

USA - Armed Fo

replace Ben Ali. A state of emergency and cur-

at that point is not clear.

Ali presented himself as a key player in the fight

try and for the region. COURTESY NEWSWEEK

# US military-industrial complexity: What Eisenhower

By Susan Eisenhower

*Eisenhower's words, from the beginning of his presidency to the end, come back to us from the mists of another era. They remind us, sadly, that sometimes we must revisit our past to learn what we have always known*

I 'VE always found it rather haunting to watch old footage of my grandfather, Dwight Eisenhower, giving his televised farewell address to the nation on Jan 17, 1961. The 50-year-old film all but crackles with age as the president makes his earnest, uncoached speech. I was 9 years old at the time, and it wasn't until years later that I understood the importance of his words or the lasting impact of his message.

Of course, the speech will forever be remembered for Eisenhower's concerns about a rising "military-industrial complex", which he described as "a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions" with the potential to acquire - whether sought or unsought - "unwarranted influence" in the halls of government.

The notion captured the imagination of scholars, politicians and veterans; the military-industrial complex has been studied, investigated and revisited countless times, including now, at its 50th anniversary. Looking back, it is easy to see the parallels to our era, especially how the complex has expanded since Sept 11, 2001. In less than 10 years, our military and security expenditures have increased by 119 percent.

Even after subtracting the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the budget has grown by 68 percent since 2001. In 2010, the United States is projected to spend at least \$700 billion on its defence and security, the most, in real terms, that we've spent in any year since World War II.

However, at this time of increased concerns over our fiscal deficit and the national debt, Eisenhower's farewell words and legacy take on added significance.

Throughout his presidency,

existential standoff with the Soviet Union, we would have to prepare for a long game. Unlike our experience in World War II, which lasted less than four years, the Cold War would last many decades. Eisenhower understood that we were facing a marathon, not a sprint.

Moreover, the logic of nuclear deterrence made the conventional wars Ike had commanded in the 1940s obsolete. Now, there could be no margin for error; the Cold War brought with it different calcula-

ity with the United States, political forces in Washington cried out for greater defence spending and a more aggressive approach to Moscow. In response, the administration publicly asserted that there was no such thing as absolute security. "The problem in defence is how far you can go without destroying from within what you are trying to defend from without," Eisenhower said. And he followed through, balancing the budget three times during his tenure, a record unmatched during the Cold War.



This theme was introduced at the start of Eisenhower's first term. On April 16, 1953, the new president spoke to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, just weeks after Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's death. In this "Chance for Peace" speech - one as important as the farewell address but often overlooked by historians - he seized the moment to out-

line the cost of continued tensions with the USSR. In addition to the military dangers such a rivalry imposed, he said, the confrontation would exact an enormous domestic price on both societies:

"This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town

early as 1959, he began working with his brother Milton and his speechwriters to craft exactly what he would say as he left public life. The speech would become a solemn moment in a decidedly un-solemn time, offering sober warnings for a nation giddy with newfound prosperity, infatuated with youth and glamour, and aiming increasingly for the easy life.

"There is a reoccurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current dif-

Eisenhower's farewell address will forever be remembered for his concerns about a rising 'military-industrial complex', which he described as 'a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions' with the potential to acquire - whether sought or unsought - 'unwarranted influence' in the halls of government

The notion captured the imagination of scholars, politicians and veterans; the military-industrial complex has been studied, investigated and revisited countless times, including now, at its 50th anniversary. Looking back, it is easy to see the parallels to our era, especially how the complex has expanded since Sept 11, 2001

Eisenhower continually connected the country's security to its economic strength, underscoring that our fiscal health and our military might are equal pillars of our national defence. This meant that a responsible government would have to make hard choices. The question Eisenhower continued to pose about defence spending was clear and practical: How much is enough?

Early on, he realised that if the United States were to prevail in its

tions, which were very costly by nature. These new realities meant that the United States would not only need to project power and resolve, but also had to ensure national solvency - no easy task for a country that had to modernise while assuming, for the first time, the mantle of global leadership.

The pressures Eisenhower faced during his presidency were enormous. Over the years, as the Soviet Union appeared to reach military par-

of 60,000 population. . . . We pay for a single fighter with a half-million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people. . . . This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

Contrary to many historians' suggestions, Ike's farewell speech was not an afterthought - it was the bookend to "Chance for Peace". As

facilities," he warned in his final speech as president. . . . But each proposal must be weighed in light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs . . . balance between actions of the moment and the national welfare of the future."

While the farewell address may be remembered primarily for the passages about the military-industrial complex, Ike was rising above the issues of the day to

# Industrial complexity: What Eisenhower meant

ing the costs of the  
ghanistan, the budg-  
percent since 2001.  
States is projected  
700 billion on its  
the most, in real  
spent in any year

this time of  
s over our fiscal  
national debt,  
ewell words and  
ed significance.  
his presidency,

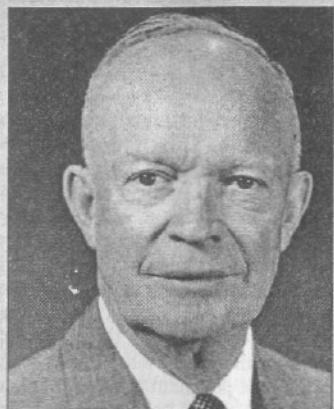
er's farewell address will forever be  
ered for his concerns about a rising  
ry-industrial complex', which he  
as 'a permanent armaments industry  
portions' with the potential to acquire  
sought or unsought — 'unwarranted  
ence' in the halls of government

inally connected  
curity to its eco-  
underscoring that  
and our military  
l pillars of our  
This meant that a  
ment would have  
ices. The question  
ued to pose about  
g was clear and  
uch is enough?  
realised that if the  
te to prevail in its

existential standoff with the Soviet  
Union, we would have to prepare for  
a long game. Unlike our experience  
in World War II, which lasted less  
than four years, the Cold War would  
last many decades. Eisenhower  
understood that we were facing a  
marathon, not a sprint.

Moreover, the logic of nuclear  
deterrence made the conventional  
wars Ike had commanded in the  
1940s obsolete. Now, there could be  
no margin for error; the Cold War  
brought with it different calcula-

ity with the United States, political  
forces in Washington cried out for  
greater defence spending and a more  
aggressive approach to Moscow. In  
response, the administration publicly  
asserted that there was no such thing  
as absolute security. "The problem in  
defence is how far you can go with-  
out destroying from within what you  
are trying to defend from without,"  
Eisenhower said. And he followed  
through, balancing the budget three  
times during his tenure, a record  
unmatched during the Cold War.



This theme was introduced at the  
start of Eisenhower's first term. On  
April 16, 1953, the new president  
spoke to the American Society of  
Newspaper Editors, just weeks after  
Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's death.  
In this "Chance for Peace" speech -  
one as important as the farewell  
address but often overlooked by his-  
torians - he seized the moment to out-

line the cost of continued tensions  
with the USSR. In addition to the  
military dangers such a rivalry  
imposed, he said, the confrontation  
would exact an enormous domestic  
price on both societies:

"This world in arms is not spend-  
ing money alone. It is spending the  
sweat of its labourers, the genius of  
its scientists, the hopes of its chil-  
dren. The cost of one modern heavy  
bomber is this: a modern brick school  
in more than 30 cities. It is two elec-  
tric power plants, each serving a town

The notion captured the imagination of scholars,  
politicians and veterans; the military-industrial  
complex has been studied, investigated and  
revisited countless times, including now, at its  
50th anniversary. Looking back, it is easy to see  
the parallels to our era, especially how the  
complex has expanded since Sept 11, 2001

of 60,000 population. . . . We pay for  
a single fighter with a half-million  
bushels of wheat. We pay for a single  
destroyer with new homes that could  
have housed more than 8,000 people.  
. . . . This is not a way of life at all, in  
any true sense. Under the cloud of  
threatening war, it is humanity hang-  
ing from a cross of iron."

Contrary to many historians'  
suggestions, Ike's farewell speech  
was not an afterthought - it was the  
bookend to "Chance for Peace". As

early as 1959, he began working with  
his brother Milton and his speech-  
writers to craft exactly what he would  
say as he left public life. The speech  
would become a solemn moment in a  
decidedly un-solemn time, offering  
sober warnings for a nation giddy  
with newfound prosperity, infatuated  
with youth and glamour, and aiming  
increasingly for the easy life.

"There is a reoccurring tempta-  
tion to feel that some spectacular and  
costly action could become the  
miraculous solution to all current dif-

appeal to his countrymen to put the  
nation and its future first. "We . . .  
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 spir-  
itual heritage. We want democracy  
to survive for all generations. To  
come, not to become the insolvent  
phantom of tomorrow."

As I see my grandfather's black-  
and-white image deliver these words,  
a simple thought lingers in my mind:  
This man was speaking for me, for  
us. We are those grandchildren. We  
are the great beneficiaries of his gen-  
eration's prudence and sacrifice.

Until today, perhaps, we have  
taken American leadership, domi-  
nance and prosperity for granted. In  
those intervening years, we rarely  
asked if our policies were sustainable  
over the long haul. Indeed, it has only  
been since the catastrophic financial  
meltdown in 2008 that we've begun to  
think about the generational responsi-  
bilities we have for our grandchil-  
dren's prosperity and welfare.

Eisenhower's words, from the  
beginning of his presidency to the end,  
come back to us from the mists of  
another era. They remind us, sadly, that  
sometimes we must revisit our past to  
learn what we have always known.

COURTESY THE WASHINGTON POST

*The writer is an energy and international  
affairs expert and chairman emeritus of  
the Eisenhower Institute*