Naively Hoping Trump’s D-Day Anniversary Rhetoric was Sincere

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Like many, I awoke early on Thursday to watch President Trump and other leaders mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day. This was a moving ceremony, reminding us of a critical moment in history and celebrating the contributions of those who fought gallantly and gave their lives to save the world.

As a partisan, I am normally critical of Mr. Trump’s rhetoric. In that vein, I was delighted that President Emmanuel Macron of France used his speech diplomatically but clearly to lecture Mr. Trump about the importance of Western values that really made America great. However, as a scholar of communication who understands the importance of separating political beliefs from professional judgments, I salute Mr. Trump for his excellent speech (perhaps his best ever). It hit the right note both in content and form.
I wish that Mr. Trump would not return, as no doubt he will, to his usual habit of following scripted speeches with shameful and unpresidential tweets and remarks undermining Americans, American institutions, America’s closest friends and allies, and our most cherished democratic values.

I hope — perhaps naively — that Mr. Trump was sincere today, and that his future deeds and discourse will reflect the words in his D-Day anniversary speech. If nothing else, Trump’s words on Thursday can be used to document his hypocrisy.

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