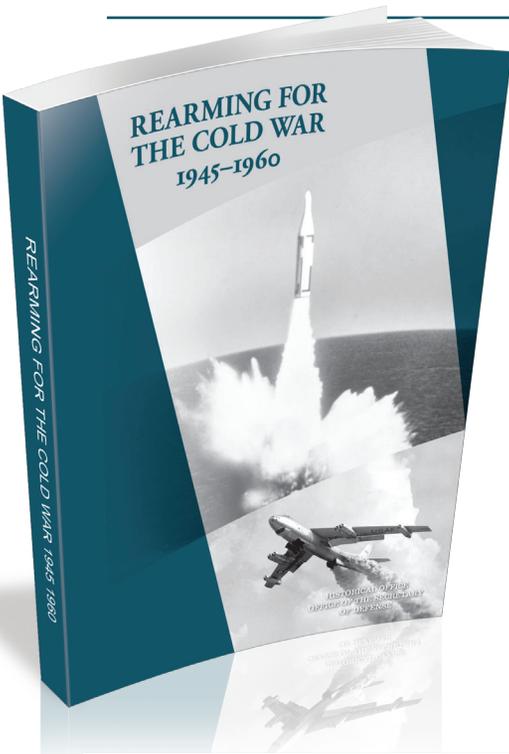


PROFESSIONAL  READING LIST

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.



REARMING FOR THE COLD WAR
1945-1960

Featured Book

Rearming for the Cold War, 1945-1960

Author(s):

Elliott V. Converse III

Publisher:

Historical Office, Office of the
Secretary of Defense

Copyright Date:

2012

Available Online:

<http://history.defense.gov>

Hard/Softcover:

Hardcover, 781 pages

Reviewed by:

Dr. Roy Wood, Dean, Defense Systems
Management College, DAU

Review:

If Dickens were to have written about the years following World War II, he might have started this tome, “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” It was certainly the best of times. The United States and its Allies had just waged a war against global domination and won, liberating Europe and the Pacific from aggression and devastation. Economies were on the mend and diplomacy again took center stage. Yet, it was also the worst of times. The Soviet Union had just cordoned off much of Eastern Europe behind an “Iron Curtain” and aimed nuclear-tipped missiles at its former allies.

It is within this context that Elliott Converse chronicles the evolution of the U.S. military from waging the largest and most deadly war in history to managing a tense and competitive “Cold War.” As the title suggests, Converse focuses on America’s efforts to rearm and modernize its arsenal in the face of this new and dangerous threat. The author tells an engaging story of the rapid emergence of technology and how a wartime bureaucracy was transformed and reengineered to acquire advanced missiles, aircraft, computers, and of course, nuclear energy and weapons.

At its heart, however, is the compelling story of the people who led this transformation. There are familiar players, like Vannevar Bush, James Forrestal, and Hoyt Vandenberg. But there are also intriguing stories of lesser know, but no less influential bureaucrats, including Wilfred McNeil, Clay Bedford, and Walter Whitman.

This is a well-researched and engaging book. The author captures the human side of the story through liberal use of quotes and good storytelling to get at why and how important decisions were made. In the process, Converse explores Service rivalries, budget battles, high-stakes intrigue, and behind-the-scenes dealing – and sometimes double-dealing – within Washington’s halls of power. The book is richly footnoted and laced with data charts, tables, period photographs, and biographical sketches of many of the key players.

This book is of particular importance to today’s defense acquisition community because it explores our roots. Many of the decisions and actions from this time period are still evident in the organization and processes we use today. Sir Winston Churchill once noted, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” Through the clear lens of hindsight, therefore, we should read this book and learn from the brilliant successes and sad foibles of those who came before us.

