Not Yet A Garrison State: Reconsidering Eisenhower's Military–Industrial Complex

JEFFREY A. ENGEL

Dwight Eisenhower's farewell address continues to resonate, beyond this admirable special edition of *Enterprise & Society*. The term he employed to describe the influence of corporations and financial interests over national defense policy, the "military–industrial complex," usefully summarized phenomenon of his time. It also depicts an ongoing and arguably even structural phenomenon within contemporary American society. Ike would therefore appear in retrospect one part keen observer, another prophet. As the articles in this forum collectively suggest, the ideas embedded within his now-famous phrase continue to frame contemporary scholarship fifty years after his final Oval Office speech, though with a far narrower lens than Ike envisioned, and with less dire societal results than he feared. The military–industrial complex is both more real, and less frightening, than he foretold. At least, so far.[1]

The term itself, "military–industrial complex," has fully entered the national lexicon in the ensuing five decades. It shapes punditry and public opinion, and even how academics conceive of their studies. Our forum authors have largely taken their charge to write on

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JEFFREY A. ENGEL is the Kruse '52 Founders Professor, Bush School of Government & Public Service and Director of Programing for the Scowcroft Institute for International Affairs, Texas A&M University.
Contact information: 4220 TAMU, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4220, USA. Email: jaengel@tamu.edu

1. The author would like to thank Phil Scranton and the editorial board of *Enterprise & Society* for the invitation to contribute to this forum, as well as Benjamin Engel, Thomas Zeiler, Susan Ferber, and Katherine Carté Engel for their helpful critiques.

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this topic as an opportunity to explore particular slices of an American economy shaped, served, and fundamentally altered by association with military spending. Theirs are microhistories, exploring local consequences of the Cold War.[2] Collectively they demonstrate the pervasiveness of the Cold War over all aspects of American society. Befitting this journal's interest our four papers largely addressed the national security state's impact on business, though similar far-reaching effects can easily be found within the nation's education system, transportation network, political environment, and overarching culture. They show that the military–industrial complex might be viewed as just another form of government stimulus, a politically-safe vote for military Keynesianism palatable to fiscal conservatives loath to support redistribution of wealth solely for domestic purposes. Though they admirably illuminate government's twentieth century reach, the four articles do not fully engage the broader philosophical aspect of Eisenhower's warning, specifically his fear that such politically palatable military spending threatened to erode the broad foundations of American liberty. Fortunately, Eisenhower proved better at identifying the problem of the growing military–industrial complex than in predicting its potential pitfalls, though each of these points, as well as the four papers in question, will be addressed below.

This forum shows the range of government's societal reach from the mid-twentieth century forward. For Eugene Gholz, the aviation industry stands as a case-study; for Mark Wilson, it is chemical and metal manufacturing; for Edmund Wherle, the interrelationship of employment and prosperity with military spending is the key, while for Jocelyn Wills it is high technology. Each has demonstrated the broad interconnection among interest, profit, and security that emerged to shape the American economy during World War II and after, largely demonstrating the state's impact on business. A broader definition also exists for understanding the military–industrial complex, however, one that explores not only the way it catalyzed and warped the American economy but also how actors engaged in military production, be they manufacturers, labor, or government, ultimately influenced national security policy not only for security's sake alone but also to maximize their own interests. This was Eisenhower's primary point and greatest fear, that American diplomacy and foreign affairs would fall prey to parochial or financial interests, and in turn that those unelected forces would prioritize *their* goals above the public good. "In the councils of government," he intoned, "we must guard against

2. Having elsewhere called for just such small studies of global events, what I term the "local consequences of diplomacy," I admit to being quite sympathetic to this approach. See Engel, *Local Consequences of the Global Cold War*.

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the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military–industrial complex." Furthermore, "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."[3] In short, the establishment of segments of the economy permanently devoted to military production, a development he deemed unfortunate though necessary given the grave nature of the Soviet threat, threatened traditional American values because it created powerful interest groups capable of overriding the delicate balance of power ingrained within the American political system.

Our contributors have turned Eisenhower's warning on its head in the most fascinating of ways. He warned of unelected economic influence over national policy. Our authors have ably demonstrated the way national policy in turn affected specific segments of the classic corporatist triad of business, labor, and government. They are to be commended for their originality, and in particular for taking on the difficult task of illuminating how the small consequences of global events are by no means insignificant to the people, communities, and yes, businesses they impact. Ike would have approved. In a letter to his brother from May 25, 1959—a letter only released by the National Archives in December 2010, less for security reasons than because it was previously held in a private collection—the President noted "the importance of getting our people to understand that local affairs have a definite relationship with foreign affairs." Our authors epitomize this sentiment.[4]

Their approach does not, it should be noted, reflect either how the military–industrial complex is most commonly understood nor necessarily how Eisenhower intended. The phrase typically serves as a short hand for describing any influence of dollars over national security policy, though linguist and social critic Noam Chomsky suggests the joining of these forces "is not specifically military," being instead better understood as "the core of the modern economy" and "just the industrial system operating under one or another pretext" to influence national policy and society.[5] It can mean any confluence of profit and policy that undermines the public's overall welfare. Thus noted food writer Michael Pollan can easily invoke the "organic–industrial complex," while activists routinely rail against the "prison–industrial complex", the "polluter–industrial complex," or even the "wedding–industrial complex" without first explaining the broad outlines of their imagery.[6]

3. Eisenhower, "Farewell Adress."
4. Roberts, "In Archive."
5. "War Crimes and Imperial Fantasies".
6. Pollan, "Naturally," 30. For other uses of the linguistic formulation, see for example Hartnett, ed., *Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex*; Chrys Ingraham, *White Weddings*, 15; and Faber, *Capitalizing on Environmental Injustice.*

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The term is rarely invoked as a compliment. Eisenhower himself did not view the military–industrial complex's development as a positive force within American society, and his phrase taps into and conjures long-standing cultural values embedded within the American narrative. Its roots have a particularly impressive pedigree, including classical republicanism's fear of encroaching power, alongside Christianity's recurrent theme that wealth corrodes moral values.[7] Max Weber famously suggested just such a caustic moral role for commerce within the European and Western context, while Perry Miller influenced generations of American historians and social critics with the suggestion that a similar commercialism undermined the spiritual core of Puritan society with effects that continue to ripple throughout the American experience. These are but the tip of this broad cultural and scholarly iceberg.[8] Charles Beard famously located economic motivations within the nation's constitutional founding, and even while putting aside debate over his conclusions, we might safely read his critique published immediately before the First World War as illustrative of the Progressive Era fear of financial influence over society's best interests.[9] Throughout progressive ranks, similar laments over financial and commercial influence were legion, whether the topic at hand was banking legislation or food safety; but the subject of war aroused particular passions. "The object in having war and in preparing for war is to make money," Nebraska Senator George W. Norris railed in opposing American entry into Europe's Great War, concluding: "Human suffering and the sacrifice of human life are necessary, but Wall Street considers only dollars and cents."[10] Belief that monetary interests were so crass as to embrace war and the death of their fellow citizens purely for the sake of profit drove the famous Nye Committee's mid-1930s investigation of Wall Street's role in pushing Washington to join the Great War, and one can easily hear echoes of this critique not only from New Left revisionist scholars but also from the conservative right as well, in more recent charges of "no blood for oil" as the United States became embroiled in decades of Middle East interventions.[11] Mammon destroyed great souls from the past and undermined American virtues; we are therefore intuitively

7. Certainly celebration of poverty's spiritual benefits pervade other global religion's, but Eisenhower was most clearly influenced by Christian teachings. See, for example, Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*.

8. Engel, "Religion and the Economy."

9. Beard, *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*.

10. Norris quoted in Cooper, "The Command of Gold Reversed," 209.

11. Officially the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry.

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to inquire upon hearing the phrase military–industrial complex—what chance does our own generation stand of resisting their allure?

One need not be a linguist or progressive to see the effects of military policy throughout twentieth-century American society, beyond the business or national security communities. As historian Michael Sherry eloquently documented, military language and imagery, warped to no small extent by the perpetual-war state Eisenhower loathed and lamented in 1961, has infused American politics at nearly every level. "American political culture featured persistent if not unique moods," Sherry wrote, including "distrust of powerful government except when war validates it, longing for the unity and progress that war seems to entail, aspirations for military power and global hegemony, and anxieties about the costs incurred in attaining them."[12] Thus, the "war on poverty," "war on drugs," and the "war on cancer," to cite but three examples, made intuitive sense as rallying cries within the American political universe, even if classical military theorists from Thucydides to Clausewitz would have dismissed declarations of hostility against an undefeatable element of the human condition. For recent critics of American diplomacy and global (over)reach, such as Andrew Bacevich, businesses' role within this political process is both elementary and corrosive. Money and power simply go hand-in-hand, he argues in words echoing Senators Norris and Nye, especially as "Washington has a vested interest in preserving the status quo" of the "new American militarism." According to Bacevich, "For the military–industrial complex, there are contracts to win and buckets of money to be made. For those who dwell in the bowels of the national security state, there are prerogatives to protect. For elected officials, there are campaign contributors to satisfy. For appointed officials, civilian and military, there are ambitions to be pursued."[13]

This view of financial and business interests at odds with the common good when matters of national security policy are at stake is not only popular but also nonpartisan. "It turns out President Eisenhower wasn't making up all that stuff about the military–industrial complex," filmmaker Michael Moore recently wrote. "The only people really making the decisions about America's wars are across the river from Washington in the Pentagon. They wear uniforms. They have lots of weapons they bought from the corporations they will work for when they retire." Like Bacevich, Sherry, Chomsky

12. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 498.

13. Bacevich, "The End of (Military) History?" Bacevich expands this thesis in *Washington Rules*. See also his earlier.

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and others, Moore does not, it should be stressed, view the corporatist relationships embedded within the military–industrial complex in a positive light. "It matters not whom we elect," he concludes. Because of the military–industrial complex that Eisenhower foretold, "the Pentagon and the military contractors call the shots."[14] This view joins the far left and right of the American political spectrum. "I think if you are going to have prosperity, it serves everybody," Republican Presidential candidate Ron Paul said in 2007, by "making sure that the powerful special interests don't control Washington, that the military–industrial complex doesn't suck away all the wealth of the country."[15] Indeed, in 2008 even one of Eisenhower's grandchildren, herself a life-long Republican, publicly endorsed Barack Obama's presidential bid, largely on the hope that he might reign in the military–industrial complex of which her grandfather had warned, thereby "defending the long-term interests of the nation as a whole" against a whole caste of "selfish interests."[16] Clearly, to align oneself with Eisenhower's legacy on this matter is to count oneself on the side of the angels in the ongoing struggle against those willing to sell their stake in democracy, liberty, and the general welfare.

The papers in this forum generally do not cast such a negative light on the military–industrial complex because each highlights the economic impact of this system more than its potential political or philosophical liabilities. Each focuses on a particular area of government and business symbiosis within the broad realm of national defense, demonstrating how pervasive and at times pernicious the confluence of such powerful strains within American society. Each merits serious attention. Collectively, they reveal something business historians might well keep in mind when considering the malicious framing of the concept "military–industrial complex": prosperity and success were hardly guaranteed even within a climate of government largesse offered in the name of national security. As Mark Wilson eloquently notes, the "common understanding of risk and profitability in the defence sector . . . needs to be substantially qualified and enriched." Military-based profits not only made many wealthy but also "allowed for risk-taking, failure, and substantial dollar losses" among the less fortunate. Even in an era of free-flowing national security dollars, such as the Cold War at its height or World War II at its worst, not every firm prospered. Military–industrial complex therefore describes the overall tone and structure of permissive government spending for the sake of security; but to

14. Moore, "Dwight was Right."
15. "GOP Presidential Candidate Forum."
16. Susan Eisenhower, "Why I'm Backing Obama."

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understand the fate of individual firms within that environment one needs a sharper focus.

Eugene Gholz demonstrates this point with great clarity, arguing from a deep study of the aviation industry that Cold War military contracts did not automatically generate corporate profits or business success. On the contrary, military and commercial aims were often in tension, if not in opposition. This is an important conclusion indeed, given the aviation industry's role—axiomatically offered by critics and proponents of military spending alike—as the best case-study for witnessing the Pentagon's commercial influence. Gholz perceptively notes that the Pentagon refused to be treated like simply another customer and rejected corporate attempts to engage its buyers just like those from airlines. "While the MIC [Military–Industrial Complex] helped push the state of the art in aircraft technology," Gholz writes, with specific reference to defense spending as a spur to business and technological innovation, "military contracts did not have a strong impact on particular firms' competitiveness in commercial markets nor did they create an American competitive advantage versus European aircraft manufacturers." Put bluntly, he concludes that Cold War military spending did not aid commercial production nearly as much as commonly believed; and to his mind, hardly at all.

This is a contentious claim indeed. There has been no shortage of works evaluating the notion that the American aviation industry enjoyed significant market leverage due to Cold War military spending. [Truth in advertising: my own work supports this view].[17] Yet Gholz's study prompts reconsideration. He ably demonstrates the need to look anew and critically at the topic, especially given his commendable melding of theory and fact to reach a vigorous conclusion. His is the most innovative contribution to this crowded debate to emerge in a decade if not more.

This argument is perhaps a step too vigorous, alas, demonstrating at once not only the utility but also a potential pitfall of micro-studies (and of the ways more broadly that theory might lead historians astray). Gholz's focus on aircraft production is nuanced and his conclusions reasonable when the specific production lines and airframes he explores are the sole focus. Such a focus, however correct within its particular scope and faithful to his theoretical models, obscures the full impact of the military–industrial complex. There were more ways to harvest profits from the national security state than merely through direct sales to the Pentagon. As Gholz writes,

17. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet* and "The Surly Bonds."

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Boeing "left the military aircraft market (but not all defense work) to pursue its commercial success: Boeing delivered its last military aircraft in 1965, thereafter focusing its efforts on commercial follow-ons to the 707 rather than on military successors to the KC-135." This conclusion requires a particularly narrow reading of "not all defense work." The company continued to reap great profits from its ongoing service contracts with the Pentagon, for the KC-135 and B-52 up through this day, for the AWAC system supplied to the Air Force through 1992, for missile systems of all shapes and sizes, to say nothing of its satellite and aerospace work for government agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and more lately the Department of Homeland Security. When American astronauts surveyed the moon, to cite one notable example, their dune buggy did not carry a Ford or General Motors nameplate, but instead read: Boeing.

These were profitable ventures indeed, producing funds that helped the company weather the volatile commercial aviation market and invest in future products for commercial and military buyers alike. NASA was itself a Cold War product, spurred by competition with the Soviet Union. Thus, if Boeing received profits from going to the moon as a Cold War imperative, and if those profits aided the company's overall bottom line, then a strict view of the 707/KC-135 accounting and production effort does not demonstrate the military–industrial complex's full influence over corporate success and failure. Indeed, a broader view offers instruction even if manufacturing is the focus. The swept wing and forward fuselage sections on Boeing's commercial products including the 707, 720, and 737, all derive from the 367–80 (the famed Dash-80) prototype, itself developed with knowledge gleaned from military research. Gholz is right to argue that different assembly lines were used to construct these planes and their military counterparts. Their origins however—paid for with money authorized by the Pentagon—suggest a more complex and interconnected lineage. If the Boeing-built 737 that I ride from Houston to Washington carries genetic material, in the industrial sense, from research first developed by Boeing engineers in pursuit of bomber contracts, and if profits from commercial and military sales alike swirled together to pay for the care and feeding of those engineers and their families, then am I not traveling on a product of the military-industrial complex? Indeed, the 737 offers a particularly interesting case in this vein, as it derived at least in part from defense research yet also became the base platform for the latest military AWAC program. The original AWACs themselves flew on 707 and then later 767 airframes, meaning that if one believes that the 707 derived at least in some small part from earlier military development, then from

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the 1970s through first decades of the twenty-first century the military is flying surveillance planes descended from commercial derivatives of long-ago military spending.

Such interconnectedness of military and commercial manufacturing during the Cold War underscores the military–industrial complex's penetration throughout American society. One can see its reach nearly as far as one is willing to look. Boeing traded engineers back and forth between military and commercial products; that interconnection is relatively easy to see. More profoundly, most of those Cold War-era engineers trained at universities with research programs in aeronautics funded to some extent by government contracts and aid. Boeing products, military and commercial alike, were assembled from subcontractors who used federal highways (another Cold War product) to deliver their goods, while their salespeople overseas benefited greatly from the presence, resources, and local knowledge of American embassies and consulates, themselves enlarged after 1945 and again after 1961 to meet Washington's ever-growing list of Cold War commitments. To separate "government actions" from "American society" during the Cold War is no easy thing; indeed, the Cold War itself made the government as pervasive as possible, with education—and ensuing high-tech commercial success—one indirect, but crucial result. Indeed, one can hardly imagine Boeing's relocation of its corporate headquarters from the Pacific Northwest to Chicago without the enhanced communication abilities fostered by the internet's technological revolution; the same World Wide Web whose own origins derived to no small extent from Cold War military research and spending.

This forum ably demonstrates that despite this extensive reach, the Cold War should not be viewed by historians as some heavenly panacea for business. Gholz notes with clarity the difficulties faced by aviation producers during this era, while Mark Wilson reaches a similar conclusion when exploring a different industry and period. His study of the Permanente Metals Corporation's struggle to reap a financial windfall, even within the seemingly safe business environment of World War II munitions manufacture, reveals at once the lesson that no business environment is truly fail safe. On the contrary, the potential for profit and the successes of competitors arguably spurred industry to undertake projects and contracts they might otherwise have deemed imprudent. Surely the desire to play an active role in the nation's collective crusade against evil catalyzed American business to act.

Indeed, one is struck—struck in the way one cannot easily erase it from one's mind—by the poignant opening to Wilson's paper. A company executive celebrates in a most tongue-in-cheek manner the

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death of untold thousands of civilians by products produced at Permanente factories. Half a million people were made homeless in the massive aerial assault on Tokyo that its output enabled. Roughly 17 square miles of the city burned to the ground. As Wilson notes, "Calhoun was giddy about the reports of the use of the M76 'goop' bombs because they seemed to validate PMC's more than four years of work on magnesium production, a period that had been full of setbacks and losses." One such loss, it would appear, was the ability of executives to fully consider the moral implications of their work. In a moment of global war, we should not be surprised in the least that Americans rallied round the flag and devoted their businesses to the cause. It was their patriotic duty, their civic obligation, and quite frankly their cause was just. Yet neither, it seems, might we subsequently so easily condemn businessmen and managers from other nations who themselves engaged in the horrific work of enabling their state to wage war. They considered arming the Luftwaffe, the Japanese Imperial Navy, and the Cold War Red Army their patriotic duty and civic obligation. No doubt German, Japanese, and Soviet engineers and experts considered their own causes just. There remains an important moral line between, say, the executives of Permanente who oversaw construction of incendiary devices wholly designed to kill Japanese civilians and those within Nazi Germany who oversaw production of crematoriums and gas chambers designed to exterminate European noncombatants. Upon close inspection, however, the width of that line becomes increasingly and uncomfortably narrow. The point: that the state's reach by mid-century and beyond penetrated every aspect of society, reaching even into areas that otherwise civilized and upstanding members of society might beforehand have considered unethical and beyond the pale. To take the military–industrial complex at its widest angle is to see the full impact of industrialized modernity. It turned Permanente executives into not only profit seekers but also as Wilson shows, as celebrants of wholesale human slaughter.[18]

18. Kurt Vonnegut, himself a veteran of fire-bombing, implicitly made a similar point in *Slaughterhouse Five*, whose protagonist played out a bombing assault in reverse, all the way back to the industrial birth of the bombs themselves. "When the bombers got back to their base, the steel cylinders were taken from the racks and shipped back to the United States of America, where factories were operating night and day, dismantling the cylinders, separating the dangerous contents into minerals" [Delta Paperbacks, 1999, p. 94]. If purposefully killing civilians at war is a war crime, and no less an authority than former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara firmly believed he and others involved would have been charged with war crimes if the Axis Powers had won the war, then one might reasonably ask at what point complicity and conspiracy to commit such crimes begins and ends. Guilt might well extend to the designers of the bombs, the owners of the bomb-making factories, the workers who constructed them, and so on throughout society. Such is the full range of moral association within the industrial state at war.

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So the military–industrial complex proved pervasive and potentially corrosive, and not necessarily lucrative, and so too might we add from Edmund Wehrle that its era was not a particularly easy time during which to labor. Even when operating in a classic corporatist triad alongside business and government agents, labor activists found full employment for their members largely beyond reach. Theirs was an important confluence of politics and prosperity, as for labor in particular during the Cold War (also during the World Wars), devotion to the national cause was not only good for its members but was also the politically safe call as well. Those on the extreme left within the labor movement ridiculed more centrist leaders such as Samuel Gompers for colluding too closely with government and business during the Great War, but he saw the need to secure his constituents' political legitimacy alongside their wages. So too did Cold War labor leaders find virtue in proving their patriotism and devotion to free market capitalism even as they colluded, as Wehrle demonstrates, to ensure employment for their members. When the great ship of state sets course, in other words, corporatist leaders of all stripes recognize that sometimes its just easier to pull oars in the same direction. Their largest political concern, Wehlre reveals, was not whether to support the Cold War state, but rather to ensure that labor's needs were prioritized on the same level as national security whenever military contracts and basing decisions arose. In other words, their greatest challenge was to transform the military–industrial complex into a fully functioning military–industrial–labor complex. Prosperity and full employment could only be ensured by active government engagement in the market, whatever the underlying rationale.

This notion of prosperity won and assured through military spending is an important lesson about the American political system indeed because conventional wisdom typically praises the onset of World War II as the saving grace for America's failing depression-era economy, and Cold War spending as prosperity's safety net thereafter. The somewhat half-hearted Keynesian boost of the 1930s, wherein financial stimulus was withdrawn by fiscal conservatives in 1937—including at heart Franklin Roosevelt himself—just when the corner on recovery seemed about to be turned finally led to prosperity only following the full stimulus of war. Military Keynesianism provided the dollars, or rather the political environment capable of launching sufficient government dollars to recharge the flagging economy, in a way Congress would never have endorsed solely to address domestic needs.

Americans proved willing to support government spending on defense far beyond all other rationales. What Congress would not

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endorse for roads, or tunnels, schools, or stadiums, even with unemployment at record levels, it willingly authorized for guns, ships, boots, tanks, and all things defense related. Indeed, during the Cold War, as noted above, Congress undertook domestic programs such as roads and infrastructure, but only after they had been painted with an anticommunist veneer. At its height in 1940, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal federal budget totaled $9.5 billion (9.9 percent of Gross National Product [GNP]). This was a far cry from the previous decade, which began with a 1930 federal budget of but $3.3 billion (3.6 percent of Gross GNP).[19] Much of this spending was, by the administration's design, deployed more to meet immediate needs and alleviate immediate human suffering than to recharge prosperity through a Keynesian multiplier effect, an approach that did not significantly influence policymakers until well after 1936.[20]

No matter the purpose, whether pump priming or relief, World War II soon made the seemingly robust levels of federal spending appropriated during the 1930s appear quaint. Total federal spending from 1941 to 1946 exceeded $367 billion, peaking during 1944 at over 44 percent of GNP. Such outlays knew little precedent in American history, more than doubling what had been spent during World War I. Gross national debt soared by 450 percent during the war years, compared to 165 percent during the depression itself. This growth in federal spending formed a crucial component of Eisenhower's concern for the nation's future as his presidency closed, though we should recall that foremost within his list of concerns was not national solvency or debt, but liberty itself. Conservative critics had long blasted Franklin Roosevelt's expansive budgets, much as conservatives in every generation had perceived overreaching state power embedded within near any expansion of federal authority. Here we might well consider Professor Wills' vigorous integration of the politics of surveillance alongside the need for corporate sales, what she terms the "surveillance state" as a natural complement to the military–industrial complex. The more the state can do, and in his case can see, the more conservatives fear it will see and will do.

Examples of this fear abound. Thomas Jefferson opposed establishment of a national bank, deeming it contrary to his reading of the constitution's enumerated powers for the government—though

19. Morgan, *Deficit Government,* 19.

20. As Morgan notes, "Roosevelt may have employed what were in effect Keynesian measures, but he had not converted to the Keynesian faith. Unable to make a complete break from the old-time religion of sound finance, he never reconciled himself to deficit spending as the fundamental, long-term approach to full economy recovery." See ibid, 39.

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as every junior high student in the country knows, Jefferson overcame his constitutional scruples when Louisiana was in the offing. Of greater concern than the constitutionality of the national bank was its potential reach, as Jefferson feared centralization of financial power threatened American liberty. "An institution like this, penetrating by its branches every part of the Union, acting by command and in phalanx, may, in a critical moment, upset the government. I deem no government safe which is under the vassalage of any self-constituted authorities, or any other authority than that of the nation, or its regular functionaries."[21] Jefferson's fear might well be rephrased as Eisenhower's: the fear that unelected power might one day overrule popular will for its own narrow interest. What Jefferson lamented at the start of the nineteenth century, and what critics of Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson assailed during their wars, Herbert Hoover and other conservatives perceived in spades by the close of the 1930s: the general expansion of the American state, with financial outlays and instruments represented the tip of a spear destined to undermine individual liberties. Deficit spending of the kind Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) proposed during the peacetime 1930s was, Hoover declared, "the first step towards fascism, communism, socialism, stateism, planned economy, or whatever name collectivism happens to be using at the moment."[22] Whenever the state expanded, the argument ran, freedom contracted. This exchange of liberty for security was arguably a necessary trade-off during moments of crisis, so long as the government released its grip as the crisis waned.

Eisenhower imbibed this ideological legacy of expansionist government's corrosive effect on liberty. He feared a home-grown "garrison state" as much as enemies like Nazism or Soviet Communism, and employed the term to describe an expansive federal power so pervasive throughout American society as to erode the foundations of traditional American liberties.[23] A government that warped (or worse yet controlled) the free marketplace would of necessity constrain liberty, he believed. According to historian Christopher Preble, Ike placed any long-term military spending in excess of 10 percent of GNP as likely to lead to a garrison state.[24] He thought the country might sustain substantial government intervention in the market for a short crisis without doing long-term harm, but as

21. Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Volume 10, 438.

22. Morgan, 41.

23. For discussion of Eisenhower's fear of the "garrison state," see Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State*) and Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*. For a useful primer on Eisenhower's Cold War strategy, see Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*.

24. Preble, *John F. Kennedy and the Missile Gap*, 26.

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he explained to financier Bernard Baruch, a sustained government role would "bring a new conception of the relation of the individual to the state" and change forever the "kind of government under which we live."[25]

It should be noted that his was not only a long-standing concern in American history but also a bipartisan one during the middle decades of the twentieth century; this belief that free markets curtailed to meet long-term crises might ultimately fail to produce the freedoms promised Americans as a birthright. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, a scion of the Democratic Party in addition to its leading early Cold War statesman, told Congress during World War II that "you could fix it so that everything produced here would be consumed here," thereby alleviating the need for exports and with them the need for an expensive foreign policy and international presence. There was, however, a downside: "That would completely change our constitution, our relations to property, human liberty, our very conception of law . . . and nobody contemplates that."[26] The government could control markets for the purpose of security, in other words, but it would no longer be the America that Acheson and Eisenhower inherited and sought to hand to their successors.

World War II was crisis enough for Eisenhower to justify such massive government enlargement and spending in the short term, as indeed it was for the majority of the American political elite. Yet the war against the Axis Powers was to his mind a crusade, and thus by definition temporary—especially if he did his job as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe right. It was not likely to prove perpetual and therefore a way of life. American planners as early as 1940 (yes, before Washington entered the fray) expected victory within a few years, and even began ratcheting down military spending in 1943, some months before the first Allied troops under Ike's command hit the beaches at Normandy.[27]

The Cold War, he came to fear by the close of his presidency, was different. Soviet-led communism posed an existential threat for Eisenhower, in particular given the apocalyptic potential of atomic warfare, but of equal concern was the Cold War's open-ended nature. None of Eisenhower's experts could predict with any certainty when the conflict might end, when the Kremlin might admit defeat, or when he as Commander-in-Chief might deem it safe to order a steady

25. Duchin, "The 'Agonizing Reappraisal'," 203–4.

26. For Acheson, see Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 236.

27. For discussion of American military-industrial preponderance during World War II, see Overy, *Why the Allies Won*.

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ratcheting down of defense spending. George Kennan, father of the containment doctrine, suggested in the late 1940s that an optimum strategy might produce a Soviet collapse within a generation. In truth it required more than twice that long, and even then came as a surprise to most knowledgeable observers.

Eisenhower came to office in 1953 intent on speeding the process of Soviet collapse, so long as it could be done safely and at a reasonable cost. He authorized an overall strategic review, named "Operation Solarium" for the White House room in which discussions initiated, which ultimately concluded that containment's flaws paled in comparison to the potential hazards of a more vigorous showdown with Moscow. Eisenhower ultimately approved, in his administration's first basic security policy statement dubbed NSC-162/2, a Cold War policy based on limiting Soviet encroachments through cost-effective deployment of tactical and strategic nuclear arms.[28] So long as Soviet leaders were made "aware of the great destruction of these weapons," he counseled, they would never initiate a war none could win.[29] They were ideologues, he believed, but they were neither foolish nor suicidal (that characterization, ironically, was instead applied with great fear to Mao Zedong and Chinese leaders). Soviet leaders might in time see the error of their ways, or their society might crumble of its own contradictions, as Kennan advised. Either way, a Cold War of indefinite duration was preferable to the immediacy of a hot nuclear exchange.

Yet embedded within Eisenhower's plan for countering Soviet power through the long-term advantages of the democratic and free market system lay the seeds of American destruction, a hazard he recognized. Any discussion of the military–industrial complex and its legacy, even ones designed to focus on small slices of the story, which fails to note this point misses Eisenhower's true message. Democracy could not perpetually sustain, he feared, a global contest of unknown duration. As Gholz notes and Wilson explicitly shows, high levels of government intervention in the marketplace might warp the market itself; as Willis argues, every technological advancement offered a new means of increasing government control; so too, as Wherle proves, did segments of the corporate triad place their own constituents' needs if not above, then at least on par, with national prosperity and security. In each case study for this forum, the length of the crisis offered opportunity for mischief, just as Eisenhower feared. "To continue indefinitely" in a perpetual state of

28. For Operation Solarium and NSC 162/2, and one of the best overall works on Eisenhower's strategic thinking available, see Craig, *Destroying the Village*.

29. Craig, 46.

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military readiness, he argued behind closed doors in 1953, "the cost would either drive us to war—or to some form of dictatorial government. In such circumstances, we would be forced to consider whether or not our duty to future generations did not require us to initiate war at the most propitious moment that we could designate."[30] There was no point to win a global struggle against communism if it required destruction of the very American institutions he had sworn to protect, Eisenhower judged.[31]

Quite literally, for Dwight Eisenhower in 1953, it was conceivably better to be dead than red, which is not to say that atomic warfare carried much appeal. By the summer of 1956, the crushing moral weight of atomic deterrence left him hardly able to consider use nuclear bombs. These weapons, he argued, were pushing us "past the point of human endurance." He did not want "a lot of long-haired professors" analyzing the problem or telling him the theoretical implications of his decisions. One thing was "dead sure," he concluded: "no one was going to be a winner in such a nuclear war. The destruction might be such as that we might have ultimately to go back to bows and arrows."[32] Soon he entered in his diary his fear that nuclear attack, for which there was no real defense given the realities of existing aerial technologies, "would literally be a business of digging ourselves out of ashes, starting again" not only as a society but also as a civilization more broadly.[33] By 1959, America's leader had become so horrified by the very notion of atomic warfare that he publicly advised, if war came, "you might as well go out and shoot everyone you see and then shoot yourself."[34]

This was the broad context for Eisenhower's final speech to the nation as President, and this context matters for appreciating the full depth of his warning to his fellow citizens. By 1961, the nation endured a conflict seemingly without end, the very type of conflict he believed incompatible with long-term liberty. Yet a decisive end to the Cold War would mean an end to civilization itself. Neither history nor ideology appeared to be on Eisenhower's side as he prepared to leave office and his long public career, especially as the ingrained structure of the military–industrial complex, those elements of society who stood to prosper by the Cold War's continuation, appeared increasingly entrenched and emboldened. More to the point, those entrenched structures, with what he termed their "total influence"

30. Chernus, *Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace,* 63.
31. Craig, 45.
32. Ibid, 56.
33. Ibid.
34. Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 66.

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felt "in every city, every state house, every office of the Federal Government," considered Cold War tensions crucial to their prosperity and survival.[35] Peace or détente would ruin business, they realized; much as the years from 1946–1948 were truly horrific for an aviation industry that had suddenly found itself devoid of military contracts following defeat of the Axis Powers. Eisenhower feared that these financial interests and self-interested business people might strive to ensure that peace never reigned, lest they lose their sources of wealth, that they would work to ensure that Cold War tensions never relaxed, and that Americans never retreated neither from their expensive global commitments nor from the military trappings of the garrison state.

Acknowledging the price, benefits, and long-term consequences of American militarism was the central lesson of Eisenhower's life, and he simply did not like the direction his conclusions ran. World War II had proven that Americans would endorse massive spending to counter an existential threat; the Cold War demonstrated that Congress would loosen its purse strings not for aid or trade, but almost exclusively to counter communism. Thus, the Truman Administration by the late 1940s returned repeatedly to the bogeyman of anticommunism as a means to win legislative passage of its expansive foreign policy. White House and Pentagon officials were not above waving the bloody shirt of communism when contentious votes in Congress were on the line. Cabled a final draft of the speech that would become forever known as the Truman Doctrine, for example, Secretary of State George Marshall counseled that perhaps the President "might not be overstating the case a bit." Truman's response: "it was clear that this was the only way the measure could be passed."[36] As Frank Kofsky ably showed in *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948* (a book too infrequently read or cited), this was an administration hardly above making bombastic arguments when contracts were on the line as well.[37]

The same dynamic played out under Eisenhower, John Kennedy, and the rest of their Cold War successors. When Congressional consent was required, anticommunism proved an easy and dependable card to play. And when the Soviets saw American military budgets increase alongside the brashness of American rhetoric, they in turn upped their own spending, which led to more calls for American military procurement, and so on and so forth. No less an authority

35. Eisenhower, "Farewell Adress."
36. McCormick, *America's Half-Century*.
37. Kofksy, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948*.

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than the august George Kennan came to fear this dangerous cycle of politics, diplomacy, and dollars. As one influential study of American Cold War strategy noted, "To Kennan, this state of affairs seemed to suggest something rather radical about America's Cold War: that it had begun for necessary geopolitical reasons, but that it had been protracted for another thirty-five years for reasons largely internal to the United States, rather than in response to external pressures and perils."[38] The military–industrial moment became the military–industrial syndrome, until ultimately it became sufficiently entrenched to warrant the moniker: "complex."

This was the point of Eisenhower's farewell address: that the nation could ill afford to have national security policy dictated by the tenets not only of security but of profit as well. Liberty could not survive in such a government-dominated marketplace, and the nation literally might not survive if those catalyzed Cold War tensions ever led to a crisis. There was no simple solution to this quandary, save a vigorous and engaged electorate, as the nation sought a safe passage between the rocks of the garrison state and the shoals of an anti-communism war. But one thing was certain in his mind: with business at the helm, or more accurately without a powerful former soldier such as himself capable of keeping business away from the helm, the ship of state was destined to run aground. The impulse to inflate security threats for the sake of perpetual war and perpetual profits was simply too great to avoid over time. Money would buy influence in the halls of congress—indeed, the penultimate draft of the President's speech chastised the "military–industrial–congressional" complex, though Eisenhower decided at the eleventh hour to eliminate the last element in that phrase and thus forgo the appearance of the executive branch chastising the legislative—and that influence would ultimately destroy American liberties.[39] The Cold War was a necessary struggle, and the Soviet Union a despicable threat. Yet the nation's very soul was at stake as much as its physical existence. "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist," he warned. "We must never let the weight of this combination engager our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizen 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."[40]

38. Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War,* 4.
39. Ibid., 193.
40. Eisenhower, "Farewell Address."

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This is the oft-cited segment of Eisenhower's farewell address, though to truly drive home his point, and its resonance for this journal's forum, we should note his off-the-cuff remarks offered the following day in response to reporters' questions. His was not an idle critique of national policy, but rather one infused by regret. He had been in office while the very developments he lamented became entrenched; thus he had concluded his previous evening's remarks with the confession "that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment."[41] The military–industrial complex was no simple thing, he elaborated the next day, no political ball to be slapped away or problem to be solved. It was American Cold War society as a whole, the militarism Sherry and Bacevich later identified, with the ubiquity Chomsky, Moore, and Paul later noted. "When you see almost every one of your magazines, no matter what they are advertising, has a picture of the Titan missile or the Atlas [missile] or solid fuel or other things, there is becoming a great influence, almost an insidious penetration of our own minds that the only thing this country is engaged in is weaponry or missiles."[42]

As we consider the implications of Eisenhower's famous speech and warning fifty years later, as historians concerned with business and as citizens, this is a warning indeed worth heeding. Americans are clearly still enmeshed within the structure of the military–industrial complex, though less clear is if we yet endure the garrison state Eisenhower feared. By 1989, as the Cold War whose growth Eisenhower oversaw finally began to wind down, expansion of U.S. defense spending outpaced domestic expenditures by the federal government. In real terms, Pentagon budgets increased nearly 25 percent under Ronald Reagan; domestic spending declined by an equal percentage. This allocation paled as a percentage of GDP to that required by World War II, with defense spending in 1986, at its Reagan-era high, totaling only 6.2 percent of GDP. It totaled, however, nearly 63 percent of the government's discretionary budget.[43]

Of greatest significance for appreciating Eisenhower's warning about the military–industrial complex's resilience and staying power is the realization that spending levels declined a surprisingly small degree after 1991, the nominal date for the Cold War's end. By the end of the Clinton era, the federal government still allotted nearly half its discretionary spending on defense, and spent nearly 3 percent of GDP

41. Eisenhower, "Farewell Address."

42. Sherry, 234.

43. Morgan, 171. See also http://www.truthandpolitics.org/military-relative-size.php#ref-1, accessed December 10, 2010.

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in the process. The promised post-Cold War peace dividend proved illusory, not because of persistent existential threats between 1991 and 2001 (the period when terms like American hegemony, hyperpower, and "unipolar moment" were bandied about policymaking circles), but rather because of entrenched political, labor, and economic interests. Military bases were shuttered or left open not due to military necessity, but rather following consultation with local economic leaders. Weapons systems were halted or sustained not because Pentagon planners desired or could do without them, but instead because contractors had wisely placed production facilities in the districts of influential legislators. By the 1990s, American labor finally won what the activists in Wherle's case study sought: widespread recognition of employment as a consideration in defense spending. In short, the military–industrial complex refused to let go even at the Cold War's end, proving itself an integral part of the structure of the American economy and political process, as Ike feared. Of course, any potential for widespread military savings evaporated following September 11, 2001. As of this writing, the United States currently spends more on defense than the rest of the world combined. With Pentagon planners increasingly rebranding their contemporary mission as "long war" or the "era of persistent conflict," future cuts appear unlikely.[44]

Eisenhower would, I think, be appalled. Entrenchment of the military–industrial complex seems complete. He did not mind spending on defense when necessary, but he feared the perpetual wartime state we presently enjoy. He would, moreover, question the conservative credentials of politicians who take defense spending off the table when considering potential budget cuts, in particular during a period of likely future austerity. In this vein, former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, for example, recently offered:

> "Something has to be done urgently to stop the out of control Obama–Reid–Pelosi spending machine, and no government agency should be immune from budget scrutiny. We must make sure, however, that we do nothing to undermine the effectiveness of our military. If we lose wars, if we lose the ability to deter adversaries, if we lose the ability to provide security for ourselves and for our allies, we risk losing all that makes America great! That is a price we cannot afford to pay."[45]

44. See, for example, Purpura, "Army Bigwig Speaks at WWII Museum," B1.

45. Rogin, "The Tea Party's Hawk". It is worth noting that not every conservative, even one with unquestionable hawkish credentials following his own Cold War service, agrees with Paline. As Defense Secretary Robert Gates noted in April of 2009, even military needs should be prioritized against the nation's broader requirements. "it is important to remember that every Defense dollar spent

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Eisenhower might well have considered that ideal version of America already lost, and the price too great indeed. Ike never considered the military sacrosanct and thus free from the laws of wise government. It was Eisenhower, we must recall, who argued that:

> every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children . . .. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense."[46]

As the year 2010 closes, Pentagon spending continuing apace and with little genuine opposition, yet health care, education, and long-term unemployment benefits for American workers remain political footballs. We are thus reminded yet again that nothing spurs Americans to spend like defense, not even the suffering of their fellow citizens.

The essays presented in this forum ably answer the charge given them by this journal's editors: to engage the military–industrial complex's legacy and impact upon the business community. These are prudent and insightful pieces. By taking the micro approach, they reveal much about the community, regional, and corporate effects of long-term government engagement in the marketplace for the purpose of making weapons and waging Cold War. E&S's editors gave me a somewhat different charge, to view these essays not only as a whole for what they reveal but also for what might reveal as avenues for further research. The time has come, now with the Cold War that spawned Eisenhower's lament over the military–industrial complex a full generation in the past, to look anew at its legacy. One need only note that military spending in 1991 and 2011 approach similar levels, noting as well that the drop-off before 2001 was hardly one Eisenhower might have embraced, to recognize the long-term influence of the military–industrial complex he foretold. Yet this raises the question embedded in Eisenhower's warning: are we yet

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to overinsure against a remote or diminishing risk or, in effect, to run up the score in capability where the United States is already dominant is a dollar not available to take care of our people, reset the force, win the wars we are in, and improve capabilities in areas where we are underinvested and potentially vulnerable. That is a risk I will not take." See Mary Louise Kelly, "Gates Calls for Shift in Defense Spending Priorities," National Public Radio, April 6, 2009. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102804336, accessed December 13, 2010.

46. Eisenhower, "The Chance for Peace."

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within a garrison state? One suspects that each answer to that question will be a particularly personal one, though I for one do not think the political climate of fear and security any greater today than during the 1950s of Joe McCarthy and rampant anticommunism. We endure vigorous pat downs to get on a plane, yet few if any academics have lost their positions since 9/11 due to opposition to government policy.

The answer to the question, are we yet living within a garrison state, might still remain, "not yet." This is one disturbing aspect of Jocelyn Wills' work, for it reveals that the type of technological innovation at the government's disposal may in fact matter. The military–industrial complex of the 1940s was largely about tanks and ships, though the atomic bomb was its ultimate product. The military–industrial complex of the 1960s not only took Americans to the moon, and buried intercontinental rockets beneath the mid-western plains, but it also spawned by the early 1970s the most vigorous and public antiwar movement the nation had experienced since the Civil War. In neither case did the military–industrial complex successfully limit civil liberties, it would seem, being more intent upon ensuring its easy access to profits. So long as the contracts continued within the state of permanent Cold War, those who Eisenhower dubbed the "influential" let the remainder of their citizens live free. Wills' article forces consideration whether high-technology surveillance capabilities might not yet change this equation, whether the Internet—another Cold War product—might not yet offer the capability for the government, or the influential, to control liberty for its/their own ends. I think not, but given that Eisenhower seemed so right in predicting the staying power of the military–industrial complex within the American political economy during and then after the Cold War, I am unable to respond to his prophesy, that of the garrison state, with anything less than "not yet."

Trouble still appears on the horizon, however, especially when Eisenhower's press conference remarks offered the day after the "military–industrial complex" address first fully entered the American lexicon are recalled and considered. Ike lamented the overt militarization of American society, the "insidious penetration of our own minds that the only thing this country is engaged in is weaponry." Clearly America today is a more militaristically aware state than the one Eisenhower governed. A decade after 9/11, World Series games pause in the seventh inning not only for the traditional stretch but also for a moment of collective jingoism as well. Soldiers, Marines, and Airmen are routinely—and one should stress, properly—thanked by strangers and pundits alike for their service. But teachers, Foreign Service officers, garbage collectors, nurses, and all sorts of citizens who themselves assumed a life of public service over a search for

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profit are typically excluded from the civic praise heaped upon the military. Our heroes today carry guns, and guns alone, a development the lifetime soldier Eisenhower would have hesitated to embrace, knowing full well the destructive power embedded in long-term militarism. Moreover, American society is by any measure violent, celebrating war not as an historical event or even a lamentable one, but rather one every citizen can partake in personally. Among the most popular video games of the 2010 season are those that depict first-person attacks on terrorists and America's Taliban enemies. Eisenhower feared the pervasive nature of the military–industrial complex, not only for its reach into the marketplace and the statehouse but also for its long-term cultural impact. The general growth of unelected influence, coupled with the long-term cancer of militarism, was at the end of the day what he feared would lead inexorably to the garrison state he loathed and spent his life combating. Half a century after his farewell address, we would be wise to consider his prophesies anew, if only to assure ourselves that he remained but half right.

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