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 recommendations are designed to complement the education and training vital to developing essential competencies and skills of the acquisition workforce. Each issue of the *Defense Acquisition Research Journal* will include one or more reviews of suggested books, with more available on our Web site http://dau.dodlive.mil/defense-acquisition-professional-reading-program.

We encourage our readers to submit book reviews they believe should be required reading for the defense acquisition professional. The books themselves should be in print or generally available to a wide audience; address subjects and themes that have broad applicability to defense acquisition professionals; and provide context for the reader, not prescriptive practices. Book reviews should be 450 words or fewer, describe the book and its major ideas, and explain its relevancy to defense acquisition. Please send your reviews to the managing editor, *Defense Acquisition Review Journal* at *DefenseARJ@dau.mil*.

Featured Book

Predator: The Secret Origins of the Drone Revolution
Author: Richard Whittle
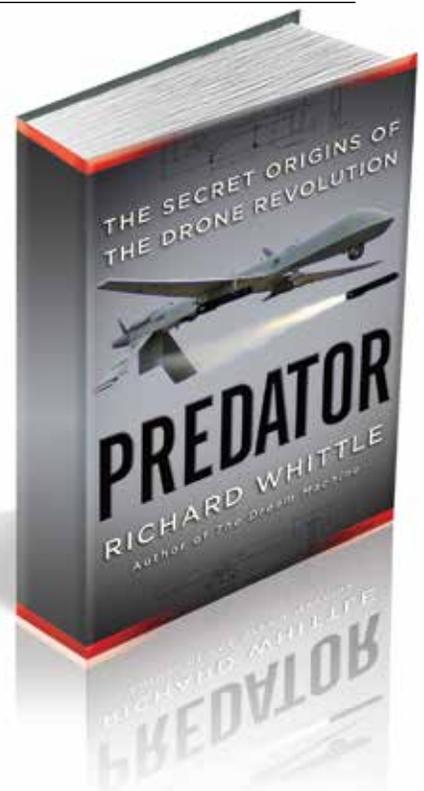**Publisher:** Henry Holt & Company, L.L.C.
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ISBN-10: 0805099646
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Reviewed by: Dr. Julien Demotes-Mainard, Senior Analyst, Avascent Europe, Paris Office

Review:

Richard Whittle, a global fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, longtime military journalist, and author of *The Dream Machine: The Untold History of the Notorious V-22 Osprey* (reviewed in the *Defense ARJ*, Vol. 74, July 2015) continues his deep-dive investigation of high-profile weapon programs by this time unveiling the development of the Predator drone. Whittle has prepared the volume drawing on hundreds of interviews with program stakeholders, and 5 years of (obviously careful) research that eventually granted the author access to a myriad of supporting documents. Readers of the *Dream Machine*, accustomed to Richard Whittle's methodology and style, won't be disoriented by this new opus. *Predator's* narrative structure is essentially a reiteration of the previous V-22 saga: the author seeks to relate the individual fates, fortunate or unfortunate political decisions, military events, and operational anecdotes that shape the course of the MALE UAV (Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) history, from its inception in the 70s, to Predator's armed debut after the 9/11 attacks.

In the introductory chapter, we learn that one of the most effective weapons in the current U.S. arsenal finds its origin in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur war, when a visionary Israeli engineer—Abraham Karem—pioneered the deployment of unmanned aircraft to collect and dispatch real-time tactical information on enemy positions. For acquisition students, the second (and central) part of the book, is undoubtedly the most interesting element of Whittle's examination. It describes how long-endurance UAVs first envisioned in the 80s as small, cheap observation tools, progressively turned into large and deadly platforms during the following decade. With a wealth of detail, the author recounts the technological hurdles drone supporters had to overcome during this 20-year development marathon (e.g., circumventing the issue of remotely piloted operations), as well as the evolution of military thinking and requirements that eventually led the Air Force leadership to weaponize the vehicle.

The book is superbly researched, well-structured, and easy to read. Whittle has an unquestionable talent for capturing his audience's attention through a compelling and thrilling story-telling. Readers less familiar with UAV jargon and airborne technology will certainly appreciate the effort put forth by the author into carefully explaining each key technological development (e.g., the installation and functioning of Hellfire payload) in a clear and intelligible way.

In sum, this volume is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in better comprehending the development of Predator, and the subsequent mass adoption of MALE UAVs. However, beyond the usual "bureaucratic road-block" and "inter-Service rivalry" arguments, it only adds marginally to our understanding of the weapon systems acquisition process. Fair to say, Whittle shows here no intention to deviate into this type of analysis, but as such, his last opus might nonetheless present a more limited interest for those seeking to extrapolate broader conclusions on how DoD and its armed forces procure the weapons they need.