

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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Essay 7

“Follow the Money”

by Andrew Cockburn

“Follow the money,” Deep Throat told Woodward and Bernstein. Endlessly and approvingly cited, these words have become a hallowed journalistic maxim, and quite right too. The problem is that most of the time this sage advice is ignored, not least by those whose job it is to report and comment on the activities of our national security system. Similarly, the venerated Dwight Eisenhower may have put the phrase “military industrial complex” in the language, but it is today deemed too loaded a term for mainstream media employment anywhere outside the opinion columns. In fact, even to suggest that U.S. military organizations exist for the benefit of those who profit from them is considered unseemly, possibly indicating a dangerous predilection for “conspiracy theories.”

Instead, the public brain is more routinely softened with thoughtful ruminations such as New York Times writer Elisabeth Bumiller’s July 25, 2010 article on the awesome cost of the Iraq and Afghan wars.¹ Pondering the issue, Bumiller found a partial culprit in “twenty-first century technology,” as if that were a sufficient explanation and also unavoidable. It would have been helpful if the writer had looked at specific examples of the technology that is costing us so much, such as “Compass Call,” a \$100 million Lockheed EC-130H equipped with ground penetrating radar that searches for \$25 home made bombs buried in an Afghan road – one small component of our \$50 billion counter- IED (Improvised Explosive Device) effort. Readers should also be aware that those responsible for Compass Call have no excuse for believing that there is anything justifiable about it all. An in-depth study of its effectiveness in Iraq, carried by a strategic analysis “cell” of military intelligence in Baghdad in April 2007, examined the results of hundreds of flights from the previous October through to May 2007. Surveying the results, the analysts summarized them as “Conclusion: No Detectable Effect.”²

¹ Elisabeth Bumiller, “The War: A Trillion Can Be Cheap,” *The New York Times*, July 24, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/25/weekinreview/25bumiller.html>.

² “Operational Iraq Data.” Study prepared for “MultiNational Force Iraq.” April, 2008. Made available to author. Estimated cost per flying hour of Compass Call is roughly \$70,000.

Why We Spend

On the other hand, it is, of course, clearly a *financially* justifiable activity for the Lockheed Martin Corporation and the galaxy of subcontractors whose interests are tied to the program, a fact that should be first and foremost in the mind of anyone looking into this or any other military initiative. With “who profits?” as a *schwerpunkt* – a main objective around which all efforts are organized – analyzing the salient features of the national security state becomes a much easier and more illuminating task.

Such an approach certainly helps in understanding post-World War II U.S. history. Library shelves groan under the volumes analyzing the origins of the cold war. Recall that following victory in World War II, the U.S. rapidly disarmed, disbanding its huge conscript army and slashing weapons production. The economies of our allies and enemies in the recent conflict lay in total ruin. Although the Soviet Union controlled eastern European states overrun by the Red Army during the war, this was by prior agreement with the U.S. and Britain. Suddenly, in the spring of 1948, senior officials of the Truman Administration suddenly began issuing ominous warnings that the Soviet Union was bent on war and might attack at any time. A warning to that effect—“war could come at any time”—was solicited by the chief of army intelligence from the U.S. commander in Germany, General Lucius Clay, and duly leaked to the press.

Why?

The answer is clear for anyone who remembers to follow the money. The aircraft corporations who had garnered enormous profits during the war on the back of government contracts had discovered by 1947 that peace was ruinous. Despite initial high hopes, the commercial marketplace was proving a far harsher and less accommodating environment than that of wartime, especially as there were far more companies than required by the peacetime economy. Orders from the civilian airline industry never lived up to expectations while efforts to diversify into other products, including dishwashers and stainless steel coffins, proved disappointing and costly.

Something had to be done. In the spring of 1948 senior officials in the Truman Administration, including Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, suddenly began warning that the Soviets were on the brink of unleashing a surprise military attack against Western Europe. There was no evidence that the Soviets had any such intentions, a point, as declassified documents now make clear, that was well known to the senior officials.³ In fact Stalin, the Soviet leader, was enjoining the powerful western European communist parties from any

³ Frank Kofsky. *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948* (St Martin’s Press. 1995) 117 ff.

revolutionary action and refusing to aid the Greek communists in their civil war against the U.S.-backed government.

This cause (need for stimulus in the aerospace industry) and effect (war scare leading to sharp increase in defense appropriations) was pithily summed up at the time by Lawrence D. Bell, President of the Bell Aircraft Corporation: “As soon as there is a war scare, there is a lot of money available.”⁴ And so it proved. The aircraft procurement budget soared 57% as the overall Pentagon procurement budget exploded by almost 600 percent from less than \$6 billion in 1947 to more than \$35 billion in 1948 (in contemporary 2011 dollars). The industry, not to mention powerful institutions linked to its fortunes, such as major banks, was saved from collapse.

Apart from a brief relapse pending the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950, “war scares,” otherwise known as “threat inflation” would thereafter be a regular feature of the U.S. political and economic landscape. It mattered little what the Soviet enemy was actually doing, or in a position to do. All that was required was for an announcement that “intelligence” had revealed an ominous “gap” between U.S. and Soviet capabilities, and the money flowed. The “missile gap” on which John F. Kennedy rode to victory in 1960 yielded an immediate fifteen percent hike in defense spending. Years after the money had been appropriated and spent, it was openly admitted by the relevant defense secretary, Robert McNamara, that in fact the gap had been entirely in favor of the U.S. Similar, if less infamous episodes recurred featuring bombers, tanks, ships, anti-ballistic missiles and, most comprehensively, defense budgets themselves.

Embarrassing realities, such as serious shortcomings in our putative enemies’ capabilities, have generally been kept out of sight of the taxpayers. Equally, explosive cost overruns and technical disasters generate, at most, short term scandals. Pleas to cut the defense budget have rarely yielded much of a political dividend. Indeed, in former days, the very size of the budget, irrespective of its components, was touted as a necessary part of our deterrent. One of the more successful “gaps” of the cold war years was the greater size of the Soviet defense budget. The Soviets didn’t announce how much they were spending on defense (even if they knew the real cost themselves, which is dubious); so the figure publicized by the military industrial complex was based on an ersatz calculation of the presumed cost to the Soviets of duplicating U.S. programs and systems. I.E., the cost of a Soviet swing-wing bomber would be assessed on the basis of the cost of a similar U.S. effort. Therefore, as Ernie Fitzgerald, the consummate Pentagon “whistleblower” of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, once observed, “every time the B-1 bomber has a cost overrun, the Soviet defense budget goes up!” In other words, the more dollars we wasted, the more

⁴ Kofsky Op cit. p170.

dangerous the other side became, which justified our wasting even more dollars, and so on.

Misguided commentators customarily referred to the cold war defense environment as the “arms race.” It is important to understand that there was little or no element of military competition with the Soviets, rather one of mostly one-sided budget enhancement. This point is most easily made by comparing the level of defense spending while the U.S. was purportedly faced with a formidable and potentially aggressive enemy with the level of spending once that threat had disappeared. From 1948 to 1990, i.e. during the cold war, America spent an annual average of \$440 billion (in 2011 dollars). For the period when the Pentagon budget had adjusted to the end of the cold war (that is with General Colin Powell’s and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney’s “Base Force” reductions) up to the first year before the global war on terrorism (1993-2000), Pentagon spending averaged \$392 billion (also in 2011 dollars). (Interestingly, during these years of the Clinton presidency, Pentagon spending was higher than the long range budget plan envisioned by Secretary of Defense Cheney.) Thus, when the Soviet Union had disintegrated and Soviet missile sub crews were offering tours of their vessels to western TV teams for \$500, the US defense budget was just 11 percent lower. By subtracting the later amount from the cold wartime figure, we can discern the actual annual cost of confronting the USSR: \$48 billion – tantamount to a bargain. The fact that the end of superpower confrontation made such a little difference to defense spending underlines the irrelevance of the Soviet military, save as a useful justification, to the U.S. defense system.

Clearly, military budgets are driven by something other than military requirements, at least in peacetime. But surely an actual shooting war, with American lives and vital interests at stake must be different, right? Military spending zoomed to gargantuan levels in 1950-53, for example, but those were the years of the Korean War, with almost six million men and women in uniform, of whom 140,000 were killed or wounded. That explains the huge increase in defense spending of those years? Not so. Sadly, it seems that even a shooting enemy made little difference to the way the defense system does business. Follow the money.

True, the U.S. deployed large armies to fight in the frozen rockbound wastes of the Korean peninsula – but that’s not where huge amounts of the money went. The fastest growing component of the budget in those years was for “strategic” B-47 nuclear bombers (which, however, lacked intercontinental range) as well as other items useful only in a strategic nuclear war, such as the sluggish “D” version of the F-86 fighter suitable only as an anti-bomber interceptor and developing the follow on F-102 and F-106 interceptors. These, of course, were suitable only for shooting down those high altitude bombers, of which the Russians had very few, and the Koreans and Chinese none. The budget for these

items soared from \$2.5 billion in 1950 to \$7.7 billion in 1951 to \$11.3 billion in 1952.

Meanwhile, in the freezing frontline trenches, U.S. soldiers and marines lacked decent cold weather boots. Half the casualties in the first winter of the war were from frostbite. Like some threadbare guerilla army, G.I.s would raid enemy trenches to steal the warm, padded boots provided by the communist high command. “I could never figure out why I, a soldier of the richest country on earth, was having to steal boots from soldiers of the poorest country on earth,” recalled one veteran of these harrowing but necessary expeditions.⁵

Lest anyone think that such outrages belong only to a dark and distant age, it is worth recalling that two years into the war in Iraq, families in the U.S. were going into debt to buy armored vests, camelbacks, socks, boots and even night vision goggles for sons, brothers and husbands whose senior commanders and congressmen and women felt no need to supply them with these items until they were embarrassed into it by the press.

In the modern era, we added \$1 trillion to the defense budget after September 11, 2001 to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (up to 2010). In that same period, we added a second trillion dollars to the non-war (“base”) Pentagon budget; that additional money made our Air Force and Navy smaller and our inventories of ships and combat aircraft older. In the Army, a 53 percent increase in money allowed a 5 percent increase in brigade combat teams.

How We Spend

Given this demonstration of Pentagon priorities then and now, it should come as no surprise that the torrent of money unleashed thanks to the Korean war continued to flow at only a slightly diminished rate once the guns stopped firing, with much of the money consigned to contracts for strategic systems with the “aerospace industry,” as the aircraft corporations had sleekly renamed themselves. Key to the process, and to the enormous ensuing costs, was the system of “cost plus” contracts instituted in World War II that endures in one form or another to this day. So long as the contractors are guaranteed a percentage of their costs as profit, they have an obvious incentive to make those costs as great as possible. A contract to produce 100 missiles at a cost of \$1 billion can yield a \$50 million profit. Ergo, if it suddenly transpires that for reasons beyond man’s control the cost of that program zooms to \$2 billion, then the profit accordingly leapt to \$100 million. It makes no difference if, as is all too likely, the cost of the individual missiles has increased so much that the \$2

⁵ Personal anecdote from Korean War veteran.

billion now buys only 50 missiles, or 10, or ultimately just one. The bottom line is unaffected.

In other words, as observed long ago by Ernie Fitzgerald, who battled this culture as an air force official, the contractors are “selling costs,” not weapons systems. To the extent that they can improve their “products” by making them more complex and thus more expensive, they prosper. The inevitable corollary has been that the number of items produced for any one program goes down as the costs zoom up. Hence the F-35 fighter, currently under development for the Air Force, Navy and Marines as well as a number of foreign air forces, was originally slated for a production run of 2866 planes at a unit cost per plane of \$81 million. Already, well before the plane has completed testing, the unit cost has soared—thus far—to \$155 million each, and the total buy has accordingly shrunk to 2457. Further production cuts, as foreign buyers drop out, are inevitable, which will in turn boost the unit cost of the remaining planes on order, leading to further cuts, and so on.

Once this disconnect between the official (weapons systems of postulated quality and quantity) and actual products (costs) marketed by the defense industry is clearly grasped, other distressing aspects of the U.S. defense system become easier to understand. Escalation of costs required inefficient management practices, employing twenty people to do, supervise, manage, and administer the work of five, for example. “Inefficiency is national policy,” declared the Air Force general managing the vastly over-budget F-111 bomber program in 1967.⁶ But inefficient production tended to produce inefficient performance. The great missile gap fraud of the early 1960s led not only to the abandonment of all cost restraints on the crash programs instituted by the Kennedy Administration to “catch up” with the Russians, but also some egregious technical failures. The guidance system for the Minuteman II ICBM, for example, was so unreliable that 40 percent of the missiles in the silos were out of action at any one time.⁷ Replacements had to be bought from the original contractor, who thereby made an extra profit thanks to having supplied faulty sets in the first place.

Since the system, despite countless reorganizations and “reforms,” remains essentially unchanged in the intervening half-century, we merely have to substitute the names of today’s major contracts in order to understand why our budget soars as our military shrinks, as it has. (For more details on more reform leading to more costs, see the essay entitled “Developing, Buying and Fielding Superior Weapon Systems” of this handbook; for discussion of a larger budget buying smaller (and older) forces, see “Decoding the Defense Budget.”)

⁶ A. Ernest Fitzgerald. *The High Priests of Waste* (Norton, 1972) 159. The general was “Zeke” Zoeckler.

⁷ Fitzgerald, op cit, p.116.

The People Who Benefit, and Suffer

Grasping the notion that defense contractors are incentivized to maximize the costs rather than the operational capability of their products should not require much imagination. But the system requires the active complicity of soldiers, sailors and airmen who, one would think, have a direct stake in effective, reliable weapons system. The easiest way to demonstrate that the military services are nevertheless as dedicated to the maximization of costs as any corporate stockholder is to consider the fates of those who buck the system, or at least try to. Plucking just a few names from the honor roll, we can review the experience of Air Force Colonel Joe Warren, whose career was effectively ruined in the late 1960s for daring to call attention to monumental cost overruns and technical shortfalls on the C-5 program, or that of Colonel Jim Burton, forced out of the service in the 1980s for insisting that the Army redesign the Bradley Fighting Vehicle so that it would not incinerate the occupants when hit by enemy fire.⁸ Even as I write, the Marine Corps is attempting to destroy the career of Franz Gayl, a former marine now a civilian working on the headquarters staff.

Gayl's offense? In 2006 he relayed pleas from the fighting troops in Iraq to Marine Corps headquarters that they be supplied with vehicles sufficiently armored to withstand the impact of increasingly lethal roadside bombs. The ubiquitous Humvee, with its vulnerable flat underbelly, offered little protection and had in fact been described as a "death trap" for this very reason in an official report following the Somali operation of the early '90s.⁹ It turned out that plans to supply such vehicles, later dubbed MRAPs (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected), were already in place but were being held up because officers in the Marine Corps procurement office did not want to disrupt their arrangements with the contractor for continuing high volume Humvee production. The necessary funds had already been appropriated and no one wanted to disrupt the flow by redirecting the money to the MRAPs. Even though political pressure ultimately forced the Marines to order MRAPs, with a consequent decline in casualties, Gayl has not been forgiven, but instead subjected to further persecution by his superiors.¹⁰

⁸ Read about Burton's experience in his autobiographical *The Pentagon Wars: Reformers Challenge the Old Guard* (U.S. Naval Institute Press) 1993.

⁹ William C. Schneek: *After Action Report, Somalia*. Counter Mine Systems Directorate, U.S. Army Research, Fort Belvoir, VA. 1994.

¹⁰ Statement of Franz J. Gayl, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Hearings on H.R. 1507, Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act, May 14, 2009.

Clearly, impeding the progress of a procurement contract, or in any way threatening the prospects of a major program, is not the way to prosper in today's military. Taking the opposite course, on the other hand, is generally seen as key to a successful career and golden (in every sense of the word) prospects following retirement. Reviewing the career of one Air Force two star, the very model of a modern major general, enjoying a trouble-free ascent through the ranks, one caustic observer suggested the following biographic entry:

"Under General ---'s leadership...the projected cost of the ---- program increased by several tens of billions of dollars. General --- is commended for the exemplary denial with which he approached the increasing non-executability of the program, and for the zeal with which he attacked those inside and outside the Pentagon who correctly predicted that the official schedule was hopelessly optimistic.

Meanwhile, General --- further disrupted the program by focusing on the PR strategy of achieving first flight dates, regardless of whether the jets were ready for sustained testing. Under his command, the program achieved timely delivery of numerous tests assets which required major work before they were actually any use.

General --- further showed his leadership qualities by bugging out, mere months before the shit hit the fan, and leaving his deputy and successor to be, inevitably, fired and publicly disgraced.

Given this record, there is no reason to believe that Gen. --- will not continue to advance in rank and, on retirement, proceed to a senior post at one or other of our leading defense contractors, as so many of his fellow general officers have done before him."¹¹

Once upon a time, defense contractors would reward general officers who had demonstrated their loyalty in such fashion with a well endowed corporate vice-presidency, requiring only a commitment to do their bit in lobbying colleagues still in uniform and plenty of time on the golf course. Nowadays, however, we find retirees playing more powerful corporate and influence-peddling roles – multi-tasking, as it were. The Humvee that Gayl was punished for endeavoring to supplant as the vehicle of choice in Iraq, for example, is manufactured by the AM General Corporation, headed until recently by retired four star General Paul Kern, who led the Army's Materiel Command until 2004. As well as serving as President and Chief Operating Officer at AM General, which is now controlled by billionaire Ron Perelman's MacAndrew & Forbes holding company, Kern

¹¹ The author of this "bio" has spent decades as an intimate observer of the Pentagon; the deletion of the Major General's name is not to protect the guilty protagonist, but the innocent source.

was also welcomed onto the board of the EDO Corporation, a lead contractor in the burgeoning counter-IED electronics industry. When EDO was bought by ITT, Kern transitioned to the merged corporate board, having also served on the board of IRobot, manufacturer of some ubiquitous counter-IED robots, as well as CoVant Technologies, a private equity group specializing in defense investments in the Washington area.

Kern's involvement with firms associated with the counter-IED mission serves as a reminder that whereas once upon a time the military industrial complex depended on "scares" generated as needed by our impressively large Soviet adversary, today's conflicts with lightly armed insurgents offer rewards that are hardly less fulfilling. "Asymmetric warfare" has turned out to be even more expensive and at least as rewarding. Not only has annual Pentagon spending gone up tremendously above cold war levels since September 11, 2001, but also the lowly home-made bomb, or IED, occupies a place in the threat pantheon once reserved for the likes of Soviet ICBMs. Thus far, the Pentagon's Joint IED Defeat Organization has spent at least \$50 billion in countering these garage-made threats, and, despite increasing US deaths from IEDs and a rising chorus of criticism, there is no sign the spigot is being turned down in any meaningful way.

The rise of CACI, a northern Virginia corporation serves as an instructive case study of the beneficiaries of today's threat environment, in which a corporation can rise to great prosperity (with a headquarters building emblazoned with its titular acronym looming over I-66 on the approaches to Washington D.C.) without actually making anything at all. Its functions, as a close scrutiny of the CACI website reveals, being in the 4nexplained area of "analysis" and "support"—a pure example of "selling costs." Originally intended by its founders to commercialize their [SIMSCRIPT](#) simulation programming language, the war on terror brought many fresh opportunities to CACI, including a contract to supply interrogators for the notorious Abu Ghraib jail. Though that service does not today appear in the list of employment opportunities on offer on the company's website, there are no lack of listings for work subcontracted by the Joint IED Defeat Organization, which remains much beloved by the service bureaucracies and their corporate partners for its mandate to apportion funds without specific authorization.

The CACI website also helpfully lists the board of directors, complete with biographies, thereby furnishing a useful cameo of today's military industrial complex. Topping the list of outside directors is Gordon England, best known for his service as Navy Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense in the George W. Bush Administration, in which capacity he adroitly avoided the odium incurred by Donald Rumsfeld and displayed a helpful solicitude for the interests of major contractors, ever ready to run interference with Congress on

their behalf.¹² That was hardly surprising, given England's prior service with the General Dynamics, Lockheed, Litton and Honeywell Corporations.

Another name that catches the eye is the retired and superbly well connected four star Admiral Gregory Johnson, who earned the trust of his peers not only as the commander of far-flung fleets, but also as senior military assistant to Secretary of Defense William Cohen. Meanwhile, James L. Pavitt, formerly Deputy Director for Operations of the CIA, where, the biography informs us, he led the agency's "operational response" to the 9/11 attacks, clearly makes a good fit on the board, as does retired four star army general William Wallace, who commanded a corps during the 2003 invasion of Iraq before ascending to the command of the army's Combined Arms Center and ultimately the potent Training and Doctrine Command. Interestingly, Wallace's CACI biography cites his role in developing the Future Combat Systems, a \$160 billion baroque extravaganza infamous for monumental overruns and technical catastrophe and ultimately cancelled, but perhaps in such circles this is seen as a recommendation.

Also on the CACI board sits James Gilmore, former governor of Virginia, whose biography is larded with references to his experience in the bountiful area of homeland security. Dr. Warren Phillips, a former academic with a expertise in oil pipelines and armored vehicles, along with a lawyer and a graduate of the railroad and natural gas industry round off the roster of this truly twenty-first century defense company, with 2010 sales in excess of \$3 billion.

No survey of the relationship between the corporate and military professions would be complete without comparing the differing fates of General John M. Keane and Admiral William J. Fallon. Both rose to dizzying heights in the military command structure; Keane retired as Vice Chief of the Army while Fallon was head of Central Command. In his latter years in the service, Keane shared the doubts of his fellow generals regarding the Iraq adventure, but kept his thoughts to himself, maintaining good relationships not only with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Richard Cheney, but also with other politically significant factions in the corporate, political, and media worlds. Keane has long accepted a major share of the credit for conceiving the notion of a "surge" in Iraq – now deemed the key to victory – though the all-important concept of buying off the insurgents would seem to have originated elsewhere. Keane has since become a highly sought after talker, advisor and

¹² One example suffices: A well informed critic of the lethal V-22 boondoggle was giving a scheduled briefing to an influential congressman on the drawbacks to the program, notably its tendency to kill the marines who were riding in it. Who should drop in, "just passing by," but Mr. England, who enquired on the topic of discussion and then weighed in with what was obviously a very carefully prepared rebuttal, defending the V-22.

policy guru. Today he also sits on the board of General Dynamics (to which he made a swift ascension after retiring) and many other boards, including Ron Perelman's MacAndrews and Forbes, is a senior adviser to the private equity giant Kohlberg, Kravis, & Roberts, sits on the board of the Rand Corporation, comments on security matters for ABC News, and is generally a potent force in today's military industrial complex.

Admiral Fallon, on the other hand, today sports only a few comparatively insignificant corporate appointments on his CV. The point of departure in the career trajectories of the two men would appear to have been Admiral Fallon's public and private outspokenness on a variety of subjects, including his rejection of the notion that Iran posed a significant threat to the U.S., coupled with spirited denunciation of a pre-emptive U.S. attack on Iran when that thinking was de rigueur in the George W. Bush administration. Such defiance of the Washington consensus, especially in an area where precise correctness is required among neo-cons and other supporters of Israel, got Fallon promptly fired and dispatched to the wilderness by George W. Bush.

A review of a hundred leading defense corporate boards would uncover many similar instances of the close embrace between the senior officer class (along with their intelligence colleagues) and the industries that serve them. That is one more reason why, in considering policies and priorities of our military leadership, outside observers must never lose sight of the pond in which they swim.

Whether it be the enduring phenomenon of the neo-cons, a group originally fostered in the mid 1970s by the late Paul Nitze as a means to enlist Israel supporters in the cause of bigger defense budgets, or the specter of the (alleged) Iranian nuclear weapons program that has so far generated \$123 billion worth of U.S. weapons sales in the region, or any other aspect or issue related to U.S. national security, Deep Throat's sage advice should always be in the forefront of a truly enquiring mind.

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.

