

THE
PENTAGON LABYRINTH:
10 SHORT ESSAYS TO HELP YOU
THROUGH IT



FROM 10 PENTAGON INSIDERS,
RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS AND SPECIALISTS
WITH OVER 400 YEARS OF DEFENSE EXPERIENCE

STRAUS MILITARY REFORM PROJECT
CENTER FOR DEFENSE INFORMATION

The Pentagon Labyrinth

10 Short Essays to Help You Through It

From 10 Pentagon Insiders, Retired Military Officers and Specialists
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Center for Defense Information
World Security Institute
February 2011

Essay 1

“Why Is This Handbook Necessary?”

by Franklin C. Spinney

People say the Pentagon does not have a strategy. They are wrong.

The Pentagon does have a strategy; it is: ‘Don’t interrupt the money flow, add to it’

Col. John R. Boyd (U.S. Air Force, ret.)
Fighter Pilot, Tactician, Strategist,
Conceptual Designer, Reformer

Today, 20 years after the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the United States spends more on defense than at any time since the end of World War II. This is true even if one removes the cumulative effects of 65 years of inflation from the current defense budget. Yet, notwithstanding the absence of a nuclear-armed superpower to threaten our existence, this gigantic defense budget is not producing a greater sense of security for most Americans.

Indeed, we have become a fearful nation, a bunkered nation, bogged down in never ending wars abroad accompanied by shrinking civil liberties at home. We now spend almost as much on defense as the rest of the world combined, yet the sinews of our supporting economy, particularly the all-important manufacturing sector, are weakening at an alarming rate, threatening the existence of the high-income, middle-class consumer society we built after World War II.

President Obama promised change, but he is under intense pressure to increase the defense budget even further, in part because he is continuing his predecessors’ war-centric foreign policy. At the same time, he is being pressured to reduce the rapidly increasing federal deficit, caused in part by the rising defense budget, but also by an ill-advised bank bailout and the cyclical effects of the worst recession since the end of World War II. Moreover, the president initially promised to place the Pentagon off limits, while he sought reductions in discretionary spending for civilian programs and only reluctantly put defense spending “on the table” when he convened a bipartisan panel to seek a comprehensive path to a balanced budget. Lurking in the background, hanging over the American people like a guillotine, lies the menacing possibility of

cutting Social Security and Medicare. In short, Obama may have promised change, but he is continuing the establishment's business-as-usual practices, including the grotesque diversion of scarce resources to a bloated defense budget that is leading the United States into ruin. Whether or not Obama's defense policy is a question of his free will is quite beside the point.

The salient question is: How did the American political system maneuver itself into such a destructive straightjacket?

This handbook is intended to provide readers - particularly students of defense, young military professionals, new Capitol Hill staff and concerned citizens - with the tools to understand the Pentagon's contribution to this mess and what might be needed to clean it up. We will speak to not just the insatiable demands for ever larger defense budgets, but also the directly resulting damage to America's defenses and to the integrity of its politics. And, most importantly, we hope to provoke thought on reversing that pervasive damage.

Follow the Money Trail

One source of the pressure for more defense spending is that our two relatively small wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, both much smaller in scale than the Korean or Vietnam wars, have stretched our military to the breaking point.¹ This is not to say that the day-to-day combat our troops face is any less grueling. On the contrary, our troops are stressed out, exhausted and many are traumatized by the intensity of their experiences - all worsened by the endless troop rotations caused by a military manpower base that is too small to sustain even these small wars. Moreover, despite the doubling of the defense budget since 1998, equipment and weapons are being worn out and not replaced, something that did not happen in either Vietnam or Korea.² The inventory is aging rapidly and modernization is going down the tubes because the new weapons the military

¹ These wars are small in terms of scale and tempo of operations. Bear in mind that the Korean and Vietnam wars took place against a backdrop of Cold War commitments. Today, the United States is spending more than we did in 1969 when we had 550,000 troops in Vietnam. But the Cold War meant that we also maintained hundreds of thousands of troops in Western Europe and East Asia, a huge rotation base at home to support these forward deployments, a large Navy fleet of 579 ships (compared to 287 today) to control the seas, and thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert in airborne bombers, missile silos and submarines. Nevertheless, according to a report issued by the Congressional Research Service, the cumulative costs of the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq have made the response to Sept. 11 the second most expensive war in U.S. history, exceeded only by World War II ("Cost of Major US Wars," CRS RS 22926, June 29, 2010; find it at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22926.pdf>).

² For example, during the Vietnam War, the Air Force modernized its inventory of F-100s and F-105s with considerably more expensive F-4s, A-7s and F-111s.

services choose to buy are many times more expensive than their predecessors. Therefore, the Pentagon cannot possibly buy enough new weapons to replace existing weapons one for one - even with a defense budget that has almost doubled since 1998.³

This current-war problem is a symptom of a deeper, more subtle web of intractable defense pathologies. These pathologies flow out of military-bureaucratic belief systems and distorted financial incentives that evolved slowly over the 40 years encompassing the Cold War. These pathologies and belief systems slowly insinuated themselves deeply and almost invisibly into a domestic political economy that nurtures financial-political factions of the Military - Industrial - Congressional Complex (MICC). The result is a voracious appetite for money that is sustained by a self-serving flood of ideological propaganda, cloaked by a stifling climate of excessive secrecy. President Eisenhower warned us to guard against the corrosive danger of exactly this in his 1961 farewell address.⁴ He was ignored, and today, 50 years later, the domestic political imperative to steadily increase the money flowing into the MICC reaches into every corner of our society. It distorts and debases our economy, our politics, our universities and schools, our media, our think tanks and our research labs, just as Eisenhower predicted it would. Even without the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to hype the money flow, Mr. Obama could not have escaped massive pressures to increase defense spending.

In retrospect, it is clear that the Cold War served as a domestic political engine to keep the money flowing into the MICC. Many believed, erroneously as it turned out, the end of the Cold War would produce a “peace dividend” that would shut down the MICC and return the United States to being a normal country engaged primarily in peaceful business, not war.⁵ However, by 1991, a true peace dividend would have collapsed the defense industry and its powerful political dependents. To survive and flourish, the factions of the MICC badly

³ See “National Defense Budget Estimates for Fiscal Year 2011,” Table 6-8: \$708 billion (amended to include the requested funding for war spending in 2011) compared to \$370 billion in Fiscal Year 1998 (converted to constant FY 2011 dollars) represents an increase of 91 percent, if one uses DOD’s official inflation indices, available in Chapter 5 of the same National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2011. Warning: DOD’s inflation indices are self-serving and can exaggerate the effects of past inflation, thus reducing the apparent increase in today’s budgets. Find “National Defense Budget Estimates for 2011” (also known as the “Green Book”) at the DOD Comptroller’s Web site at <http://comptroller.defense.gov/Budget2011.html>.

⁴ Find a copy and video of this address at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/dwightdeisenhowerfarewell.html>.

⁵ A pamphlet I authored, “Defense Power Games” (Fund for Constitutional Government, 1990; download available at <http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/09.pdf>), explains why the belief in a peace dividend was fallacious; however, I failed to predict the MICC’s dangerous mutation.

needed to evolve a subtle, pervasive shift in strategy, a subliminal mutation in the MICC's political DNA. It is now clear that this mutation has taken a frightening form: namely, the need to foment an enduring voter-terrifying threat and unending small wars to justify the money flow needed for the MICC's survival.

Without that never-ending succession of little wars (Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, the first and second Gulf wars, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, the war on terror, etc.) keeping the political system lathered up, the MICC's political-economic house of cards would collapse. A little reflection reveals that this mutation actually started in earnest as early as 1990, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Clearly Sept. 11 did not create this mutation, but it certainly proved a windfall for expanding the scale and cost of our small wars.

Continuing small wars (or the threat thereof) are essential for the corporate component of the MICC; these companies have no alternative means to survive. Although they now make up a very substantial part of America's much diminished industrial base, they cannot convert to civilian production. Many of them tried and failed; they simply do not have the marketing, managing, engineering and manufacturing skills to compete successfully in global commercial markets. In the prophetic words of William Anders, CEO of General Dynamics in 1991, "... most [weapons manufacturers] don't bring a competitive advantage to non-defense business," and "Frankly, sword makers don't make good and affordable plowshares."⁶

⁶ "Rationalizing America's Defense Industry: Renewing Investor Support for the Defense Industrial Base and Safeguarding National Security," Keynote Address by William Anders, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, General Dynamics Corporation, presented to *Defense Week*, 12th Annual Conference, October 30, 1991, 13. Anders' intent was to explain why General Dynamics was not going to diversify its business into the non-defense sector, given the end of the Cold War. He rationalized a takeover strategy to increase market share in a (temporarily as it turned out) shrinking market. This was a precursor to the "Pac-Man" consolidation strategy promoted by President Clinton's then Deputy Secretary of Defense, William Perry, at a meeting with the defense titans, dubbed the "Last Supper." Perry's strategy led to industry-wide mergers in the early to mid 1990s. Significantly, when the defense budget began to grow rapidly after 1998, there was no undoing of the consolidation. Thus, today the defense industry is dominated by three giant all-purpose weapons manufacturers, two of which now have their headquarters in the Washington, D.C. area, and the third (Boeing) with a major government relations office in the D.C. area as well, to more closely supervise their most important corporate activity: the lobbying efforts that influence the money flow out of the Pentagon, Congress and White House.

Turning Clausewitz on His Head

It is easy to throw rocks at President Obama, but he did not create the defense mess, nor did his predecessor - though George W. Bush's reckless spending, coupled with incompetent management in Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon and the domestic politics of the war-centric foreign and domestic policies that metastasized in the wake of Sept. 11, certainly worsened the crisis and accelerated the Pentagon's day of reckoning.

In fact, Mr. Obama inherited a Defense Department that was in the terminal stages of a meltdown first ignited as far back as the mid 1950s, when the unit costs of weapons started to grow substantially faster than the defense budgets. The deliberate explosion of military electronics spending - radar and other sensors, automation, communications, and then digitization - in the late 1960s greatly accelerated this cost growth and widened the mismatch further. That huge cost growth was (and still is) justified with a myopic argument, entirely tautological, that rising cost and technical complexity were a necessary consequence of our advantages in technology - and it was this technology that was the source of our strength.

The dogmatic belief that greater weapons system complexity and, even worse, greater organizational complexity enhances combat effectiveness is at the epicenter of the belief system sustaining the MICC. In truth, as later essays in this book will show, the out-of-control complexity of our weapon and command systems has shackled our forces in the field, making them rigid, predictable and highly vulnerable to faster thinking, more creative and more adaptive enemies using far simpler weapons and systems of command.⁷ Our drive towards complexity makes a mockery of the hard-learned lessons of history going back thousands of years.

Most readers have heard of the KISS principle, distilled by World War II GI's out of their hard-won combat experience: Keep It Simple, Stupid. KISS and its antithesis, complexity, were hardly new concepts in the 1940s. They are, for example, at the heart of Clausewitz's 200 year-old theory of friction in combat - encapsulated in his famous statement that, "Everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a

⁷ "Complexity (technical, organizational, operational, etc.) causes commanders and subordinates alike to be captured by their own internal dynamics or interactions; hence they cannot adapt to rapidly changing external (or even internal) circumstances." (Col. John R. Boyd, "Patterns of Conflict," slide 176) To understand the reasoning underlying this brilliant and original insight, download the entire "Patterns of Conflict" briefing at <http://dnipogo.org/john-r-boyd/>. Also, find an excellent and very readable biography of Boyd in Robert Coram's *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (Little, Brown and Company, 2002).

kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war.”⁸ Clausewitz considered friction to be the pervasive atmosphere of war, or the fog of war; his musings on the proper conduct of war emphasized simplicity to reduce this friction.⁹ The ideology of the American military - and its academies - purports to be grounded in Clausewitzian thinking. Yet, for at least the last 40 years, military service doctrine, headquarters briefings, and defense contractor brochures and propaganda have continuously asserted that increasing the complexity of our technology and organizations is the key to lifting the fog of war. The complexity dogma becomes ever more deeply ingrained, notwithstanding our painful combat lessons on the ineffectiveness of complex weapons and command systems in Vietnam, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁰

In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, using mounds of data and analysis, reformers clearly laid out the future consequences of the cost-budget mismatch in terms that were never rebutted empirically by the defenders of the status quo.¹¹ Despite that, the military reformers were unable to convince either the Pentagon leadership or members of Congress of the long-term dangers posed by the

⁸ See: Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Anatol Rapoport (Penguin Books, 1968). Chapter 7 in Book 1 discusses friction.

⁹ According to Clausewitz : (1) each adversary possesses an independent will and therefore can act and react unpredictably; (2) uncertainty of information acts as an impediment to vigorous activity (i.e. friction); (3) a variety of psychological and moral forces can impede or stimulate vigorous activity; and (4) military genius can overcome friction, simplifying the myriad difficulties of war. These ideas are timeless but, as American strategist Col. John Boyd has shown, Clausewitz overemphasized the importance of reducing your own friction while greatly underestimating the importance of amplifying your adversary’s friction. See slides 40, 41 and 42 of Boyd’s “Patterns of Conflict,” downloadable at <http://www.dnipogo.org/boyd/pdf/poc.pdf>, or http://www.dnipogo.org/boyd/patterns_ppt.pdf.

¹⁰ While the lessons of Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan are clear, some readers may question the inclusion of Kosovo. Kosovo is a case study in the failure of high complexity weapons and organizational arrangements. U.S. military planners predicted a “precision” bombing campaign would force the Serbs to capitulate in only two to three days, but the air campaign grinded on for 79 days. Yet when it was over, NATO intelligence determined only tiny quantities of Serbian tanks, armored personnel carriers, self-propelled artillery, and trucks were destroyed. Serbian troops marched out of Kosovo in good order, their fighting spirit intact, displaying clean equipment, crisp uniforms, and in larger numbers than planners said were in Kosovo to begin with. Moreover, the terms of Serb “surrender,” which the undefeated Serb military regarded as a sell out by Serbian President Milosevic, were the same as those the Serbs agreed to at the Rambouillet Conference, before U.S. negotiators and Secretary of State Madeline Albright inserted a poison pill to queer the deal, so we could have what the politically troubled Clinton administration thought would be a neat, short war.

¹¹ Readers interested in examples of the numbers and logic behind this statement are referred to (1) *Defense Facts of Life* (Westview, 1985), (2) “Defense Time Bomb,” (<http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/07.pdf>), and (3) “Defense Death Spiral,” (<http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/05.pdf>).

increasing complexity/ineffectiveness of our hardware and organizations, the shrinking, aging force consequences of the weapons cost explosion, the combat dangers posed by the rigid, techno-dependent mindset, or the corrosive influence of the warped financial incentives that fueled this death spiral.

In response, the factions of the MICC united in persuading a succession of presidents to waste 30 years pursuing the fantasy that we could buy our way out of the military-economic death spiral with ever larger defense budgets funding fewer numbers of ever more complex and costly weapons. The circularity of the underlying argument for complexity was perfectly expressed in 1980 by Defense Secretary Harold Brown, a leading proponent of high-tech spending and one of the chief architects of the shrinking, aging force: “Given our disadvantage in numbers, our technology will save us.”¹²

A telling vignette of the buy-our-way-out fantasy is the Ronald Reagan spending spree beginning in 1981: his budget increases unleashed a round of cost growth wherein weapons costs grew at a far faster rate than ever before, thereby widening the gap between accelerating unit costs and the much slower growth of the overall budget. Those Reagan budget increases led directly to a 1990 combat force structure that, overall, was smaller and older than in 1981. Similarly, the ongoing Clinton-Bush-Obama spending spree that began in 1999 merely set the stage for a today’s much larger crisis.¹³

A Case in Point: The 2010 QDR

We decided to produce this anthology in early 2010, when it became clear that President Obama’s defense team was not up to even acknowledging, let alone fixing the core problems discussed above. This became obvious when the Pentagon released the results of the Quadrennial Defense Review early in 2010, one year into Mr. Obama’s presidency.

When a new president assumes office, as Mr. Obama did in January 2009, he inherits the long- range defense budget plan that was produced over the preceding 18 months by his predecessor’s Pentagon. Given the reality of a Congress committed to ongoing spending programs, there is little any president can quickly do to change his predecessor’s budget in a way that reflects his own policy intentions, unless he just wants to indiscriminately throw money at the

¹² As quoted in *Newsweek* in 1980; see David Dickson, *New Politics of Science* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 125.

¹³ Readers can confirm this by referring to the cost, force structure and age data in the last two references of footnote 11.

Pentagon, as Ronald Reagan did in 1981.¹⁴ In effect, the new president is a prisoner of the Pentagon's fatally flawed bureaucratic planning process known as the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS)¹⁵ and all the MICC budget games it contains.¹⁶

But there is more. Mr. Obama also inherited a congressionally-mandated requirement to produce a long range strategy document during his first year in office. This document is known as the Quadrennial Defense Review or QDR, and it is required by law, every four years, at the end of the first year of a newly elected president's term.¹⁷ The QDR is supposed to shape the activities of the PPBS, but they both go on simultaneously, and by necessity, pretty much independently. Nevertheless, the 2010 QDR was Mr. Obama's first real chance to imprint his policy intentions on the MICC.

Obama's Pentagon let him down by producing yet another sham of a QDR.¹⁸ To make a long story short, consider just one important example. Judge for yourself if it suffices to make the point.

First, a little background: the Pentagon has been producing FYDPs since 1962. But they have been repeatedly criticized, quite rightly, for producing defense

¹⁴ In 1981, the Reagan administration was so intent on throwing money at the Pentagon they chose to rush through an amendment to President Carter's 1981 budget. Without any kind of systematic review—and not having the time to type up a new budget—Reagan's political appointees directed the Pentagon to just write in pen-and-ink changes adding billions of dollars to hundreds of line items. Much of this largesse was immediately converted into cost growth in existing programs.

¹⁵ The product of the PPBS is the Future Years Defense Plan or FYDP. This document is produced by staff work involving millions of man hours over a period of 18 months; it lays out the Pentagon's future spending intentions for the next five years for thousands of individual line items. The first year of the FYDP is the budget that is sent to Congress each February. So, with only two months to make changes, and a staff not fully in place, the most a new president can do is make a few marginal changes to his predecessor's document.

¹⁶ A description of the MICC's gaming pathologies can be found in my 1991 pamphlet "Defense Power Games," (<http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/09.pdf>) and in my June 4, 2002 statement to the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, United States House of Representatives (<http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/02.pdf>).

¹⁷ In the 1994 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress mandated the Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM). Among the usual plethora of "feel-good" recommendations was the idea that DOD should undertake a major quadrennial strategy review. Reacting to this, Congress directed the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review as a method to conduct a "fundamental and comprehensive examination of America's defense needs."

¹⁸ See, for example, my critique of the first QDR in 1997, which can be downloaded from <http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/06.pdf>.

budgets disconnected from the national military strategy. Because the dollar allocations made in the budget define the government's real policy, the critique was logically equivalent to saying there was no functioning national strategy, and budget decision-making was actually driving strategy (which was and still is the case). The QDR legislation was the most recent attempt to deal with this long-standing criticism by requiring the Pentagon to lay out a framework for matching its military strategy and policy ambitions to its budgetary, people and technology constraints.

The 2010 QDR, together with the new FY 2011 budget (and accompanying FYDP), therefore, are supposed to permit an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses implicit in the administration's proposed match-up between resources and strategy. This information would then become the grist for a rational national debate by linking strategic considerations to the inevitable compromises made in the sausage-making factory that is Congress. Moreover, as this was the first defense budget President Obama controlled from beginning to end, and because it represented \$700 billion-plus that Mr. Obama had temporarily put off limits in the extant debate over spending, it was crucially important for the Pentagon to get the QDR and the accompanying FYDP right in a logically consistent and transparent manner.

The Pentagon flunked the test.

For the past 20 years or so, the mainstream press, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Pentagon's own Inspector General have inundated the American public with well-supported horror stories about the Pentagon's aging and shrinking force structure, the Pentagon's unauditible budget shambles, the apparently deliberate inability of the Pentagon's accounting system to track actual expenditures, the weapons cost growth that outstrips the budget growth and, more recently, the wear-out of the force structure caused by our never-ending wars, and the alarming increase in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) casualties (and suicides) caused by the excessive troop rotations mandated by shrinking force structures.

With this in mind, readers should now download the QDR and the FY 2011 Budget Overview from these links:

QDR -

<http://www.defense.gov/qdr/QDR%20as%20of%2029JAN10%201600.pdf>

FY 2011 Budget Overview -

http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/FY2011_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf

These reports are searchable PDF files. I urge readers to do word and phrase searches on terms like "age," "weapons aging," "shrinking forces," "weapons cost growth," "wear-out," "excessive troop rotation," "sustainability of

deployments,” “accounting,” “audit,” “tracking expenditures,” or anything else one can think of that might relate to the widely known and overwhelmingly important people, money and hardware problems described above. Determine for yourself that not one of these vital national security issues are acknowledged, addressed or analyzed in either the QDR or the defense budget.

A search in the “Budget Overview” document for the word "audit," for example, will take you to page 7-34, among others, where you will find that DOD set a goal of reaching 100 percent readiness to audit its assets and liabilities by the year 2017, but the last column shows that the indicator of progress made toward that goal in FY 2010 was deleted at the request of the Comptroller, who happens to be the chief financial officer of DOD! Furthermore, the “auditability” asserted for 2017 would not include any audits of specific weapons programs!

Alternatively, you could search for any mention of these central problems by reading the entire text - but be advised, it makes for grim reading. Either way, a reader that approaches this task objectively will end up with the same conclusion: these documents fail to touch on any of the pressing strategy and resource problems described above, much less present plans for correcting any of them.

Defenders of the MICC status quo might say we must go forward with these ridiculous plans that do nothing but whitewash business-as-usual because we are at war and need the resources “for the troops.” But that argument merely proves our point about the MICC needing continual war to keep its political economy afloat.

Nor is it true that the ongoing wars force us to accept the budget as is: President Obama could freeze the non-war defense budget at this year's level, just like he is doing for the rest of discretionary spending by the government. He could tell the Pentagon to go back to the drawing board and produce some plans that address the all-too-real fiscal problems we face. He could declare the bookkeeping shambles a task of the highest national security urgency - which it is - and order the Pentagon to clean it up with a massive crash program, leaving the budget freeze in place until full and complete auditability is achieved, or better yet conduct the audits themselves.

The omission of critical thinking, the failure to engage DOD’s most crucial problems in the 2010 QDR is no accident - it represents a defense of business-as-usual. And business-as-usual brings us full circle back to Colonel Boyd’s quote at the beginning of this introduction: the Military - Industrial -

Congressional Complex “...does have a strategy; it is: don’t interrupt the money flow; add to it.”¹⁹ The QDR is the handmaiden of that strategy.

Pressing On

The rest of this handbook is concerned with providing the reader the tools for assessing national strategies that serve the country’s interest rather than the MICC’s - and for assessing productive changes in the money flow, changes that contribute to improved training and better combat leadership for our people in uniform, more effective weapons that cost less, cures for the shrinking and aging forces, full accountability throughout DOD, and sustaining troops in the field without the excessive rotations that incur widespread psychological—and physical—casualties in wars now driven more by the need to keep the MICC afloat financially than by considerations of the national interest.

Our aim in all this can be found in James Madison’s call for an informed citizenry: “A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”²⁰ In that spirit, we hope to provide enough background and orientation to enable our readers to determine for themselves what has gone wrong and to assess what might be needed to end America’s defense meltdown.

¹⁹ For more in summary fashion about Colonel Boyd, see my summary of his life’s work at <http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/01.pdf>.

²⁰ James Madison, from a letter to W.T. Barry, August 4, 1822, at <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s35.html>.

The Pentagon Labyrinth aims to help both newcomers and seasoned observers learn how to grapple with the problems of national defense. Intended for readers who are frustrated with the superficial nature of the debate on national security, this handbook takes advantage of the insights of ten unique professionals, each with decades of experience in the armed services, the Pentagon bureaucracy, Congress, the intelligence community, military history, journalism and other disciplines. The short but provocative essays will help you to:

- identify the decay—moral, mental and physical—in America’s defenses,
- understand the various “tribes” that run bureaucratic life in the Pentagon,
- appreciate what too many defense journalists are not doing, but should,
- conduct first rate national security oversight instead of second rate theater,
- separate careerists from ethical professionals in senior military and civilian ranks,
- learn to critique strategies, distinguishing the useful from the agenda-driven,
- recognize the pervasive influence of money in defense decision-making,
- unravel the budget games the Pentagon and Congress love to play,
- understand how to sort good weapons from bad—and avoid high cost failures, and
- reform the failed defense procurement system without changing a single law.

The handbook ends with lists of contacts, readings and Web sites carefully selected to facilitate further understanding of the above, and more.

