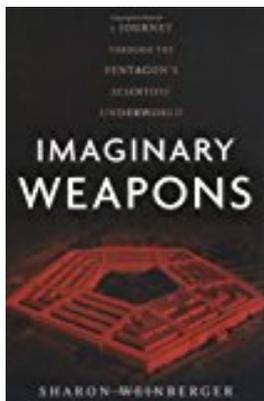


[PDF] Imaginary Weapons: A Journey Through The Pentagon's Scientific Underworld

Sharon Weinberger - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly The Pentagon's fascination with fringe science is old news, writes veteran defense reporter Weinberger in this incisive study, but the Bush administration has pushed it to new levels of wackiness. After reviewing our government's pursuit of antimatter weapons,

psychics and telepathy, she focuses on a "nuclear hand grenade" that may cost billions and seems certain to fail. Before the War on Terror and the avalanche of government money for advanced new weapons, few paid attention to physicists who said they could harness the energy of unstable atomic nuclei, or "isomers," through a wildly expensive process involving atomic reactors. But in recent years, a group of fringe scientists aided by defense industry insiders has convinced the Pentagon that America's post-9/11 survival depends on developing an isomer bomb. While proponents compare it to the Manhattan Project, opponents point out that independent researchers have not been able to duplicate the results attained by isomer enthusiasts, and that many assumptions behind the bomb contradict the laws of physics. Though Congress canceled isomer bomb development in 2004, the Department of Energy found \$5 million to continue the research. *(July 1)*
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From That the Pentagon wastes billions of dollars on outmoded or ineffective weaponry has been old news for decades, but Weinberger offers a new dimension. Editor of the magazine *Defense Technology International*, Weinberger has previously worked for the U.S. State Department and the Systems Planning Corporation, and she uses her insider's understanding to expose the flaws in weapons design through a case study built around a device called a hafnium bomb. The idea for a handheld weapon with the explosive power of a nuclear bomb begins in the mind of a pseudoscientist who makes more headway with the Pentagon than seems logical. "All it took," Weinberger notes, "was a used dental X-ray, a few die-hard supporters, some farfetched claims of a new arms race, and the Pentagon thought it was on its way to the next superbomb." The episode seems outlandish enough to be satire, but alas, it's true to life. Weinberger injects humor into the saga, but comedy pales in light of the potentially deadly nature of the proposed weapon. *Steve Weinberg*
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