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# FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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The year 1979 was marked by the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, the Iranian Revolution that overthrew the Shah and held 52 American diplomats hostage, and the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The Sony Walkman was introduced to a transfixed public, but at a price equal to almost a week's wages. The entire federal budget was roughly \$500 billion, a number now equated with just the Department of Defense portion of the budget.

The year was also marked by the first full publication of the now-legendary "Augustine's Laws and Major System Development Programs" in the pages of the *Defense Systems Management Review*, and a few years later in *Concepts*, the journals that preceded the current *Defense Acquisition Research Journal*. Norm Augustine, at the time a member of the journal's Editorial Board and a Vice-President at Martin Marietta Aerospace, was well known in the defense acquisition community, having served in several senior leadership positions in the Department of Defense and industry.

Although Augustine's Laws were written in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion, they are quite serious. We are proud to republish them 35 years later, and delighted that he has agreed to pen a short introduction looking back at how

they have held up over time. His most famous law, on the increasing cost of tactical aircraft, can now fix the precise date on which the entire defense budget will buy just one airplane. We are even provided a glimpse into future laws.

In this issue we are also pleased to publish the research of several teams of researchers who are extending the boundaries of our knowledge in defense acquisition. Alex Miller and Joshua L. Ray, in “Moving from Best Practices to Standard Practices in Defense Acquisition,” examine the DoD’s difficulty in translating observed best practices into consistently applied acquisition processes and provide a simple framework to assess the standardization of these practices. Capt Allen J. DeNeve, USAF, Lt Col Erin T. Ryan, USAF, Lt Col Jonathan D. Ritschel, USAF, and Christine Schubert Kabban, in “Taming the Hurricane of Acquisition Cost Growth—Or at Least Predicting It,” provide a statistically derived approach to forecast how a program’s baseline is likely to change over time, instead of assuming it will remain static, which promises to improve the prediction of a program’s likely cost growth and thus to develop more realistic cost estimates.

In “The Effects of System Prototype Demonstrations on Weapon Systems Development,” Edward J. Copeland, Thomas H. Holzer, Timothy J. Eveleigh, and Shahryar Sarkani find that system prototyping positively influences the outcomes of weapon systems development programs—a key finding that helps support recent Better Buying Power initiatives promulgated by Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Frank Kendall to incentivize innovation in both government and industry.

Finally, we acknowledge the hard work and dedication of three departing members of the *Defense Acquisition Research Journal’s* Editorial Board: Dr. J. Robert Wirthlin of the Air Force Institute of Technology, Dr. Donald Hutto of the Defense Acquisition University, and Dr. Mark Montroll of the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy. We also welcome three new members to the Board: Dr. John M. Colombi of the Air Force Institute of Technology, and Professors John Cannady and Dana Stewart, both of the Defense Acquisition University South Region in Huntsville, Alabama. We look forward to their contributions.