

# Remarks

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

By way of introduction, I am Larrie Ferreira, the director of research at the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the new executive editor for the *Defense Acquisition Review Journal (ARJ)*. I am stepping into the post that Dr. Paul Alfieri so ably occupied for the previous 5 years. As Paul mentioned to you in the previous edition, I come from the naval side of defense acquisition. I was a naval architect for the U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard for 25 years before joining DAU to teach systems engineering. During that time, I had the opportunity to serve in various posts overseas (including as an exchange engineer with the French navy, where I designed French warships) and several turns in industry. Since joining DAU, I have worked with many different acquisition agencies across the Department of Defense (DoD) and at the Department of Homeland Security.



It comes as no surprise that the defense acquisition process, and its problems, have evolved considerably in the 30 years I have worked in the field. The cold war pitted the West against a single, known adversary; and in the very broadest of terms, defense acquisition was focused on maintaining superiority over that potential enemy. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, no one was certain who the next potential foe would be. Now a generation later, we face a multitude of threats, from terrorism to regional instability, and our forces may have to pivot on a dime from one moment to the next. Even more unsettling, we simply cannot know with certainty what the next threat may be or from where it may come.

It is therefore opportune that the current issue of *Defense ARJ* is themed “Managing the Unknown.” The concept is of course not new. Norman Augustine, in his classic 1982 book *Augustine’s Laws*, famously stated that “two types of uncertainty plague most efforts to introduce major new products: known-unknowns and unknown-unknowns” (Augustine, 1982, pp. 49–50). The five articles in the current issue address some aspect of managing the unknown—whether risk, accelerating technology, or managing economic and environmental influences—all examine and embrace the uncertainty inherent in large, complex programs.

Richard J. Palmer, Mahendra Gupta, and Rodney Dawson lead off with an examination of the unexpected decline in the government credit-card usage of defense agencies, long considered an important cost-saving practice, and propose ways to redress the decline. Joseph W. Carl and George Richard Freeman explore how to control aspects

of programs, variable over time, that contribute to program failures—a partial response to the lament of a Canadian official, Martin Cobb (1995): “We know why projects fail, we know how to prevent their failure—so why do they still fail?” (p. 1). David E. Frick advocates that Congress, the DoD, and industry all embrace uncertainty in managing program budgets, schedule, and performance. John F. Rice suggests the programs use alternative business risk models, in addition to traditional ones such as the *risk cube*, to account for the external and internal forces that can make or break a program. Rounding out this edition, Mark F. Cancian examines the myths and the realities of weapons cost growth; he also evaluates the “What if” questions that often arise out of unanticipated growth.

The theme, “Managing the Unknown,” is also appropriate in the current acquisition environment for two reasons. First, the Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 made sweeping changes to the DoD 5000 framework, and pending legislation may further impact the way the DoD acquires systems and services. The full impact of this legislation will not be understood for some time. Second, one of the most important jobs in defense acquisition will change hands, most likely by the time you read this edition. On June 30, 2010, DAU President Frank J. Anderson is retiring after 10 years of exemplary service to this community and 44 years serving the United States of America. DAU is central to the revitalization of the defense acquisition workforce, and the new president will play a key role in implementing the reforms now underway.

Both defense acquisition and DAU itself, therefore, are on the cusp of another transformation. In the coming months and years, the *Defense ARJ* will be transforming as well. I look forward to helping guide all of you through that process.



Dr. Larrie D. Ferreiro  
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## REFERENCES

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