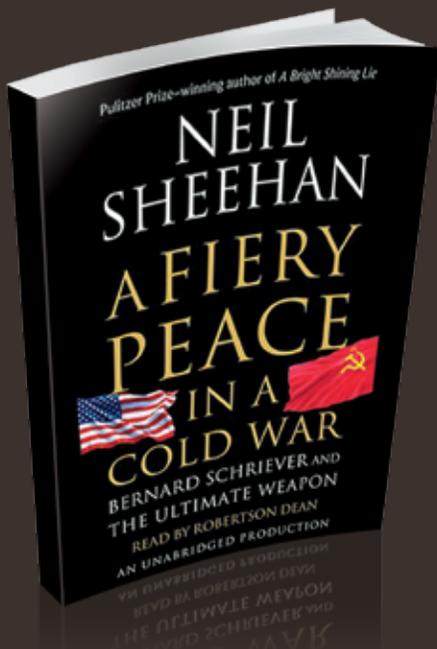


The Defense Acquisition Professional Reading List

The Defense Acquisition Professional Reading List is intended to enrich the knowledge and understanding of the civilian, military, contractor, and industrial workforce who participate in the entire defense acquisition enterprise. These book reviews/recommendations are designed to complement the education and training that are vital to developing the essential competencies and skills required of the Defense Acquisition Workforce. Each issue of the *Defense Acquisition Research Journal (ARJ)* will contain one or more reviews of suggested books, with more available on the *ARJ* website.

We encourage *ARJ* readers to submit reviews of books they believe should be required reading for the defense acquisition professional. The reviews should be 400 words or fewer, describe the book and its major ideas, and explain its relevance to defense acquisition. Please send your reviews to the Managing Editor, *Defense Acquisition Research Journal*:
Norene.Fagan-Blanch@dau.mil.

Featured Book



Book Reviewed:

*A Fiery Peace in a Cold War:
Bernard Schriever and the
Ultimate Weapon*

Author(s):

Neil Sheehan

Publisher:

New York, Random House

Copyright Date:

2009

ISBN:

0679422846

Hard/Softcover:

Hardcover: 560 pages

Reviewed by:

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Review:

With an attention to detail seldom encountered, coupled with penetrating psychological explorations into the minds and motives of many of those involved, Pulitzer prize winning author Neil Sheehan provides a comprehensive look at the Cold War development of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), written around the story of the life and career of Gen. Bernard Schriever, commander of the Air Force Systems Command, the brilliant man who brought the ICBM to life. He does this while exploring the birth of the United States Air Force and the formation of the Strategic Air Command. The importance of the ICBM among U.S. weapon systems, and how the people involved came together to give it birth, is masterfully recounted.

Schriever's influence was palpable. He had battled the likes of Curtis LeMay, first commander of Strategic Air Command, who believed bombers were the ultimate strategic weapon. Sheehan shows how they lacked the vision to see how useless bombers would be in the event of a strategic nuclear war where the ICBM, capable of striking a target continents away in a matter of minutes, would be the primary—and deciding—weapon. By 1963, Schriever controlled 40 percent of the Air Force budget.

Sheehan captures in fascinating detail the relationship between Schriever and the head of the U.S. Army Air Force, Henry "Hap" Arnold, and shows with clarity seldom seen elsewhere the influence a visionary leader like Arnold is able to exert to shape the career and open the doors to advancement of someone as brilliant and visionary as Schriever. He shows how Schriever's vision and strategic thinking ability enabled him to see with absolute clarity the need to develop the ICBM to protect his adopted country from the growing menace of the Soviet Union, in spite of encountering resistance from LeMay at every turn. Sheehan also describes how Schriever set up research and development labs as a critical element in the advancement of weapon systems, while addressing the problems with Soviet spies who had infiltrated the research labs. He was able to stay on target, to continually shift tactics to reach his strategic goal, working through and around challenges from people, budgets, family obligations, and Air Force top brass.

All those who worked with Schriever really did walk with a legend whose story deserved to be memorialized. For this, we owe Sheehan a debt of gratitude.