

RALPH E. WILLIAMS
6531 JAY MILLER DRIVE
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22041

December 28, 1985

Mr. Martin M. Teasley
Assistant Director
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
Abilene, Kansas 67410

Dear Mr. Teasley:

Your nice letter and enclosed materials about the Eisenhower Library were waiting for me when I got back from Williamsburg yesterday, and the answer to your main question is yes indeed, I would be delighted to meet with your representative at whatever date we can agree upon. I don't plan to set foot outside the Beltway for at least two months, so most any time during that period would be suitable to me. If time is important, my phone number is (703) 256-3305.

I have always been astonished at the attention that has been given to the "military-industrial complex" portion of President Eisenhower's last speech, and agree with Pete Aurand that its true significance has been distorted beyond recognition. 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. But as things were, it became red meat for the media, who have gleefully gnawed on it for twenty five years.

As to your query about the origin and source of the idea and phrase I'm sending along a Xerox copy of a memorandum which may be of some help. It is the only definitive paper I could find in my files relating to the so-called farewell address, and you are certainly welcome to the original (which is itself a file copy) if you feel it merits a place in the Eisenhower collection. As you will immediately note, at that early date we were still thinking in terms of a State of the Union message, which made less and less sense as the sands of the Administration ran out. So at some point in its evolution it turned into a farewell message.

Mac's protocol in getting the speech construction process started was to have an initial brainstorming session with Steve Hess and me, at which time each of us would toss in his ideas about what topics should go in. If they survived the ensuing discussion Mac would then ask the

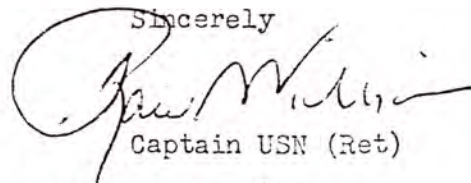
originator to develop a full text version for further consideration as an insert into the main speech. Some of these made it all the way to the final draft and others never got into the first--the second item discussed in the memorandum being one of the latter. In its stead I substituted the caveat against a scientific-technological elite, which is now about as well-remembered as Edward Everett's Gettysburg Address. (It no doubt would have fared better if Ike had been a Nobel Laureate in physics). The October 31 memo is therefore in essence both a minute of the meeting and a work order to me covering the assigned topics. As you will also note, the celebrated phrase itself had to evolve only slightly from "war-based" to "military" as the initial modifier over the course of the speech's gestation.

I'm sure the President never thought about either the phrase or the concept itself until Mac Moos put the first draft under his nose. I am equally sure, for reasons too lengthy to go into here, that it struck a responsive chord in his breast. Ike may not always have said the right things, but he never ever put anything into a formal speech that he didn't believe and fully intend to say, as the few hacked-up drafts you have amply testify.

As to other participants in the preparation of the speech, I would say that probably only Steve Hess, in addition to the others you mentioned, would have had any substantive input. It is possible that Mac may have showed it to a few senior staff members for comment--Bryce Harlow for one--but in general you could count on the fingers of one hand the number of people who were privy to a speech's contents prior to its delivery.

Well, enough for now. I'll wait to hear from you.

Sincerely



Captain USN (Ret)

*P.S. Since you expressed an interest in what I did in
The White House, I have a number of papers--largely
copies of memoranda I wrote to Mac Moos & other staff
members, to which the Library is welcome. Your assistant
can select those most appropriate when he is here--
TW*