Everyone has an equal say and start on the same foot. It is up to the individual to advance themselves in society.

The idea of capitalism seems to go well with liberty and is necessary for political freedom. However, Friedman suggests that:

Clearly it is not a sufficient condition. Fascist Italy and Fascist Spain, Germany at various times in the last seventy years, Japan before World Wars I and II, tzarist Russia in the decades before World War I— are all societies that cannot conceivably be described as politically free. Yet, in each, private enterprise was the dominant form of economic organization (Friedman, 2003).

It is apparent that it is possible to have an economy that is basically capitalist while having a restricted government. This also supports the fact that two ideologically different systems, capitalism and fascism, can work together pretty well as Mussolini suggested. If this can occur, the inverse might happen as well: capitalism and democracy might not work together.

There is an intimate relationship between the economy and the government (Friedman, 2003). This relationship should cooperate: the government regulates business while business increases revenue for itself and the country's economy to support the government. Yet the corruption of government officials is causing the rift between the harmony of capitalism and democracy. Politicians are easily influenced by lobbyists and other sources that give generous donations. In 1935, Senator Hugo Black said:

Contrary to tradition, against the public morals, and hostile to good government, the lobby has reached such a position of power that it threatens government itself. Its size, its power, its capacity for evil, its greed, trickery, deception and fraud condemn it to the death it deserves (Loomis & Cigler, 2002).

Money means power in politics and it undermines the basic power of the public. The representative government of the people that was wanted by the founding fathers is being replaced by a government represented by special interests of the corporations.

According to traditional text, the government of the United States can be best described as a representative democracy. In this democracy there are four basic views that describe the distribution of power: the Marxist view, the power elite view, the bureaucratic view and the pluralist view. Those who see the distribution of power through the Marxist view say that the government is run by capitalists. The power elite view states that the government is run by a few top leaders who are outside the government. In the bureaucratic view, the government is dominated by appointed officials. Finally the pluralist view believes that competition among all interests shape public policy. This final view is the text's answer toward the division of power in the American government (Wilson & Dilulio, 2006).

However, the current influence of capitalists in the government leads the distribution of power to lean towards the Marxist perspective. Corporations have the ability to affect laws and regulations because of their ability to use money to make or break a politician's name. For example, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan contributed about \$77 million combined to campaigns since 1989 (Watson, 2010). These same corporations were big beneficiaries of the 2008 bailout. The financial industry is by far the largest contributor and most persistent lobbyists. Another powerful campaign contributor and lobbyist is the oil industry. In 2010, the House of Representatives defeated a measure to begin debate on legislation to end certain subsidies for oil companies. Those who helped to defeat the act received five times more in campaign contributions from the oil and gas industry. All together, those who supported the oil company subsidies acquired \$8.7 million while those who did not support the subsidies only

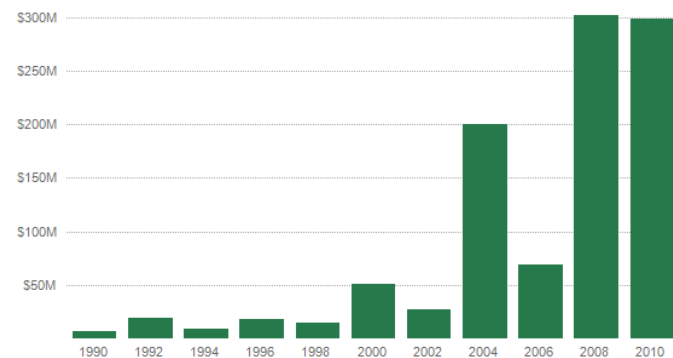
received \$1.2 million. Even though the five largest U.S oil companies made over \$30 billion in profits during the first quarter of 2011, they continue to receive generous government subsidies and tax breaks (Smith, 2011).

Corporations such as the oil industry also vie for influence in writing state laws. One example would be Exxon Mobil helping write legislation in various states through an institute called ALEC: the American Legislative Exchange Council. Exxon Mobil sat at the legislative drafting table beside elected officials and policy analysts by paying a fee between \$3,000 and \$10,000 and helped to draft new legislature that varied from new taxes, energy policies to agriculture. The fee to join ALEC can reach up to \$25,000, a small price for corporations to buy more power. This is just another way for corporations to buy their way into the law making process. According to its website, ALEC's mission is to promote free markets, limited government, federalism and individual freedom: all cornerstones in the foundation of capitalism. Environmentalists, labor unions and democratic groups all oppose ALEC and claim that corporations are behind its creation. Some targets by ALEC include Obama's health-care reform and the Environmental Protection Agency (Fitzgerald, 2011). The existence of ALEC infringes on the power of the American people. In essence, ALEC is money taking over the voice and vote of the American bourgeoisie. It also goes along with the Marxist view of the distribution of democratic power where capitalists run the government.

Politicians themselves are usually very wealthy. They often come from careers such as banking, law or business and then retire to lobby for these interests. To run for office requires a large personal fortune, rich acquaintances or patrons. Virtually no one wins a seat in office without raising sufficient funds (Tabb, 2006). This is especially apparent during campaign season. As Michael Malbin of the Rockefeller Institute of Government says, "Having money

means having the ability to be heard; it does not mean that voters will like what they hear" (Smith, 2006). It cost \$5 million, on average, to win a Senate seat in 2002. It cost just over \$966,000 to win a House seat (Sifry & Watzman, 2006).

Total Outside Spending by Election Year



Source: Center for Responsive Politics, OpenSecrets.org

Almost every presidential election, a new record in campaign spending is broken. As seen in the chart above, campaign spending has skyrocketed this past decade (Torres, 2011). Money is becoming just as or more important than a politician's stance, history, personality or morals. When a particular group donates a significant amount of money, they are expected to get something in return if their candidate wins. This can be made by passing or preventing laws that may be beneficial or hurtful to the group. As former Congressman Hamilton admitted, "Congress is run by lobbyists and special interests" (Hamilton, 2006).

Lobbying is not the most destructive force against a fair government. It is people coming together to push their interests. This is sort of a pluralist form of democracy. Lobbyists include the AARP, the Sierra Club and the Chamber of Commerce. Being part of one of these organizations is just one way the American public can participate in government (Hamilton, 2006).

The belief that American democracy being self-government is heading towards a decline. A large amount of Americans are being shut out of economic and political decision making. Even greater threats to democracy include organizations like WTO, NAFTA and other creations by global corporate powers. As Hightower states:

Being connected to the Internet is not democracy, having a choice between Gore and Bush is not democracy, receiving five hundred channels of digital television is not democracy, being awarded a slice of corporate-allocated prosperity is not democracy. Democracy is control. Whatever goals we strive for as a people—racial harmony, peace, economic fairness, privacy, clean water and air—all are dependent on our ability to control the decisions that affect these goals (Hightower, 2006).

Corporations are damaging American democracy as we know it. The idea of corporations is dangerous because of their immense financial power and also allows shareholders to profit from business without being responsible for any harm or destruction.

The corporation and how it runs the economy hurts the relationship between America's capitalist system and democratic government. The problem is not the free market, but the ways corporations are designed. The market is based on buyers and sellers bargaining with equal power to set prices. A free market should be largely unregulated and property rights should be respected. The stock market and its system of shareholders have no place in the market economy. Being a shareholder is a form of entitlement, which in turn is a privilege. This privilege accruing to property ownership is a remnant of the aristocratic past. Between 1983 and 1998, over half of the total gain in marketable wealth went toward the richest one percent in society. Fifty one corporations are in the world's top one hundred economies, having revenues larger than nations and yet still have the title of "private property." Even with all this success, employee salaries are not raised. Gains to an employee lead to losses in corporations. They have no voice within their corporations. In fact an employee is not even a part of a corporation, but more like a tool or a subject to the corporate society (Kelly, 2006).

Those with a substantial amount of wealth looked toward the government to commit crimes that they would not be able to do for themselves. They want to repress the participation and power of the American people, limit economic competition and strengthen the trend of capitalistic accumulation. It is often thought that the United States government deliberates labor issues with an unbiased eye. However, history proves that the government played a more often than not, partisan, repressive role in class and labor issues and favored business interest. If conflicts arise between small and large businesses, the government frequently sides with the most powerful one. The American government provided the subsidies, protections, regulations, and services that business could not provide for itself. Corporations are making laws and breaking laws so that they may become more profitable. They cross moral lines that hurt the average American citizen. As Thomas Jefferson said, "aristocracy of our monied corporations which . . . bid defiance to the laws of our country" (Parenti, 1996).

The United States can be said to be in a "systematic crisis." Freedom, equality and a meaningful democracy is in danger because of the political and economical characteristics of the current system. In this period, the political-economic system loses authenticity because its outcomes directly contradict the values it proclaims. Republican senator and former presidential candidate John McCain describes the government as "an elaborate influence-peddling scheme in which both parties conspire to stay in office by selling the country to the highest bidder" (Alperovitz, 2006).

Americans commonly make the mistake of thinking that capitalism and democracy is the same thing. Because of this, American foreign policy says they are spreading democracy around the world when in fact they are furthering capitalism. By capitalism, the government means freedom and in freedom comes democracy. These three terms are heavily related and mesh

together well. The public, however confuse these terms. This leads to the problem where democracy needs an educated public. The public is misinformed with propaganda set out by the government and from advertisements by corporations. A public that is educated with the issues and alternative ways of thinking is seen as a threat to the privileged minority and thus they work to disarm this public nuisance. The American people are being fed by institution such as corporations with illusions of “information” (Boyer, 2006).

One example of corporations pulling wool over the eyes of the public is with the issue of global warming. After the Kyoto summit, the corporate sponsored Global Climate Coalition began a propaganda campaign to convince the public that global warming is just a “mere theory.” When this was not possible, the next strategy would be to change the nation from being a leader in climate control to one that slows down the process. This would preserve the profits of oil industries. Eventually, the Senate was persuaded to not ratify the Kyoto protocol. The oil lobby spent \$13 million in television advertisements to strengthen opposition of the Kyoto protocol. The Constitution guarantees a freedom of press and speech. In a totalitarian regime such as Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy, the government has control over the freedoms of press and speech. In the United States, this infringement of press is done through the media that affects the public. Corporate television tries to dumb down America and limit the public’s understanding of current events. Here, the corporations can control the knowledge of the public so that they are able to achieve maximum profit without the threat of an informed population (Boyer, 2006).

The corruption of man and man’s selfishness washes away the harmony and cooperation that should occur between democracy and capitalism. The influence of corporations has grown to almost apocalyptic standards where they are able to manipulate the government that was meant to regulate it. Politicians now seem to work for these corporations because they fund their

campaigns and thus are indebted to them. The American public has lost a significant portion of their economic and political power. Now instead of a democracy, the American government seems more like an aristocracy run by the top one percent of society. Those are the shareholders of the corporations that can control the country and yet hold no responsibility for their actions. As Hightower puts the country's current situation, "This is an exciting time to be an American. We are in a crisis. We are on the brink of failure of our old democratic processes—swamped, subverted, perverted, and filibustered by the corporate feudal system and its totalitarian dominance of our lives. We have the opportunity and the duty to overcome all that" (Hightower, 2006).

The Mass Media and War

The First Amendment in the United States Bill of Rights states that the public has the right of freedom of press. By press, the Bill of Rights means the right to publish, the right to confidentiality of sources and the right to access (Stevens, 2003). The public relies on the press for information about the world and the current state of the nation. The press has three main functions; to serve the public as a watchdog against abuse by those in power; as a source of information for citizens about social and political issues; and as a place for diverse opinions to be shared (Croteau & Hoynes, 1999). On most topics, the press accomplishes most of these functions. However, when the press, or media, covers foreign policy affairs or wars, they seem to be heavily influenced by the government. The media's views tend to favor and to promote the government's actions during these times. Examples of this occurring would be during the Spanish American War, the Vietnam War and the current wars in the Middle East. In those times of war, the media does not complete the functions it is supposed to do. The media sides and even lies for the government so that the public agenda can be promoted. This is because of the

corruption within the media's system and the amount of influence that the government has on the media that infringes over the rights specified in the First Amendment.

First of all, the term "mainstream media" needs to be explained. There are different types of media that report on different subjects, such as entertainment, sports, politics and society in general. There is one portion of the media called the "elite media" that is also labeled as the agenda-setting media. They are the ones with a large amount of money and they serve as the base in which all the other media outlets operate. Some examples of this sort of media are CBS and the *New York Times*. The readers of the *New York Times* are usually wealthy or part of the political class that has influence in the government. They can be managers in every field like CEOs, professors, doctors or journalists who are involved in influencing the perspectives of people. The mass media are trying to divert the public's attention. That is why celebrities, sex scandals, and sports headline the media. While the general audience is being distracted by such issues, the elites in society can worry about the real and serious issues in the world (Chomsky, 1997). Chomsky describes the media as:

[What] we may call a propaganda function -- that is, that they shape perceptions, select the events, offer interpretations, and so on, in conformity with the needs of the power centers in society, which are basically the state and the corporate world (Chomsky, 1990).

The public is all too easily manipulated by the media and rarely questions it.

Nowadays, the mass media are all massive and prosperous corporations. In addition, most of them are connected or owned by larger corporations like General Electric and Comcast. Corporations are based on hierarchy and tyranny, with all power coming from the top. For example, the *New York Times* is a corporation. All corporations sell products. The product in this instance is audiences. Corporations sell that product to advertisers, or other large corporations

(Chomsky, 1997). The mass media sometimes does not fulfill the functions of an effective press because it needs to make money. There are many ways that they can make money. This includes publishing interesting stories to the public (sometimes even fabricating them), political propaganda, product placement and being compliant to what the government tells them to do.

One of the first instances of the media using war to sell news would be during the Spanish American War. The competition between Pulitzer and Hearst, owners of the *World* and the *Journal*, respectively, led to what is called “yellow journalism.” Rivalry between competing newspaper companies usually result in a better informed public. However the financial and emotional stakes were too high in 1896 for Pulitzer and Hearst. The Cuban insurrection caused the *World* and the *Journal* to sink below their standards and publish exaggerated and biased news. Both openly supported the revolutionaries and refused to carry news from Spanish sources. The published rushed toward the newsstands to read about the latest developments about the Spanish “tyranny.” The rising conflict between Spain and Cuba then included the United States with the explosion of the American battleship Maine in the Havana harbor on February 15, 1898. This convinced the public to go along with the government’s announcement of war against Spain. Now, the *World* and the *Journal* have gone down in history under the label of “yellow journalism” for exacerbating the conflict and for publishing propaganda for money (Therkelsen, 1996).

One way that the media is run is through the propaganda model. It proposes that the media is controlled by a small clique of profit-oriented companies. They also use their power politically in addition to economically. The media has various screens and filters that are placed by corporations to report facts and stories that serve the interests of the elite class. However there are flaws in this view because of major inconsistencies. For instance, various media outlets do

not agree on certain issues. Newspapers do not usually have the same views and do not cooperate (Lehrer, 2006).

In World War I, the government launched a propaganda operation that intended to persuade Americans and "mobilize support for the [largely right-wing] special interests that dominate the state and political activity" (Lehrer, 2006). Other countries, such as France and England, used propaganda to spread their want of war as well. They spread news such as the Germans being "baby killers" (Rampton & Stauber, 2006). The government has used the media to persuade the Americans into war and have been successful in doing so. They used atrocious stories and the idea of fighting for "freedom and democracy" to convince the public to support the war.

However this trend of unquestioned public support ended during the tenure of the Vietnam War. As the public learned more about the truth and horrors of the Vietnam War, they heavily protested and fought against it. "One study shows that between 1965 and 1970, only about 3 percent of all evening news reports from Vietnam showed heavy fighting with dead or wounded" (Roy, 2006). This left the public with a fantasized version of the fighting and that the United States was winning. However, this view that the United States was invincible all ended with the Tet offensive in 1968. This started the growing anti-war movement. The press frequently sensitized the war in Vietnam. For example, the My Lai massacre of 1968 was not heard of in the United States until a year and a half later by an alternative news source.

[In] the Winter Soldier hearings convened in Detroit in January 1971 by Vietnam vets to try to communicate directly to the American people the horrors they'd experienced... [Dozens] of veterans described -- often tearfully -- atrocities against Vietnamese they'd witnessed or participated in... [Few] major U.S. media bothered to cover them [the

trials]. Many of the veterans expressed hostility toward the media, blaming gung-ho pro-war coverage for deceiving them into going to Vietnam in the first place. During particularly gripping testimony, one of the few mainstream camera crews present turned off its lights and packed up; the crew's exit sparked boos and jeers from the vets (Cohen, 2011).

In that event, hundreds of Vietnamese civilians were executed by American troops. The media hid such stories and images to comply with the government, the military and with network regulations. It was really the public and Vietnam War veterans that influenced the media to take a skeptical view on the war. The media failed to provide diverse opinions, to serve as a watchdog and to provide information to the public.

Some cases where the press was blocked by the government would be during the United States' invasion of Granada in 1983. The press was not told about this invasion until an hour after it began. The Reagan administration did all it can to keep journalists from coming to Granada. In response to this blackout, the National Media Pool was created to allow better coverage of wars. This small pool of knowledgeable and trusted reporters would be taken to the scene of the war at short notice. In the invasion of Panama in 1989, then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney insisted that that pool would not be allowed access. Once journalists discovered about the situation of Panama and entered there, they were detained by the military for five hours. The reporters were not able to find out anything other than what the Pentagon already revealed to them. There were no reporters to tell the story of how the United States destroyed an impoverished district within Panama City (Roy, 2006).

The media also tended to favor stories that would benefit the government's agenda. As Chomsky reported in 2006:

Popieluszko, murdered in an enemy state, will be [seen in the media as] a worthy victim, whereas priests murdered in our client states in Latin America will be unworthy. The former may be expected to elicit a propaganda outburst by the mass media; the latter will not generate sustained coverage (Lehrer, 2006).

Popieluszko was a Polish priest that was murdered by the Soviets. This was during the time where the Soviet Union was occupying Poland. With mass publication of his death, the world would view the USSR as the villains and would want to fight against their oppressive state. On the other hand, the mass murder of priests in Latin America was barely reported on.

The most recent case in which the media failed to substantially report on a war would be during the Iraq War right after the attacks on 9/11. When a reporter asked former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, if the Department of Defense would lie to the media to increase the chances of advancement in Iraq, he stated:

Of course, this conjures up Winston Churchill's famous phrase when he said—don't quote me on this, OK. I don't want to be quoted on this, so don't quote me—he said, sometimes the truth is so precious it must be accompanied by a bodyguard of lies, talking about the invasion date and the invasion location, and indeed, they engaged not just in not talking about the date of the Normandy invasion or the location, whether it was to be Normandy Beach or just north off of Belgium, they actually engaged in a plan to confuse the Germans as to where it would happen. And they had a fake army under General Patton, and one thing and another. That is a piece of history. And I bring it up just for the sake of background. The answer to your question is no (Rampton & Stauber, 2006).

However he did lie to the media. In addition, the media did not do anything to delve in deeper to find the truth.

The media frequently viewed Saddam Hussein as an evil and diabolical man. He has in fact done horrible deeds, but he was an ally to the United States earlier in his dictatorship. Donald Rumsfeld was the principle emissary of the Reagan Administration to Saddam. The CIA used Saddam to kill previous ruler of Iraq who wanted Kuwait to return to Iraq. In 1990, the United States hailed him as the “most enlightened enlightened leader in the Middle East... and praised Saddam for how he had raised the educational and health care standards for his people, as well as their standard of living” (Bowman, 2002). There seemed to be a blossoming relationship between the United States and Saddam Hussein.

But this all changed when Saddam became a threat to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, two of the strongest Middle Eastern allies of the United States. The United States government came up with various reasons to go to war with Iraq following the September 11 attacks. First of all, Saddam has been claimed to ignore and violate resolutions of the United Nations Security Council relative to inspections and disarmament and must be removed to protect the credibility and integrity of the United Nations. In fact, he has complied frequently with these resolutions, even if it was hard for him to do so. Another major reason for war is that he has ties to Al Qaeda and has some responsibility for 9/11. The truth is that none of the attackers were Iraqi. Some of them were from Saudi Arabia, a supposed ally of the United States. Also, Saddam was the head of a secular nation and he has been extremely unpopular with Muslim fundamentalists. Saddam supposedly had atomic weapons ready to be lent to Al Qaeda as well. First of all, Saddam was not in good relations with Al Qaeda. Secondly, Iraq has no indication of achieving a program capable of producing nuclear material. This was proven by the IAEA. Dick Cheney asserted that

UN inspectors do not do their job well enough to disarm Saddam and to thoroughly inspect Iraq for weapons of mass destruction. He also says that the United States got more information from defectors than from UN inspectors. Saddam Hussein's son-in-law said:

I ordered destruction of all chemical weapons. All weapons -- biological, chemical, missile, nuclear -- were destroyed. There is not a single missile left. ... they [Iraq] had kept blueprints and molds for production, but all the missiles were destroyed (Bowman, 2006).

This is what the UN verified as well. These exact facts were in the documents provided by the UN that Cheney scrutinized. This pre-emptive war against Iraq was unconstitutional and in violation of international law.

The lack of the American's knowledge can be seen in a poll conducted by Knight Ridder Newspapers. They found that two thirds of Americans claimed to know about the issues of why the United States is going to war, but closer questioning showed that they were incompetent. As stated above, they believed the majority of the attackers were Iraqi when they were not. If people were more educated about the war, they would be greatly opposed of it and would have joined the fight against the war (Rampton & Stauber, 2006). This lack of knowledge can be attributed to the way the media has covered the war. There are many corruptions between the media and the government. For example, CNN's top reporter Christiane Amanpour married top State Department public relations officer James Rubin during the Gulf War. The *New York Times* failed to report that 90 to 95 percent of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons have been destroyed and it never scrutinized any of Bush's shifting claims and lies the foreign and internet media has covered. The media also did not discuss international law and the UN charter – both of which the United States was violating (Herman, 2006).

Opinion polls play a factor in shaping the nation's views. They do not simply measure but also manipulate thoughts and tilt perceptions. Polls usually ask volunteers to choose responses that have already been prepared for them. Slight differences in a question's wording can have large consequences. Overall, the mass media in the United States have been adapted to boost pro-war agendas. There might be negative reporting of the war but they have been eclipsed by propaganda. The media industry's structural constraints alleviate against various public opinion. These constraints tighten during times of war to promote the Washington's agenda (Solomon, 2006).

One way the media has reported on the Iraq war would be by using "embedded reporters." Reporters and news organizations get quick and front of the line access. However the reporters have rules to comply to and cannot give any data that can be potentially helpful to the military (Garamone, 2003). The reporters sleep among the troops, patrol with them and eat with them. They get to hear about the troops personal stories and they exchange dreams, jokes and fears. Tharp, a reporter and embedded journalist from the *Merced Sun-Star* said:

In combat you may find that those around you may need a helping hand. Do not shy away from an opportunity to act first as a concerned human being and then later as a reporter. Help the wounded, if called to do so. Carry water or ammo or the dead if it seems needed. None of that violates either the Geneva Convention or your objectivity as a journalist (Tharp, 2011).

They become one with the troops. However this also has disadvantages. The reporters will no longer be objective because of the personal time they spend with the troops. They will be conflicted if they write any negative stories about them because they have become friends. The

reporters' lives depend upon the troops. The troops and the operation become the saviors while those they are fighting against are demonized.

The Iraq war has been highly sanitized by the mass media. The press did not totally blackout all the horrors of the war, but they tended to minimize and rationalize it. From January to March of 2003, neither ABC, CBS nor NBC aired a single report about the long-term consequences that the war might have on humanitarian conditions in Iraq. They also did not heavily report on the enormous amount of civilian deaths in Iraq. The Pentagon ironically predicted that thousands of Iraqi civilians would be killed entirely by accident because of planned bombings. The press did not criticize the supposed precision weapons that the military was using. NBC even reported that every weapon was precision guided and designed only to kill targets and not innocent civilians. The *Wall Street Journal* claimed that the United States had too many worries about harming civilians. They argued that force was needed to show that the United States meant business in the Middle East. The public has been shielded by the image of all these deaths, some estimating the number to be in the thousands (Hart, 2003). On March 29, 2006, an explosion in a market in Baghdad killed over 50 civilians. The United States and Britain claimed that they were not responsible for the incident. However later evidence proved that the explosion was caused by a United States missile (Roy, 2006). This lack of reporting clouded the minds of the public.

“Militainment” is what some people called the beginning of the war in Iraq. The media pictured the war as some type of movie to entertain the audience. They made strategies with fancy names such as “shock and awe.” News programs around the nations were featuring the various weapons that the military had and did not show any of the inevitable consequences that might arise from a war. All the networks seemed pretty gung-ho and excited for the war. This

should not be a surprise because GE, which owned NBC at the time, would be the contractor for the power plants that would be rebuilt in Iraq. During the “Final Hours,” the war looked picture perfect as the nation waited with excitement and anticipation: the United States would be able to show her muscles and power once again. “In the world of militainment, the ‘conquering power’ bears no responsibility for the death left in its wake” (Andersen, 2003).

As the war trudged on, the public became more knowledgeable and started to question the war. The Americans are starting to join the 15 million people world-wide who were protesting the war in the first place. This alteration in the American public is also changing what the media is reporting on. The media is now reporting more critical stories on United States policy; such as those on Guantanamo Bay and the Patriot Act. They are openly disapproving on those cases because they see them as a threat to American safety. For example, the Patriot Act infringes upon the liberties of the public. Through the Patriot Act, the government takes on a sort of “Big Brother” role (Noyes, 2006). The future is brightening with the way the media is currently reporting.

Ever since the Spanish American War, the government and the media worked hand in hand to promote the pro-war agenda. It is only when the public stands up first that the press takes an anti-war stance. The media has been influenced by the government and the corporations that own them. They have so far failed to meet the three criteria of being a watchdog, giving substantial information and providing diverse opinions. They seemed biased as to benefit themselves. It takes public action for the real truth to come out because press is a business and the main goal of a business is to make money. Sometimes the truth is not that profitable.

US Foreign Policy and the Military-Industrial Complex

War has been a part of human civilization since its beginnings. The struggle for power and control has been an issue that leads to deaths of many infantrymen, politicians, and civilians. The United States has been no stranger in war, participating in over a dozen wars in its short 235 year history. Those wars ranged from those for independence like the Revolutionary War, to internal fragmentation with the Civil War, to worldwide conflicts like World War II and to wars that supposedly protected democracy and capitalism in the Vietnam War ("Military conflicts in," 2007). As the United States gained power throughout the twentieth century, their military strength and influence around the world grew exponentially. To keep this sovereignty, the United States instilled a military-industrial complex. In this relationship, Congress, the Pentagon and military manufacturers benefit from each other. This was also implemented in other nations such as the former Soviet Union and in Latin American countries. The policy and monetary relationships between legislatures, the armed forces and the defense industrial base is a sort of iron triangle and is very difficult to dismantle (Ball, 2002). As the years go on, the reasons for why the United States have gone to war becomes more obscure. From fighting the Axis powers to protect Europe and the world from tyrannical domination, the United States seem to be fighting for power and resources. As President Eisenhower warned the public in his farewell address, the military-industrial complex violates many of the components of American foreign policy. Instead of benefiting the American public and the world, the military-industrial complex and wars do not help the advancement of mankind.

The military-industrial complex is the entire network between the Pentagon, Congress and arms manufacturers. Those within this network benefit through each other with government subsidies, campaign donations, manufacturing contracts and other perks (Ball, 2002). During the

Clinton administration, the president encouraged and subsidized military-industry mergers. The reason for this according to the Pentagon is that because there is no longer a powerful enemy to contend with, the United States should still need to be equipped to fight two major conflicts simultaneously against rogue states such as Iran and North Korea. One example of the military-industrial complex at work is through the partnership between Lockheed Martin and the United States government. Lockheed Martin is the nation's top weapons manufacturer and was formed when Lockheed merged with Martin Marietta. Today, Lockheed Martin is worth \$35 billion, receives over \$18 billion in Pentagon contracts and has facilities all over the world. Lockheed martin is trying aggressively to have favor from the federal government, asking for special subsidies, expensive contracts for weapon systems and dramatic changes in United States policies on the arms industry (Hartung, 2000).

The military-industrial complex arose after World War II. Before this, the United States military was very small and did not consume much of the federal funds. Even though the United States has kept a standing army since the ratification of the Constitution, they remained relatively small in times of peace. At this time, the army would consist of military professionals. Citizen soldiers only mobilized during times of war. Following World War II, the army did shrink from 12 million people to 2 million. However this amount is ten times the size of the military in the 1930s. Beginning in the twenty first century, the United States standing military was much larger and more powerful than any in American history. In addition, it was made up of mostly professional soldiers (Hudson, 2004).

In his farewell address, President Dwight Eisenhower warned against the rise of the military-industrial complex. He said it was necessary at first to protect the United States from hostiles such as the Soviet Union (Ball, 2002). However, he said that its rapid growth afterwards

might prove disastrous. Before the Korean War, manufacturers who built weapons went back to building their normal items. For example, Ford built bombers during the war but then returned to building cars soon afterward. Eisenhower also commented on the sheer price of the military-industrial complex:

The jet plane that roars overhead costs three quarters of a million dollars. That's more than a man will make in his lifetime. What world can afford this kind of thing for long? ("Ike's warning of," 2011).

The government can spend its money on other programs such as for education or welfare. What Eisenhower feared was the amount of power the government and military corporations could have if the military-industrial complex rises to full power. The corporations would have just as much say in policy writing as congressmen. Unfortunately with companies like Lockheed Martin and Raytheon lobbying in Washington, their influence in government is rising.

Defense has always been a top priority for the United States government. In 2000, the global military spending rose to \$798 billion. The United States accounted for 37 percent of that amount. America is also the largest arms salesman, being responsible for almost half of all munitions transfers between 1996 and 2000 (Johnson, 2003).

Military companies have been heavily involved in the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan. When Saddam fell, Lockheed Martin was awarded a \$10 million contract to provide translators for the Pentagon in Iraq. Two of those translators however, were accused of torture. After 9/11, Lockheed shifted from private contracts to almost only government contracts. By 2003, \$1.8 billion of its corporate income came from the government. Lockheed Martin gets \$228 in federal tax money from every household in the United States each year. Bechtel, a global construction firm based in San Francisco, was awarded a \$680 million contract to rebuild Iraq's

infrastructure. This was done in secret and now that original contract is expected to rise to 450 billion. All the projects that the government plans for them to do has been funded by US tax dollars and Iraqi oil revenues. The CEO of Bechtel said, “We’re more about making money, than making things” (St. Clair, 2005).

Halliburton, former Vice President Cheney’s offspring has been an important part in the war in Iraq.

On February 26, 2003, less than a month before the invasion of Iraq, a meeting was convened in the inner sanctum of the Pentagon. The purpose of this conclave was to devise a project that would come to be known as RIO or Restore Iraq Oil. Gathered around that table just down the hall from the office of Douglas Feith were ranking officials from the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (US AID), as well as the Pentagon. The meeting was chaired by Lt. General Carl Strock, a ranking official at the US Army Corps of Engineers (St. Clair, 2005).

Little does the public know, but Halliburton had already been paid \$1.9 million to draft a plan on how to implement the RIO. Halliburton then established their main offices not in Baghdad, but in a resort in Kuwait. They spent \$73 million a year to house their executives in an oasis. After leaving Halliburton, Cheney worked his way up until he became the vice president of the United States. He was one bullet away from being ruler of the “free world.”

Aside from siphoning money from the federal government, military companies like Lockheed Martin also actively engage in shaping United States foreign and military policies. These companies lobby for subsidies for defense industry mergers, eliminating royalty fees, and grants and government-guaranteed loans to support the export of their products. A prime example of military corporations acquiring what they ask for is with the Star Wars program. This

was created to supposedly defend American airways from potential missile attacks. It received an average of \$1 billion per year because of lobbying by Pentagon contractors and other advocacy groups. The military industry has also been successful on lifting a 20 year old ban on exports of advanced combat aircraft to Latin America (Hartung, 2000).

The United States and her thirst for oil have caused her to become incredibly buried in Middle Eastern affairs. Saudi Arabia has become America's most important partner in the world. Even though many of the terrorists on the 9/11 attacks were Saudi Arabians, policy makers are still willing to work with that country. 25 percent of the world's oil preserves are in Saudi Arabia, an enticing fact that causes the United States to be blind to Saudi's apparent sexism, prejudice and involvement in 9/11. From the 1970s, Saudi Arabia has purchased over \$100 billion worth of arms from the United States. As a former CIA counterterrorism expert has written, "The Saudis have been the world's number-one consumer of American armament and weapons systems" (Gardner, 2005).

The main tenets of American foreign policy are to ensure national security, promote the free market economy, defend and spread democratic governments, help with humanitarian concerns and to have world peace. Unfortunately, with the help of the military-industrial complex, many of these components are broken.

While claiming to be motivated by a dedication to human rights and democracy, U.S. leaders have supported some of the most notorious right-wing autocracies in history, governments that have tortured, killed, or otherwise maltreated large numbers of their citizens because of their dissenting political views, as in Turkey, Zaire, Chad, Pakistan, Morocco, Indonesia, Honduras, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala,

Haiti, the Philippines, Cuba (under Batista), Nicaragua (under Somoza), Iran (under the Shah), and Portugal (under Salazar) (Parenti, 2003).

Overthrowing governments because of their dissenting political views through violence does not promote world peace or humanitarian causes. The incidents above are just a few of the instances where the United States acted to promote the free market and democracy but at the price of human life. The preservation of life is greater than capitalism and democracy.

With global protests vying for more economic equality and calling for a reformation of the capitalist system, the United States Department of Defense has said that it is necessary to implement weapons in space to protect the wealth of the west. In the United States Space Command's pamphlet, it argued that with the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the United States should dominate the space dimension of military operations to protect America's interests and investments (Johnson, 2003). Here, the Department of Defense wants to keep the status quo of capitalism and the gap between the rich and the poor. Instead of using federal funds to raise the standard of living of the less fortunate, they plan on the absurd and start an army in space. Here, they protect capitalism while sacrificing the lifestyle of its own citizens and those around the world.

Some recent examples of the United States interfering in foreign affair would be in the many Middle Eastern revolutions. The US was heavily involved in the Libyan revolution. The youth led revolt caused a stir in the North African country and forced Kaddafi to launch a violent counterattack. Kaddafi's strongest opposition came from the country's most oil-rich regions. His government led a savage repression against the movement. Pro-Kaddafi forces fired bullets in large crowds, killing hundreds while trying to take back control of the country. One important group to the revolution was the National Transitional Council. Headed by Mustafa Abdul Jalil,

they claimed to be the sole legitimate body representing the Libyan people and state. France, Italy and Qatar has recognized the Nation Transitional council as the true government of Libya.

For the first part, the US was just a bystander in this conflict. However:

If Qaddafi could succeed in rolling back the revolution, the U.S. would verbally castigate him while secretly thanking him for cutting short the Arab revolution before it spilled over into a place, like Bahrain or Saudi Arabia, that really concerned the U.S. (Selfa, 2011).

The US did not want a wave of revolutions sweeping the Middle East because it would interfere with the oil business. But as Kaddafi's tyrannical and inhumane treatment of the revolutionaries persisted, the United States decided to support the UN sanctioned no-fly zone and accepted a larger role in support of the Libyan revolution. Secretary of State Clinton said that the United States will use military force in Libya for humanitarian purposes.

On the other hand, the United States have another reason for supporting the no-fly zone according to Pepe Escobar, a correspondent of the *Asia Times*:

You invade Bahrain. We take out Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. This, in short, is the essence of a deal struck between the Barack Obama administration and the House of Saud. Two diplomatic sources at the United Nations independently confirmed that Washington, via Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, gave the go-ahead for Saudi Arabia to invade Bahrain and crush the pro-democracy movement in their neighbor in exchange for a "yes" vote by the Arab League for a no-fly zone over Libya (Selfa, 2011).

The hypocrisy of the United States government is clearly shown in the above quote. They said they promoted humanitarian concerns. But instead, the government struck a deal with Saudi Arabia so that they can quell the prodemocracy revolution in Bahrain. Another component in

American foreign policy is to promote democracy. So why did the United States want to stop democracy in Bahrain? The US sanctioned Saudi invasion of Bahrain supported the Bahraini monarch's attacks against the opposition. Even if Kaddafi could not be defeated, the oil rich regions of Libya would be in support of the United States because they seemingly backed their revolution. But weeks before imposing the no-fly zone, the US government was selling weapons to Kaddafi. At first, the US thought Kaddafi would defeat the revolution himself. Then as their resistance grew stronger, America has tried to manipulate them so that they can still be loyal to capitalism and global colonialism.

However the United States did not take that much of a role during the Egyptian revolution. Mubarak was America's man. He was a very effective puppet that ensured American access of the Suez Canal, upheld the Egypt-Israel peace treaty and kept Islamist fundamentalists down. But he has also ruled over a foul regime that abused its people and breached principles that Americans hold dear (Cook, 2011). Weeks before the uprising, Washington was caught supporting Mubarak. As the revolution caught fire later on, the US government then said it "heard the voice of the people" and asked Mubarak to make an "orderly exit" (Cunningham, 2011).

The United States took a mostly spectator role during the Egyptian revolution. Though they wanted to keep influence over Egypt, they did not want to fully participate in the revolution, whether it be pro-Mubarak or the other. Even if the United States pledged neutrality in Egyptian politics, a bold and public democracy effort could garner support for a particular faction or group. Some congressmen like Representative Howard Berman expressed desire to use federal money to support liberal Egyptian political movements and were skeptical toward the Muslim

Brotherhood. During the course of the revolution, the United States allowed the Egyptians to triumph or fail on their own (Cook, 2011).

According to the National Security Council's website, its main purpose is to provide the president with a "principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials." ("*National security council*") It was established under President Truman and has served the nation since. The council is chaired by the president and its attendees include the vice president, the secretary of state, the secretary of treasury and the secretary of defense.

Private military companies are the new term for mercenaries. They allow governments to pursue goals in rough areas of the world with the comfort of plausible deniability. There are at least 90 private military companies that have done work in 110 countries around the world. These private armies provide services that are normally done by a national military force. They offer specialized skills in high-tech warfare, communications and intelligence, surveillance, training, battle planning and so much more. Some argue that they save lives and improve security while being cost effective since they are cheaper than national armies. However this is still a dark and unknown business that deals with war and death (Van Niekerk, 2002).

The reasons for why America has gone to war has been blurred to the public as time goes on. Also, the stake that American citizens had in war has started to decrease compared to previous wars. For example in World War II, Americans had a stake in the war. It was a war of necessity to defeat Hitler and his Nazis and Japanese militarism. The goals of this war were clear and the military relied on an uncontroversial draft of citizen soldiers. The citizens were for the war and supported its reasons for fighting. However, nowadays citizens have a much smaller stake in war aside from providing the military with able bodies to fight. The military-industrial

complex now controls when, where and who wars are fought for. Since 1961, corporations, lobbyists, retired military, and politicians have gained much power in Washington and evolved into a gargantuan organization that controls trillions of dollars supposedly devoted to national security and dominates the government. They are the ones who sent off the citizens in the volunteer military to repetitive tours of duty fighting wars American do not know why they are fighting for. Unlike before, the goals behind America's wars have been confusing and very fickle (Astore, 2011). Citizens have to take control of their country once again and pry it away from the greedy hands of corporations that have infiltrated the government. The people of United States have a voice in their government and should be able to use it. It takes action by the people to prevent atrocities caused by the government.

The Americans elected President Barack Obama for change. One such change would be the way government used armed force. However two years later, the Obama administration intensified involvement in Afghanistan, fought a war in Libya and is now pending a war with Iran. Even with the withdrawal of troops in Iraq, one must wonder why the United States seems addicted to war. One reason according to Stephen Walt, a journalist for *Foreign Policy*, is because the United States have no serious enemies. After the Cold War, the US was left in a relatively safe position. There is no country (aside maybe from China in the new future) that can attack the United States without fear of utter destruction. If America was really in danger from a threatening country, the government would not be able to spend millions of dollars to fight unnecessary wars such as in Libya. America's favorable geopolitical position allows the government to participate in these reckless wars. Another reason for America being involved in so many global conflicts is its all-volunteer force. Since the military is mostly made up of volunteers, public opposition to wars of choice is more easily contained. But if the military was

forced to do a draft for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the American public would be up in arms. The children of the wealthy CEOs and Wall Street bankers would be at risk of fighting and dying in a war. United States foreign policy dictates making the world a better place and protecting it from tyranny. One way the government views this is through military action to protect democracy and people around the world. They think the United States is responsible for the rest of the world and want to solve as many of the world's problems as they can. Since the 1960s, conservatives have waged a campaign to convince citizens that it is foolish to pay taxes to support domestic projects, but it is more patriotic to support the military to fight wars in behalf of other people. A final reason for America's addiction to war is that Congress has lost the power to declare war. The Constitution proclaimed that only Congress has the right to declare war. But with presidents like Nixon bombing Cambodia and Bush invading Iraq, this right has been shifted to the president (Walt, 2011).

The military-industrial complex is just corporations leaching into the government to make more money and gain power. Its involvement in wars following World War II allowed it to grow to gigantic proportions. Aside from serving the United States, weapons manufacturers serve private parties and other nations around the world. The American public is losing their voice in government as corporations like Lockheed Martin and Raytheon buy their way into power. They have caused America to defy the components of its foreign policy, only fighting for more money and resources. The people must rise up to regain their voice in *their* government. The military-industrial complex was best summarized in President Eisenhower's haunting farewell address:

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. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. 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 ("Ike's warning of," 2011).

Conclusion

In *America*, a poem by African American poet Claude McKay, he writes about his negative and positive feelings about the United States. The first part of the poem describes bitterness and pessimism about the country. Then the second part talks about America's majesty. The final lines of the poem views America's dark future, like treasure sinking into the sand. Written in the 1920s, McKay describes America amazingly. The United States is seen as a land of dreams. However her stern and corrupt government brings down her citizens. The dark future awaits America as the economy plummets, foreign relations are becoming sour and internal unrest rises.

With the current society of the United States breaking down, one must question whether the foundations on which the country is based on can cooperate for the benefit of the entire nation. The two systems in question are capitalism and democracy. Both theoretically should be able to work together because of their basis on freedom and self-sovereignty. However, the corruption of politicians and the creation of corporations violate the liberties and powers of the American people that democracy and capitalism should protect and enhance. This is apparent in the dealings between elected officials and various companies as well as the growing power of the

shareholders in corporations. Corporations are gaining power and influence within the government and is infringing upon the American citizen's natural rights of equality and a voice in government.

The mass media has the duty to serve the public as watchdogs against abuse from political power, to provide substantial information for the public on social and political issues and to serve as place share diverse opinions. However the mass media does not seem to accomplish its functions during times when the government needs the public's support, such as during times of war. The media is being influenced by the government and by the corporations that own them. There are various examples of this throughout American history. During times when the mass media is being blacked out or allying with the government, the alternate media or the public needs to go out themselves to discover the truth.

The military-industrial complex is taking over the government in regards to war and foreign policy. No longer do the precedents of American foreign policy matter in regards to global conflicts. Now the public never knows why the United States is at war. Corporations can influence the government to go to war in order to improve their profits. The government gives these large military corporations large contracts to build and provide workers in their foreign projects. Before, Congress had the sole right to declare war. This has long been violated and the president can basically do whatever he pleases. American citizens need to speak up in order to get their power back from the corporations.

For the United States to become a traditional democracy once again, the American people need to stand up and fight for their rights and regain their power from the elites. Money has corrupted those in the highest government seats so much that they even go against their own

morals. The elite now control the government for their own benefits, manipulating politicians to write favorable policies even at the expense of the American people.

Group uprisings such as the Occupy movement can help start the flame for Americans to fight for the return of their voice and rights. In addition to organizing and getting their message heard, politicians need to be true to their constituents and resist the lure of lucrative payments of corporations. Electing the right people with the right morals can do that. These are just simple solutions to solve this elite problem. American apathy and laziness needs to be fixed first in order to get more people involved and educated about the country's current situation. When all of the 99 percent are educated and ready to speak up, the elite class system will fall and traditional democracy will rule again.

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