

1990

## Affording Defense

D.K. Pace

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Pace, D.K. (1990) "Affording Defense," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 43 : No. 1 , Article 32.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol43/iss1/32>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

cost, and delivery, with the operative word being simultaneous; staying close to both the customers and the suppliers; using technology for strategic advantage; and flatter, less compartmentalized organizations. The obstacles to the diffusion of "best practices" are complacency, adherence to outmoded practices, superficiality, and lack of commitment on the part of top management.

These things, the book says, are essential:

- Industry must both improve product quality and shorten the cycle from technological discovery to the marketplace. A key element is continuously educating and training the work force. Another is to abandon the adversarial relationship with suppliers. A third is to search worldwide for industrial "best practice" and incorporate it in our processes.

- Union leaders must become champions of cooperative and innovative industrial relations practices.

- Government must emphasize both reduction in the cost of capital for private investment and the pursuit of free trade. It must support education and training. It should also support research and development, including product and process engineering. And it must improve its own efficiency in military research, development, and procurement.

- The strategies for the universities have far-reaching implications for curricula and for the length of time required to receive adequate multidisciplinary preparation. Those

who adhere to Thomas Jefferson's belief that education is distinctly a local responsibility may have some qualms about the proposed federal role in education, but what is the alternative?

AL BOTTOMS  
Melbourne Beach, Florida

---

Gansler, Jacques S. *Affording Defense*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989. 417pp. \$24.95

Since the mid-1980s, many books have been written on weapon system acquisition and the cost of American defense. Gansler's book is by far the best of the lot. It addresses the three basic questions facing American defense leadership: 1) how to determine what forces and weapons systems America needs, 2) how to procure those forces and systems within constrained budgets, and 3) how to keep special interests (in the public, Congress, a military service, or elsewhere) from preventing the accomplishment of the first two. Gansler explores the entire context of defense decision making. He identifies the fundamental cause of problems in weapons acquisition and suggests what actions must be taken to solve these problems.

Gansler provides ample evidence that short of revolution, there will be no quick fixes for the many serious problems in American defense. No reform effort within the defense establishment seems to have long-term staying power because special interest groups are able to sabotage

or subvert it before the reforms are completed.

Gansler begins with a brief discussion of the numerous dilemmas facing defense leadership, including the potential conflicts for which our nation must be prepared. He then describes the process by which America selects its weapons. The relation between defense spending and the national economy is discussed, as is the development of the defense budget. He describes how military equipment is bought, and highlights the deleterious impact of the numerous efforts to regulate the process which have been counter-productive. Unlike some other treatments of defense acquisition, Gansler does not neglect R&D, the industrial base, or personnel (both military and civilian). He covers them all. His suggestions for improvement come from his own analysis of the defense system, from the recommendations of numerous reform studies, and from careful consideration of the approaches of other nations to weapons acquisition and force structure planning. The current efforts of the president and the secretary of defense to improve DoD management are similar to many of Gansler's suggestions.

Gansler understands his subject well. He is a senior vice president of The Analytic Sciences Corporation (which works extensively for DoD) and a member of the faculty of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. His earlier book, *The Defense Industry* (1980), is one of the standard

textbooks on weapons acquisition. This book should also become a standard text. I strongly recommend it for every serious student of American national security.

D.K. PACE  
The Johns Hopkins University

---

Fitzgerald, A. Ernest. *The Pentagonists: An Insider's View of Waste, Mismanagement, and Fraud in Defense Spending*. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989. 316pp. \$19.95

This is a disturbing book. It presents a disgusting tale of malevolence, deception, and waste. If even a small portion of the numerous allegations in this book are true, some of our military, governmental, and industrial leaders are the greatest threat to our national security, for in their drive for power and position they have saddled us with expensive weapons of dubious military utility.

The author, A. Ernest Fitzgerald, is a "whistle blower." He served as deputy for management systems in the air force in the late 1960s and was fired because of his whistle blowing to Congress. He was reinstated in the mid-1970s after a prolonged legal battle, and continued to be a whistle blower, which resulted in much bureaucratic infighting and legal battles with his superiors.

*The Pentagonists* is too heavily bent toward sensationalism for my taste, but it presents such a large number of specific charges of mismanage-