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Eisenhower's Farewell Speech: Initial and Continuing Communication Effects

Abstract

When Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his final Presidential speech in 1961, he was using the opportunity to bid farewell to America, but he was also trying to warn his fellow countrymen about deeper challenges threatening the country. In this analysis, Eisenhower's speech is examined in light of the impact it had on American culture, communication concepts, and political ramifications. The paper initially highlights the previous literature on the speech, especially in light of its 50th anniversary, and reveals a man whose main concern was how the speech's words would affect his beloved country. The painstaking approach to the wording of the speech to reveal the intent is key, particularly in light of analyzing the motivations according to "virtuous communication." This philosophical construct indicates that Eisenhower's Farewell Address was crafted carefully according to a departing President's deepest values and concerns, concepts that he wanted to pass along to his successor, to his country, and even to the world.

Keywords

Eisenhower, political speech, rhetoric

Disciplines

Mass Communication

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B. Kuiper

Abstract—When Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his final Presidential speech in 1961, he was using the opportunity to bid farewell to America, but he was also trying to warn his fellow countrymen about deeper challenges threatening the country. In this analysis, Eisenhower's speech is examined in light of the impact it had on American culture, communication concepts, and political ramifications. The paper initially highlights the previous literature on the speech, especially in light of its 50th anniversary, and reveals a man whose main concern was how the speech's words would affect his beloved country. The painstaking approach to the wording of the speech to reveal the intent is key, particularly in light of analyzing the motivations according to "virtuous communication." This philosophical construct indicates that Eisenhower's Farewell Address was crafted carefully according to a departing President's deepest values and concerns, concepts that he wanted to pass along to his successor, to his country, and even to the world.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview of Eisenhower's Farewell Address

THE televised speech given by President Eisenhower on January 17, 1961, was Eisenhower's final public platform to say "goodbye" to the American public, and to provide one last warning about some of the dangers facing the country. Although the charisma and memorable phrasing of President Kennedy's inaugural speech on January 20 eclipsed some of Eisenhower's concepts in the short run, ultimately this farewell address has become one of the most quoted speeches of American history. The speech may have been only 15 minutes long, but much work went into the address, with Eisenhower spending nearly two years working on the speech; "the 21 drafts of the speech, showing the evolution of the final presentation" indicate the painstaking care the President used to craft his final message [21]. The speech may have been short, but its enduring legacy has had a foundational effect on how people in the United States think and talk about the military, business, and technology over 50 years later.

B. Importance of the Speech

The shift from the Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower to that of John F. Kennedy has often been regarded as a highly significant moment in the 20th century; David Frum [17], for example, comments pointedly at the dramatic economic and political shifts taking place in the transition year of 1961. Aside from personal style and political strategies, though, the

transition was significant also for the kinds of speeches it produced. Eisenhower's farewell address and Kennedy's inaugural address took place within just days of each other, and each is regarded as a key speech in American history [1].

Although much has been written about this transition from the "old" to the "young," or the military to the cultural, this paper specifically focuses on Eisenhower's farewell speech and the effects it has had on American communication, politics, and other foundational aspects. If for nothing else, such a focus would be useful to understand Eisenhower's Presidency; [2] states, "Possibly the most memorable, and very likely the most extraordinary, of the many speeches of President Eisenhower was his last". His own granddaughter, Susan Eisenhower, maintains that the speech is a key aspect in understanding this President, especially in how his "farewell speech was not an afterthought – it was the bookend to 'Chance for Peace' [one of his first main speeches as President]." As a conclusion to his Presidency, the address functions admirably in summarizing the person who sat in the Oval Office for most of the 1950s.

Obviously, analyzing this speech might help one understand a little more about the man Dwight D. Eisenhower. However, this speech has had a larger effect than of just biographical interest. Another specific aspect here is the speech's famous phase of "the military-industrial complex," a famous phrase in itself warranting deeper examination. The phrase appears particularly prescient given ongoing political issues [3]. In addition, [4] maintains the language and admonitions in the speech are exemplified in the phrase, and make it "the most enduring legacy of what became, arguably, the most famous farewell address since George Washington's, and that both Eisenhower and his staff were "surprised by the phrase's durability" [4]. Other reviewers go beyond the phrase and state, in regard to anyone reading or hearing the speech now, "You'll be stunned by its intellectual courage" [5]. Because the speech has made such an impression in America, and because it lies at such a transitional time in American history, the speech signifies much about politics, history, and communication.

C. Challenges of the Speech

The year 2011 had a particular focus on Eisenhower's words since it was the speech's 50-year anniversary. Reference [6] argues that Eisenhower would be "shocked to see how this influence [of the military-industrial complex] has grown over the past half century and how it has manifested in the country's immense military budgets, the nuclear arms race, our permanent war footing, the failure to achieve meaningful disarmament, and the illegal wars the US has initiated" [6]

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While this statement is very similar to that of many other writers, there is not unanimity on this issue. Others maintain, "It is clear that President Eisenhower believed we have more to fear from this hostile ideology [of communism] than we do from the military-industrial complex" [7]. These two writers exemplify not only the plethora of articles dealing with the speech this year, but also some of the deep-rooted differences that lie between various analyses. Such an example dichotomy between such views brings up the basic premise of this paper – that Eisenhower's speech is regarded as a hallmark of truth by multiple parties, sometimes even parties vehemently opposed to each other. As one example of this disparate evaluation says, "Rarely has a sober warning of a possible danger been so quoted out of context" [8]. Because of this speech's various interpretations, Eisenhower has been regarded as a libertarian in favor of total dismantlement of the military as well as an advocate of keeping some semblance of a strong military. Whatever the evaluation, Eisenhower's integrity remains intact. Eisenhower was not out to play political games. He truly felt the importance of what he was saying, and wanted every audience listening to feel the seriousness themselves, and to take his warnings to heart.

If the basic premise of Eisenhower's altruistic motivation is accurate the main problem, then becomes deciphering what Eisenhower's purpose was in delivering this speech. To discover a possible solution to this puzzle, this paper will explore three questions. First, from what moral foundation was Eisenhower speaking? That is, what values was he utilizing or appealing to as he delivered this speech? Second, who were the primary audiences he was addressing in his speech? He begins the speech with the ubiquitous "My fellow Americans," but did he have ulterior intentions as to who should hear and heed his words? Third, what kinds of effects did the speech have, and did these effects line up with what he had intended? He is well-known for his "military-industrial complex" phrase now; is this one-phrase memory sufficient for his aims? Answering these and other related questions will provide a way for modern readers to examine the effectiveness of an important speech in American history, and the semblances of Virtue involved.

D. Overview of Paper

This paper first takes a look at some of the pertinent writing that has been done about Eisenhower's farewell address, highlighting the idea that this President deeply cared about the wording and the effect that the speech would have on the world. The paper then describes the speech in some of its intent and wording. In the next section, the philosophical methods to be used in the speech's analysis are laid out, followed by the actual analysis of the speech. Finally, the paper concludes with the implications of the speech and possible avenues for further research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

For a speech resulting in such long-lived and even controversial dialog, it is a bit surprising that there are few authoritative voices commenting on the speech. Reference [4]

suggests that few people actually read the whole speech and center only on the famous "military-industrial complex" phrase. He adds, "Today, Eisenhower's Farewell Address largely remains in the public consciousness for the coinage of the "military industrial complex," an insight about the corporatization of power that has led to a tumble of exfoliations such as the "drug industrial complex," the "prison industrial complex," the "ag-industrial complex," and the "porn industrial complex." Again, this phrase seems to have made more of an impact on society than the speech as a whole. However, despite the general lack of focused and academic analysis on Eisenhower's Farewell Address, a few sources would be crucial for any such study. One of the earliest ones is Emmet John Hughes' book, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years*. In this book, Hughes lays out some of the basic principles of how Eisenhower regarded public speaking, saying the President's "greatest aversion was the calculatedly rhetorical device." Hughes then shows how the "down-to-earth" quality of Eisenhower's public speaking was developed and capitalized for his final Presidential speech.

Reference [15] spends particular attention analyzing the transition between Eisenhower and Kennedy, suggesting Eisenhower's farewell speech was "one of his greatest services as President." Sorensen and others comment on how smooth the transition was – perhaps one of the smoothest Presidential changeovers ever – and how this shift affected not only Kennedy's Presidency but also Presidencies beyond.

A more personal account, obviously, can be found in Eisenhower's own words. Reference [16] talks about the pressures surrounding him at the end of his Presidency and why he was so focused on meticulously preparing for his final speech. His words reinforce the concept others have noted, namely that Eisenhower was perhaps one of the last Presidents who was so directly involved in his speeches.

Other biographies and accounts provide similar material, for example, [23] outlines especially the personal nature of the speech, and how it should be regarded as a continuation of the President's ideas, not a final dramatic appeal to gain attention.

Although not a set analysis in itself, a discovery in 2010 of Eisenhower's extensive notes and revisions has provided new information about the thought processes that went into the painstaking creation of the address, of high significance for [3] and [23]. Reference [3] suggests, "The documents help explain the origins of the term [military-industrial complex], which Eisenhower used in the speech to warn against unbridled military development."

III. SPEECH OVERVIEW

Eisenhower's farewell address, as has been mentioned before, is not terribly long. At 1,948 words, it took the President only 15 minutes to complete, using his trademark "homeliness of phrase, earnestness of tone, and a sturdy directness of approach" [9]. President Eisenhower's personality and reputation cannot be ignored here, since much of the effect of the speech seems to derive from these aspects. Reference [4] suggests that no one else could have delivered

this speech, citing Ralph E. Williams, one of Eisenhower's speechwriters as proof: "I am sure that had it been uttered by anyone except a president who had also been the Army's five-star chief of staff, it would long since have been forgotten" [4] Without question, Eisenhower's personality and reputation were major factors in how the speech was received.

The actual text of the speech was designed as "a platform to warn and, at the same time, comfort the Nation" [10]. To that end, Eisenhower begins with a few paragraphs to thank the public, the media, and the Congress for his experience as President. Even here, though, the speech's themes of "cooperation" come through strongly. Such themes set the stage for the main part of his speech. Paragraph seven is a transitional paragraph, where his expected idea of how "America is today the strongest, most influential and most productive nation in the world" is quickly contrasted by the concluding sentence of how the United States needs to use that "power in the interests of world peace and human betterment." Here is the first taste of how "the departing Chief Executive explained the great irony of the Cold War: that to maintain our peace and freedom to that point, the United States had had to sustain a megalithic military establishment, but no longer" [11]. This last little three-word phrase must have been one of the first direct statements that caused listeners to realize Eisenhower was not going to end his Presidency on a status quo note.

Over the next several paragraphs of the speech, Eisenhower brought this glimpse of peace into brighter focus, and this is the section that usually gets all the attention. After thinly veiling some warnings against the communist threat against America, Eisenhower dives into the idea that the United States has a "recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties." He suggests here that any major program could cause problems for the country if it is "suggested as the only way to road we wish to travel." Balance then becomes key, "balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable," for example, but above all the idea that "good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration." After this reasonable suggestion, he then broaches the subject of how perhaps the country's military structure is getting out of hand, and might even be due for a major overhaul. He says, "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." He follows this idea with the now-famous sentence, "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." Eisenhower does not stop with the dangers of a military complex, however; he also suggests that even scientific research has become "more formalized, complex, and costly."

President Eisenhower makes these bold statements, and concludes his warnings by reminding the audience that he knows of what he speaks. He speaks with authority and desperately wants to avoid more war "as one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness" of such conflict. Then, with an effective transition into his down-home, warm personality, he ends his speech with his idea of what all Americans strive for: "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 few spiritual blessings." With such a sweeping statement of American goodwill on the table again, he caps his speech with a personal "Now, on Friday noon, I am to become a private citizen. I am proud to do so. I look forward to it. Thank you, and good night." He punctuates this last idea by taking off his glasses and even smiling a bit, leaving the American public with a personal, friendly impression as the view of President Eisenhower.

IV. PHILOSOPHICAL CONSTRUCTS

A. Overview

The main source for philosophical analysis used here will be ideas from Alasdair MacIntyre's book, *After Virtue* [11]. The three main ideas to be considered from this book are 1) the disintegration of society's moral fabric, 2) the concept of how specialization in social science ultimately leads to the inability to truly judge reality for what it is, and 3) the importance of a person developing a sense of "internal goods" in his or her life. As will be shown in the "Analysis" section, all three of these ideas are reflected in Eisenhower's speech, and help reveal the kind of person behind the speech's words. In fact, many of Eisenhower's statements in this speech and in other sources seem very similar to what MacIntyre postulates in *After Virtue*.

B. Summary

The first idea to be taken from Alasdair MacIntyre is one of the main themes of his book. He raises his central "disquieting suggestion" saying his hypothesis is that our ability to communicate about morality is about to disappear if it has not already disappeared. Namely, we have "lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality." Later in the book, he postulates a summary of how the modern person views morality: "My morality can only be what my will creates," which creates a very individualized – and thus almost chaotic – sense of morality [12]. He again focuses his attention on the issue when he says that the "language – and therefore also to some large degree the practice – of morality today is in a state of grave disorder" [12]. This absence of a moral foundation as outlined then becomes the foremost concept utilized from MacIntyre.

The second aspect to use from MacIntyre would be the concept of "specialization" or even the idea of "expert." MacIntyre makes it very clear these modern formulations of learning and profession are products of the above-mentioned

absence of morality. He particularly condemns the social sciences for their inability to achieve a semblance of moral standards, saying they are “predictively weak” and they “do not discover law-like generalizations” [12]. A few sentences later, he suggests “the true achievements of the social sciences are being concealed from us – and from many social scientists themselves – by systematic misinterpretation” [12]. In this kind of setting, social science has influenced similar kinds of thinking on many levels of society, perhaps especially in business and politics. Thus, to the managers and the bureaucrats who claim they entitled in their “own limited fields to be called experts,” MacIntyre responds: “It is not claims of this kind which achieve power and authority either within or for bureaucratic corporations, whether public or private. For claims of this modest kind could never legitimate the possession or the uses of power either within or by bureaucratic corporations in anything like the way or on anything like the scale on which that power is wielded” [12]. From these views, it can be surmised that MacIntyre views many constructs of society as being built on a flimsy foundation, one without a sense of virtue. Power in this setting then becomes power used for its own sake rather than for the welfare of the public.

The absence of a strong moral foundation in society leads to the third point from MacIntyre, namely that individuals still need to develop a strong sense of virtue. As MacIntyre develops a theme of trying to find a moral center in a moral-less culture, he comes to his ultimate definition of virtue: “A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those good which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods” [12]. On this same page, he says some of the internal goods might be “justice, courage and honesty”; he then mentions some external goods, especially as seen by institutions: money, material goods, power, and status. The whole nature of virtue becomes relative to who is doing the “practice” and the reasons of such practice. MacIntyre points out that a person operating from an internal goods stance often will suffer – through direct persecution or simple absence of benefits – in comparison to someone focusing especially on external goods. In the end, a person following a moral compass, so to speak, is a person exercising admirable moral qualities. Such qualities ought to exercise more, according to MacIntyre as he concludes his book: “What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already on us” [12].

Alasdair MacIntyre has much more to say in this book and in his other writings, of course, and picking out only three points as representative might seem inadequate to the task. However, it does seem clear at least that one major preoccupation of MacIntyre is the absence of a moral foundation in modern society. For example, he broaches this subject again in his later book, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, when he states, “There is no theoretically neutral, pre-theoretical ground from which the adjudication of

competing claims can proceed” [13]. From this root, this paper takes the stance that the power of organizations and the practice of virtue in today’s world are two natural resulting concepts. In addition, the use of these three suggested facets provide a workable base from which to judge a specific communication event.

V. PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

As noted above, there appear to be several connections between the ideas of Alasdair MacIntyre and President Eisenhower’s Farewell Address. The first link is the recognition that the moral structure of society – or America specifically – is decaying to the point where some sort of change needs to take place. Much of his especially pointed remarks in this vein speak primarily to the ideas of power and organizations (which will be covered in the next section), but Eisenhower does speak in general terms about the problems facing the United States and the need for action on the part of its citizens. In paragraph 22, Eisenhower clearly feels as though he’s left things unfinished; “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.” This statement reflects a clear sense of what was affecting the foundation of the country. Some have focused precisely on this very concept: “I think we should view the speech as an admission of failure on the president’s part, an acknowledgement that he was unable to curb tendencies that he had recognized, from the very outset of his presidency, were problematic” [14]. Others suggest, “What worried Eisenhower ... is the absence of a larger view of American interest” [15].

Like Alasdair MacIntyre, but perhaps not to the same extent, Dwight Eisenhower saw the problems facing his country. In addition, Eisenhower also saw similar potential for hope. In paragraph 8 [24], for example, he suggests one part of the solution: “There is called for, not so much the emotional and transitory sacrifices of crisis, but rather those which enable us to carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle with liberty the stake.” Later, in paragraph 20 [24] he adds, “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.” MacIntyre’s solution to the moral vacuum was very similar, as noted above, in that it is a focus again on internal goods rather than external goods which provides a renewed moral foundation for society. As Eisenhower [24] states in paragraph 21, “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.”

The sense of finding a deep-rooted center to operate from seems very similar between MacIntyre and Eisenhower. This similarity becomes even clearer when looking at the second comparison of how each viewed the ways organizations handle control and power. In obvious ways, the very central phrase of “the military-industrial complex” echoes several of

MacIntyre's ideas. This phrase "represented a combination of political and economic forces, both in and out of government, capable of bringing immense pressure to bear upon the shaping of official policies" [9]. Eisenhower [24] highlights the military situation most specifically in paragraph 13 [24], listing information detailing the vastness of this new phenomenon in American history. The impact on society is not to be underestimated, he says, since everything about America, "Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved" (par. 14) [24]. Eisenhower [24], however, did not see this military influence as the most problematic. In paragraph 16 he suggests a larger societal movement behind the military situation: "Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades." Paragraph 17 lays out this situation rather forcefully:

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.

So great is this danger that Eisenhower [24] warns his audience in the next paragraph that "public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite."

As proof of Eisenhower's warning, an internal government memorandum from 1963 regarding the influence of both the military and large corporations states "If ... successful, it will be impossible for any civilian official ever again to exercise judgment ...[without] measuring the influence of large corporations with Congress or ... to control the military men who are theoretically under his direction" [16]. In his autobiography, Eisenhower reiterates this idea of the power of institution, saying that these forces "override the convictions of responsible officials" [17]. Again, the correlations between Eisenhower's words and MacIntyre's ideas seem clear. A world in which power is often exercised for power's sake seems to be a fear of both men.

The third and final connection between MacIntyre and Eisenhower lies with the idea of virtue. In the first point above, it was mentioned that this philosopher and this President each saw virtue as one way to combat amorality. For this point, it is argued that not only did Eisenhower see virtue as a solution, but also he himself was an example of someone who practiced that morality. In other words, his life in general but his speech specifically shows a person focused more on MacIntyre's internal motivations rather than external gain. This characteristic perhaps is best seen in how the speech defied expectations or, even 50 years later, interpretation. Eisenhower was seen as the symbol of the "Powers That Be,"

one of the group of other older statesmen around the world [18]. Such a setting, then, would make some of Eisenhower's ideas seem a bit radical. The speech represents "some of the bravest and most prescient words and thoughts ever uttered by an American President" [5]. In fact, "Some who had no idea of the energy Eisenhower had spent during his second term to resist demands for more military spending to escalate the Cold War thought this an eccentric utterance by a President they had seen as a front man for the Pentagon and Big Business" [19]. In addition, both "liberals and conservatives alike applauded [the speech's] contents" [20], but there still was a tendency for these and other groups to focus on specifics they were applauding. For example, "Liberals delighted to hear these words did not know that they conveyed one of his most profound anxieties" [19]. Conversely, the kind of acknowledgement espoused by Eisenhower "would move us far towards the conservative vision for American leadership, strength, and liberty that Eisenhower's Address embodied" [8]. One reason for this seeming lack of agreement is the suggestion that since Eisenhower was not playing politics but was speaking from the heart, the absence of partisanship means listeners feel more freedom in interpreting the words of the speech [21]. The very language of the speech in itself quickly shows a preoccupation with balance [22]. A textual analysis of the farewell address points out the parallel language Eisenhower specifically used to highlight "balance" as a key concern for the country [10], [23]. More importantly, though, Eisenhower was speaking from a center of what he believed the country should hear, not how he was going to be remembered or how the speech was going to affect his Republican party. "Ike was rising above the issues of the day to appeal to his countrymen to put the nation and its future first" [24]. Behind the scenes, there appeared to be an Administration's internal debate that Eisenhower quickly settled: "The White House staff also debated if the speech should be made before Congress, for maximum publicity value, but Eisenhower vetoed that idea, stating, 'I'm more interested in how this reads a generation from now than I am in the comment it gets in the headlines'" [11]. Eisenhower's grandson, David Eisenhower, "contends his grandfather was not concerned with the political fallout" speech, being more concerned about the communication of truth [3]. This idea of truth might be a way to settle an old question; "Generations have wonder what prompted the most celebrated general of the Second World War to leave the White House with a warning about the military" [25]. It might be argued that MacIntyre would have a similar answer as well. In *After Virtue*, for example, MacIntyre says, "The essential function of the virtues is clear. Without them, without justice, courage, and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions" [12]. As shown above, it appears that Eisenhower was practicing these very virtues as he addressed his country for the final time [26].

As part of the evidence to this claim is the idea mentioned earlier in this paper – that Eisenhower spent months crafting this speech to make sure it was doing what he wanted it to do. Eisenhower seemed fully aware the speech "was going to have

an impact” [3]. In addition, the address, “far from being an afterthought, was among the most deliberate speeches of Eisenhower’s Presidency” [21]. The speech was not a last-minute creation, which speaks to its credibility, but it also continues the line of thinking established early on in Eisenhower’s Presidency, that the speech “expressed what he had felt all along” [20]. Perhaps this is best seen in comparison to a statement he made eight years beforehand, in a speech before a renowned group of newspaper editors – “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, is a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed” [3]. MacIntyre would suggest the concept of internal goods would mean a person would have consistency in actions, and Eisenhower’s farewell address is certainly consistent in the ways he viewed the military and other institutions of America.

VI. CONCLUSION

Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Farewell address may have “sparked little fire at first,” but its concepts “flickered and finally flared into a heated national debate about the defense industry” [11]. This quiet little speech with the left-hook jab of “the military-industrial complex” has provoked such fires of argument for five decades now, trying to pin down exactly what Eisenhower was trying to say. By using a few of Alasdair MacIntyre’s principles, such interpretation might not be quite as difficult as imagined. When the 34th President of the United States directly shows his concern for the state of morality in his country –as well as a blueprint to regain that morality, highlights the dangers of organizational power, and demonstrates his own personal allegiance to integrity, it seems clear that he is in many ways living out the ideals that MacIntyre proposes. Eisenhower may not be one of the first Presidents people cite as being a “great President,” but it might be argued that “the best don’t just fade away, for the principles behind their bravery remain etched on history for future generations to learn from and pass on in turn” [11]. In his final address to the public of the United States, Eisenhower showed that his unswerving principles of peace and equality make him at least a President to remember, a man whose integrity would be well worth imitating.

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