

Was Biden right to warn about the tech-industrial compl...

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Joe Biden's swan-song speech to the people of the USA warned about the threat to the people of the USA from what he called the tech-industrial complex, otherwise known as Musk and his tech billionaire friends. Was he right to do so? But was he also too late?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKc7h12AEqI?si=HS2z8YzmstJGskci>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=h5375-17b5e94-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is transcript:

President Joe Biden, in his farewell speech from the Oval Office in the White House, warned the USA about what he called the Tech-Industrial Complex.

He wasn't the first president to issue such a warning. Sixty four years ago, and I don't remember the speech in question, President Dwight D. Eisenhower left office as president of the USA and also issued a warning to the people of that country about the threats to it from commercial power.

Eisenhower, who was the general who led the invasion of Europe during the Second World War which ultimately led to the fall of the Nazis, said this. when he left office in

January 1961.

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 only and will persist.

Eisenhower was clearly right. The rise of misplaced power was a threat to the USA. In 1961, and as Joe Biden had to say in 2025, it is still a threat. All that Joe Biden did was rename the military-industrial complex and call it the tech-industrial complex.

His words were:

Americans are being buried under an avalanche of misinformation. and disinformation enabling the abuse of power. The free press is crumbling. Editors are disappearing. Social media is giving up on fact checking. The truth is smothered by lies told for power and for profit. We must hold the social platforms accountable to protect our children, our families and our very democracy from the abuse of power.

And that power he called the tech-industrial complex. He did, of course, have some very specific people in mind. There is no doubt that these comments were aimed at the likes of Elon Musk and the other so-called 'tech bros' in Silicon Valley who are supporting the rise of Donald Trump.

But what he was talking about was something that was remarkably similar to what Eisenhower described in 1961. What he was suggesting was that the power of the private corporation to shift the values within American society in its favor - to enrich a few at cost to the many, by spreading fear, by spreading misinformation, by spreading abuse - that threat remains as real now as it was 64 years ago. And I believe Biden is right.

I wish he'd done it earlier in his career. I wish he had talked about this a long time before his farewell speech. I wish we'd seen the Democratic Party in the USA do something about this. Because frankly, it seems to be as in hock to corporate power in the USA as the Republican Party does. Well, perhaps slightly less, but so little less as to make almost no difference. But at least he's used those words now.

He's said that this tech-industrial power threatens us all. And it does.

It threatens the ordinary person who's abused online, and there will be nothing to stop that happening.

It threatens the person who is abused in a libellous way.

It threatens the young person who's bullied at school.

It threatens the small business who these large tech powers literally try to bring down

through their own ability to force others out of the market.

All of this is an exercise in extracting profit, just as the military complex tried to do in the early 60s.

I remember the 1960s all too well. There was a US Air Force base not far from where I was brought up, so the reality of US military power was something that was quite familiar to me at the time. USAF Bentwaters it was, for those who are geeks about these things. And what happened then? There was this massive expansion of military spending, partly, of course, because of Vietnam, but partly because that was a proxy war in the whole Cold War between the USA and Russia.

A total pack of lies was said about the threat to us from Russia; that Russia was going to be marching troops across the plains of Germany and threatening the UK, when, frankly, there was not a hope that Russia could have done such a thing at the time. Any more, by the way, than it could now.

And, things were said about China which were so unrealistic at that point in time that it was absurd. And slightly more credible if they were said now. But again, really not credible.

And now we have the tech bros coupling with that military power to actually, in a sense, produce something that is very similar.

Remember that Trump is demanding that the countries of Europe increase their military spending to 5 per cent of their gross domestic product - their national income.

It's the same force on the march. "You gotta spend on the military, or you're gonna die." No, you're not. Almost certainly, you won't. Spend money on diplomacy, solve the conflicts, understand the causes, resolve them, talk about how we can actually live peacefully together on this planet rather than threatening each other, stop spreading the lies and the misinformation, and then you might achieve an outcome. But that's not the style of the neo-fascist. And I do happen to think, and I'm allowed to have this opinion, that Trump is one of them.

So, where are we? We are, as Joe Biden said, at threat, real threat, from the tech-industrial complex. And things have changed since 1961. The change is that these people have more power over the media, over the network of ideas, and the information that we get all the time, every day, day and night, if we want it. And that really does change the potential outcomes for the way in which the world sees itself and each other. Those tech companies literally influence our worldviews in ways that it's very hard to understand. But they threaten us if they believe that aggression at a macro and a micro level is the way to leverage profit for themselves. And I fear they do. And I fear the consequences of that.