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

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Edited by Winslow T. Wheeler

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# Table of Contents

PREFACE ......................................................... xiii

ESSAY 1 ......................................................... 1
Why is this Handbook Necessary?
   Franklin C. Spinney

ESSAY 2 ......................................................... 12
Penetrating the Pentagon
   George Wilson

ESSAY 3 ......................................................... 23
Learning about Defense
   Bruce I. Gudmundsson

ESSAY 4 ......................................................... 28
Congressional Oversight: Willing and Able
or Willing to Enable?
   Winslow T. Wheeler

ESSAY 5 ......................................................... 43
Careerism
   Col. G.I. Wilson (U.S. Marine Corps, ret.)

ESSAY 6 ......................................................... 60
Confused Alarms of Struggle and Flight:
A Primer for Assessing Defense
Strategy in the post-Iraq World
   Col. Chet Richards (U.S. Air Force, ret.)

ESSAY 7 ......................................................... 75
Follow the Money
   Andrew Cockburn
ESSAY 8 ......................................................... 86
Decoding the Defense Budget
Winslow T. Wheeler

ESSAY 9 ......................................................... 101
Evaluating Weapons: Sorting the Good from the Bad
Pierre M. Sprey

ESSAY 10 ..................................................... 113
Developing, Buying and Fielding Superior Weapon Systems
Thomas Christie

Suggested Contacts, Readings and Web Sites .......... 126
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.