Military-Industrial Complex Speech, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961

My fellow Americans:

Three days from now, after half a century in the service of our country, I shall lay down the responsibilities of office as, in traditional and solemn ceremony, the authority of the Presidency is vested in my successor . . . .

But each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs -- balance between the private and the public economy, balance between cost and hoped for advantage -- balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between actions of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration.

The record of many decades stands as proof that our people and their government have, in the main, understood these truths and have responded to them well, in the face of stress and threat. But threats, new in kind or degree, constantly arise. I mention two only.

IV.

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.
Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea.

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

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.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades.

In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the Federal government.

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been overshadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present

and is gravely to be regarded.

Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system -- ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

V.

Another factor in maintaining balance involves the element of time. As we peer into society's future, we -- you and I, and our government -- must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We
want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.

VI.

Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.

Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic, and military strength. That table, though scarred by many past frustrations, cannot be abandoned for the certain agony of the battlefield.

Disarmament, with mutual honor and confidence, is a continuing imperative. Together we must learn how to compose differences, not with arms, but with intellect and decent purpose. Because this need is so sharp and apparent I confess that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment. As one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness of war -- as one who knows that another war could utterly destroy this civilization which has been so slowly and painfully built over thousands of years -- I wish I could say tonight that a lasting peace is in sight.

Happily, I can say that war has been avoided. Steady progress toward our ultimate goal has been made. But, so much remains to be done. As a private citizen, I shall never cease to do what little I can to help the world advance along that road.

VII.

So -- in this my last good night to you as your President -- I thank you for the many opportunities you have given me for public service in war and peace. I trust that in that service you find some things worthy; as for the rest of it, I know you will find ways to improve performance in the future.

You and I -- my fellow citizens -- need to be strong in our faith that all nations, under God, will reach the goal of peace with justice. May we be ever unswerving in devotion to principle, confident but humble with power, diligent in pursuit of the Nation's great goals.

To all the peoples of the world, I once more give expression to America's prayerful and continuing aspiration:

We pray that peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations, may have their great human needs satisfied; that those now denied opportunity shall come to enjoy it to the full; that all who yearn for freedom may experience its spiritual blessings; that those who have freedom will understand, also, its heavy responsibilities; that all who are insensitive to the needs of others will learn charity; that the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance will be made to disappear from the earth, and that, in the goodness of time, all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love.


1. *Unwarranted Influence: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the ... - Google Books Result*
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   Enthralling and explosive, *Prophets of War* is an exposé of America's largest military contractor, Lockheed Martin. When President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave ... www.prophetsofwar.com/ - Cached

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6. **Videos for Bill Hartung Prophets of War**
   After Words with William Hartung
   59 min - Dec 15, 2010
c-spanvideo.org
   Interview - William Hartung - Prophets of War
   67 min - 3 days ago
   Uploaded by talkingsticktv
   youtube.com

7. **After Words - After Words: William Hartung, "Prophets of War ...**
   In *Prophets of War,* William Hartung presents the history of the largest military contractor in U.S. history, Lockheed Martin. Mr. Hartung argues that with ... www.booktv.org/.../After+Words+William+Hartung+Prophets+of+War+hosted+by+Pierre+Sprey.aspx - Cached

8. **FDL Book Salon Welcomes William Hartung, Prophets of War:**
   Lockheed ...
   Jan 16, 2011 ... A detailed accounting of all of Lockheed Martin's government contracts could
fill several large volumes," writes William Hartung, ...

Feb 10, 2011 ... William D. Hartung will discuss his new book, Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex. ...

Jan 20, 2011 ... Bill Hartung, director of Arms and Security Initiative at the New America Foundation. His latest book is Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin ...

Jan 24, 2011 ... "Prophets of War," William D. Hartung's exposé of the world's most pervasive private corporation that benefits from military weaponry, ...

"Bill Hartung's Prophets of War is a searing indictment of the collusion between Lockheed Martin, the Pentagon, and Congress to boost the company's profits ...

de Rugy writes: "Today we are living Ike's nightmare. Defense spending is not just one of the most sacrosanct parts of the budget but also one of the largest and most inscrutable. Adjusting for inflation, military spending has grown for an unprecedented 13 consecutive years and is now higher than at any time since World War II."

U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower makes his farewell address, Jan. 17, 1961. (photo: AP)

The Invincible Military-Industrial Complex

By Veronique de Rugy, Reason, 18 February 12  RSN

uring his 1961 farewell address, President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously warned the American people that one of the greatest threats to freedom came not from enemies abroad but from "the conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry," which over time would lose sight of defending the United States and become devoted only to its own perpetuation. "In the councils of government," said the man who had commanded the Allied forces in Europe during World War II, "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."

Today we are living Ike's nightmare. Defense spending is not just one of the most sacrosanct parts of the budget but also one of the largest and most inscrutable. Adjusting for inflation, military spending has grown for an unprecedented 13 consecutive years and is now higher than at any time since World War II. Even excluding war costs, the military baseline budget has grown by about 50 percent during the last decade.

Yet the faintest suggestion of a plan to reduce the rate of the defense budget's growth inevitably triggers dire warnings that Americans will soon be speaking Russian, Chinese, Arabic, or the mother tongue of whoever is deemed the most powerful adversary of the moment. Consider the Pentagon's reaction to the recent threat of defense spending reductions following the failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (popularly known as the "supercommittee") to find deficit savings of $1.2 trillion over 10 years. The lack of a deal triggered an alternative path to those savings: a sequestration that would cut projected overall spending by $1.2 trillion between 2013 and 2021. Half of those savings are to come from the defense budget - an annual hit of about $54 billion compared to current administration plans.

But don't confuse that $54 billion with reductions from current spending levels. In August 2011, the Congressional Budget Office projected that discretionary national defense spending (96 percent of all military spending), excluding the wars, would cost $5.3 trillion between 2013 and 2021. After sequestration, that spending will instead total $4.8 trillion, or $500 billion less. That's 10 percent less than otherwise projected (see the chart) but still 10 percent higher than current defense spending.

How did apologists for the military-industrial complex react to the possibility of an increase of just 10 percent rather than 18 percent? Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, in a November letter to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), warned that if "maximum sequestration" goes into effect in 2013, "these cuts would be devastating for the Department." One of Panetta's deputies colorfully described the cuts as a form of "self-castration." Former Defense Secretary William Cohen characterized the possible cuts as "draconian" and "calamitous," Air Force Chief of Staff Norton Schwartz fretted that his branch "may not be able to overcome dire consequences," and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) declared that trimming the rate of military spending growth would do nothing less than "destroy the Department of Defense."

There is no basis in reality for such hyperbole. Adjusting for inflation, sequester cuts would freeze the military's budget at its level in 2007 - a year in which America was ably defended, and plenty of cash flowed to the armed forces.

All these numbers underestimate the growth of defense spending. The data for 2013–21 exclude war spending, which will add roughly $400 billion during that period, even if the withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan proceed as planned. It also excludes mandatory spending, which adds another $6 billion a year on things like military retirement benefits.

When U.S. defense spending is placed in a global context, flipping out over "cuts" becomes even stranger. A country's defense budget should be a function of its security needs - the cost to guard against the threats it faces. Secretary Panetta has noted that "threats to national security would not be
reduced” in the face of budget cuts. But it’s far from clear that current spending is commensurate with the dangers the U.S. faces.

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's military expenditure database show that the United States spent $728 billion on its military in 2010, or about 45 percent of the world's $1.6 trillion total, more than the next 14 largest military spenders combined and nearly six times more than the next biggest spender, China. Most of the other countries at the top of the list are American allies. With or without the automatic cuts to defense from the Budget Control Act of 2011, the United States will remain the biggest global military power for at least a generation.

Defense hawks may have some legitimate gripes about sequestration: Since 42 percent of the cuts in the budget deal come from military spending, defense, which accounts for about 20 percent of annual spending, is being targeted disproportionately. Furthermore, Cato Institute research fellow Benjamin Friedman argues that sequestration is an inefficient method for resizing government. When it comes to military spending, the process doesn't allow for prioritization - cutting less important missions and programs to fully fund more critical ones. As written, the law applies equally to all military accounts. The president can choose to exclude only personnel spending.

Overreliance on across-the-board defense cuts was meant to maximize the pain of sequestration. The idea was to encourage each side of the supercommittee to sacrifice in order to reach a deal, meaning tax increases for Republicans and domestic spending cuts for Democrats. The committee's failure doesn't end those negotiations; it broadens and extends them.

Defense hawks, however, should be careful what they wish for. Unless Congress changes current law, New Year's Day 2013 will bring both sequestration cuts and the expiration of the Bush tax cuts, two outcomes Republicans wish to avoid. By exaggerating the impact of defense "cuts," conservatives are giving President Obama important leverage to win revenue increases in exchange for overturning sequestration.

It doesn't have to be this way, Friedman notes. Rather than bellyaching about a somewhat smaller spending increase, Panetta could offer an alternative that allows the Pentagon to choose more wisely among its priorities while bringing spending levels down to a level compatible with adequate national defense. That option would relieve pressure for tax increases while allowing the American people to enjoy the dividends from winding down two expensive wars. But if Eisenhower was right about the military-industrial complex's insatiable need to keep increasing its budget, size, and influence, it is foolish to expect any defense secretary to propose wiser spending, let alone agree to spend less.

**Contributing Editor Veronique de Rugy** This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it is a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

**Comments**

+11 # giraffee2012 2012-02-18 09:35
And the money spent includes hiring "contractors" - like Haliburton, Brown etc without going out to
"bid"--- and don't forget the Congress also has privilege of "insider trading" although u/I would be in jail for same.

Do NOT vote GOP/TP but vote in 2012

**+16 # douglassmyth** 2012-02-18 09:36
If cuts were targeted, which they should be, we could probably cut the Defense budget in half and still do most of the stupid stuff "Defense" is doing now.

However, cutting the Defense budget should really require us to re-think what we're paying for.

Must we really be the world's policeman, especially since American corporations aren't really American anymore, so our patrol of the world for their benefit is not really for ours? In fact, the pax Americana works against the interest of the American people, since it enables the export of jobs, and the devaluation of work at home (the race to the bottom).

Further, our real economic problem is our balance of payments deficits, and our military's expansion all over the world is a major contributor.

I say, cut back the "Defense" budget so that what we pay for is real defense, not an imperial presence all over the world.

**+8 # reiverpacific** 2012-02-18 10:05
It really rubs it all in when I'm trying to make the shattered remnants of a once-successful small business survive, which has tried to benefit the community, whilst the death-machine has a seemingly bottomless budget, including the CIA's "Black Budget", not accountable even to the president.

My American Indian friends have always referred to the invader's mentality as being the product of a "Death culture" and this is indeed what it more and more identifies itself as, destroying anything which even appears to stand in it's way, including the assassination of a president who was turning to peace. It is indeed the buttress of the corporate state, like the Nazi storm-troopers and "Blitzkreig" of aggressive arrogance and overwhelming firepower.

Anybody who thinks that the US Military is a benefit to the world is delusional, including those who have family in the death-machine that is allegedly keeping the "bad guys du-jour" away from our shores whilst interfering in the affairs of other countries thereby inviting blowback and retaliation.

It is both the most environmentally destructive entity, fuel-sucking and wasteful at taxpayer expense and has been the biggest threat to all hopes of world peace since WW11.

Maybe I should bite the bullet and learn to "kill as directed", as a second job, and funnel the obviously generously available proceeds into my pathetic little business.

**+7 # angelfish** 2012-02-18 10:29
The Military Industrial Complex doesn't give a Big Rat's Patoot about defending America, what it DOES care about is it's BUDGET! MORE, MORE, MORE! HOW much MORE do they need to destroy this Planet a thousand times over? We, the People, have given them the MONEY to build their Million Dollar tanks for Desert Storm that WOULDN'T roll in SAND! We've given them Million Dollar Jets that are incapable of fulfilling their promise! WHY are they allowed such Financial Leeway when our Infrastructure is DISINTEGRATING before our eyes! ARISE, Americans! Learn who the War Mongers are in your State and remember to Vote them OUT in November! The People, UNITED, will NEVER be defeated!
Donald Kaul: “Profiting from the Pentagon”

A two-war strategy is like a two-car garage - you'll own two cars sooner or later. Des Moines Register, Feb. 10, 2012 | (Essay also appeared in The Populist, March 1, 2012.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
DONALD KAUL, a retired Des Moines Register columnist, now writes for www.OtherWords.org. Contact: donaldkaul@att.net.

Washington’s talking about cutting the military budget. Whoopee.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta recently revealed plans to cut hundreds of billions of dollars from the Pentagon’s budget in the next decade, with possibly more reductions on the way.

We’re going to have fewer soldiers, fewer warplanes and ships, and not so many missiles. We’ll cut back a bit on nuclear weapons. If Congress buys this plan, the Pentagon’s $530 billion-a-year base budget, which excludes extras like the wars we’re actually fighting, would shrink to a mere $472 billion by 2013. Double whoopee.

Not everyone is happy with the plan. Critics say that so piddling a sum as $472 billion would leave us naked to our enemies. We wouldn’t even be able to fight two wars at a time, they say.

To which Panetta replies, maybe not. But we’ll be able to fight one major war and have enough strength left over to “spoil” a second enemy’s malign intentions elsewhere. Half a whoopee.

I’ve always been suspicious of the two-war strategy. To me, it’s like having a two-car garage. You may not really need two cars, but if you have a two-car garage, chances are you’ll own two cars sooner or later. One-and-a-half wars are plenty. If we have more enemies than that, let them take a number and form a line.

There’s also a contingent of critics who complain that cutting troop levels might leave us unprepared to fight a grinding and long land war in Asia.

Oh, darn, and that’s what I wanted for my birthday this year — another protracted land war in Asia. Now I’m going to have to settle for diplomacy, sanctions, and boring stuff like that.

Buck up, folks. Even with those cuts and more like them we will still be — by far — the most
militarily powerful country on earth by several orders of magnitude. We just can’t go off and invade a country anytime we had a hint of a suspicion that it might be planning to do something bad to us.

Which is what we do. We’re the most war-prone people on earth. In the past 60 years we’ve invaded, bombed, or sought to subvert more countries — Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Cuba, Somalia, Ethiopia, Panama, Iraq (twice), Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Chile, Laos, Cambodia, the Balkans, Grenada, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Indonesia, Guyana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Greece, and Libya, as well as Guatemala, Nicaragua, Angola, and El Salvador by proxy — than our bean counters can count. Some of these operations transpired under a NATO or United Nations umbrella, but most didn’t.

One of the chief targets of the budget cutters is the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a stealth model that theoretically eludes radar detection and is presently budgeted at $400 billion for 2,500 planes, or $160 million a pop. And if past history is any indication, it won’t work.

Which won’t matter, because very little of this is about “defense.” It’s about the money and political profit to be gained from the building of ever more expensive weapons systems of dubious utility.

A friend of mine, Nick Kotz, once wrote a book on the development of a similar weapons system, the B-1 bomber.

Built in the 1980s, it cost $28 billion (not chump change in those days) and hardly ever saw combat. It was designed for nuclear war, you see, and we haven’t had one of those yet — unless you count Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which no one does. A few can still fly, but they’re hideously expensive to operate, so they don’t.

Toward the end of his book, Kotz takes us through a B-1 assembly line in Palmdale, Calif.

First we learn about the forward fuselage, which was made in Ohio, then the middle and rear elements (Texas), the tail section (Maryland), and the nose landing gear (California), with tires from Ohio. And so it went. Before the plane was fully assembled, more than 70 manufacturing sites were accounted for, each represented by a pious member of Congress with a handout.

That’s what military spending is all about and why it’s so difficult to cut. It’s called the military-industrial complex.
Medea Benjamin, “Will US Mayors Vote Against War?”
Reader Supported News
Intro: "Senate Armed Services Chair Carl Levin - a Democrat from Michigan - had just put down the gavel, marking the end of the confirmation hearing for Leon Panetta to be the next Secretary of Defense, when Detroit-born CODEPINK activist Tighe Barry jumped up. 'Shame on you, Senator Levin, for supporting endless wars while Detroit is dying,' he shouted. 'Your constituents are eating cat food while you're funding a champagne war.’ Levin shook his head in disgust, dismissing Barry as some kind of kook, and walked out of the room."
READ MORE http://www.readersupportednews.org/opinion2/266-32/6294-will-us-mayors-vote-against-war

END MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL (CONGRESSIONAL) COMPLEX NEWSLETTER #1