



Buying Military Transformation: Technological Innovation and the Defense Industry

Peter Dombrowski, Eugene Gholz

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In *Buying Military Transformation*, Peter Dombrowski and Eugene Gholz analyze the United States military's ongoing effort to capitalize on information technology. New ideas about military doctrine derived from comparisons to Internet Age business practices can be implemented only if the military buys technologically innovative weapons systems. *Buying Military Transformation* examines how political and military leaders work with the defense industry to develop the small ships, unmanned aerial vehicles, advanced communications equipment, and systems-of-systems integration that will enable the new military format.

Dombrowski and Gholz's analysis integrates the political relationship between the defense industry and Congress, the bureaucratic relationship between the firms and the military services, and the technical capabilities of different types of businesses. Many government officials and analysts believe that only entrepreneurial start-up firms or leaders in commercial information technology markets can produce the new, network-oriented military equipment. But Dombrowski and Gholz find that the existing defense industry will be best able to lead military-technology development, even for equipment modeled on the civilian Internet. The U.S. government is already spending billions of dollars each year on its "military transformation" program-money that could be easily misdirected and wasted if policymakers spend it on the wrong projects or work with the wrong firms.

In addition to this practical implication, *Buying Military Transformation* offers key lessons for the theory of "Revolutions in Military Affairs." A series of military analysts have argued that major social and economic changes, like the shift from the Agricultural Age to the Industrial Age, inherently force related changes in the military. *Buying Military Transformation* undermines this technologically determinist claim: commercial innovation does not directly determine military innovation; instead, political leadership and military organizations choose the trajectory of defense investment. Militaries should invest in new technology in response to strategic threats and military leaders' professional judgments about the equipment needed to improve military effectiveness. Commercial technological progress by itself does not generate an imperative for military transformation.

Clear, cogent, and engaging, *Buying Military Transformation* is essential reading for journalists, legislators, policymakers, and scholars.



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