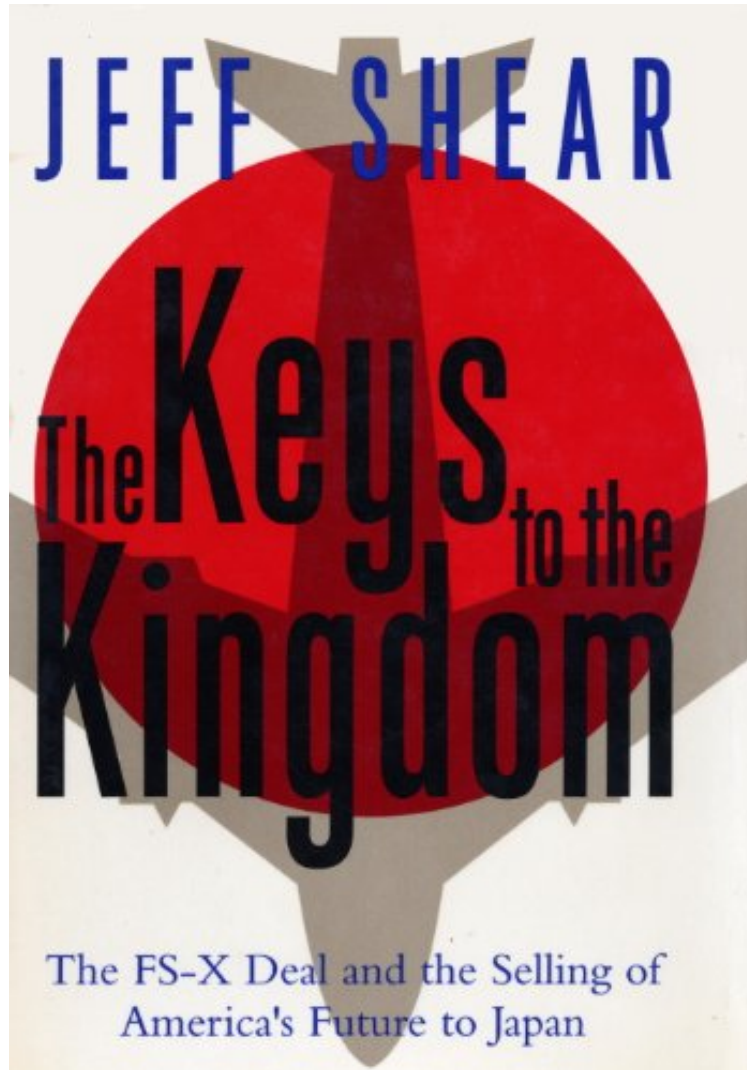


The Keys to the Kingdom

Jeff Shear

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Jeff Shear : The Keys to the Kingdom before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Keys to the Kingdom:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Heightened danger or just hype? By A Customer The book covers the intense competition between McDonnell Douglas and General Dynamics to be the prime support company to Japan for their FSX program. The book is easy to read. It presents an interesting overview of many of the issues impacting releasability of high technology and American competitiveness, and the U.S. Government's participation in sensitive areas of international business. For someone with zero exposure to this arena, the book is a good place to start. Keep in mind that the book is written with an agenda in mind and has a very pessimistic view of this process. If you are pro-American/anti-hi tech export, you will love the book. Otherwise, keep a bag of salt near by during your read. Of

course, the so far unwritten sequel is how miserably the FSX program has performed. Did Japan pick the wrong supplier? Were the 'keys' unable to unlock the box? Or was the box Pandora's?

The United States is in a war. This war is not fought with missiles and bullets, but with dollars, yen, and deutsche marks. This is a war for dominance in the global marketplace, a war for economic supremacy. The United States is losing this war. Year after year, tens of billions of dollars flow from American bank accounts to Japanese pockets—the stark meaning of the oft-cited "merchandise trade deficit"—half a trillion dollars worth in the last decade. The United States is not losing because the Japanese are devious, or mercenary, or "unfair traders." We are losing because of our own greed, myopia, and arrogance. *The Keys to the Kingdom*, a masterful account of bureaucratic ineptitude, political bloodshed, high-level intrigue, and sometimes breathtaking stupidity, chronicles the first major battle in this war. Aerospace and aviation products are America's most lucrative exports, bringing in billions of dollars and providing millions of high-wage jobs. The Japanese, having developed world-class auto, steel, and electronics industries (in the process devastating large segments of the American economy), make no secret of the fact that aviation and aerospace are their next targets. Despite these high stakes, the government of the United States, incredibly, agreed to give the Japanese some of the most sensitive, state-of-the-art aviation technology and design information America possesses—to build a plane called the FS-X. How this astonishing event transpired is the subject of *The Keys to the Kingdom*.

From *Publishers Weekly* The already rancorous U.S.-Japan trade relationship was exacerbated in the late '70s, when research entrepreneur Ryozyo Tsutsui launched a campaign to revive his country's once-great aircraft industry through an experimental fighter called the FS-X. Shear's well-researched study reports on the advocacies of and oppositions to codevelopment of the plane both in Tokyo and Washington, punctuated by Tsutsui's blunt declaration that Japan could build a better fighter faster and more cheaply alone. American officials began to understand that the Japanese were threatening to surpass the U.S. in aircraft manufacture, one of the last areas of American high-tech dominance. Yet the U.S. handed over to Japan massive amounts of sophisticated aircraft technology. Freelance journalist Shear recounts in detail the complex, appalling story of why and how this was allowed to happen. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Shear, the author of articles on many of the thematic components of this book—technology, aerospace, and international affairs—relates the story of how Japan got hold of the biggest secrets of the U.S. aerospace industry, the only industry in which they have not yet beaten us soundly in world markets. Regardless of the risk to the U.S. economy, the Japanese were given the technology that would make their FS-X (Fighter Support Experimental) plane a reality. The book opens with a description of Hirohito's funeral, at which then-President Bush was in attendance. This period of transition, Shear asserts, heralded the end of an era of Japanese traditionalism, with a young "salaryman emperor" taking over. What ensues is a story about deals made in hot tubs, Japanese playboys, incredibly stupid politicians, and good old American greed. It makes for entertaining reading for those interested in scandal on the global scale. Recommended for business collections. Lisa K. Miller, Paradise Valley Community Coll. Lib., Phoenix Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* FS-X stands for Fighter Support Experimental, Japan's answer to the fighter plane. Though it was thought that Japan would settle for an upgraded F-16, the U.S. soon realized that Japan desired a more advanced piece of technology. Shear's thesis, in part, is that our government gave away much state-of-the-art aviation technology in trying to placate the Japanese and draw them closer to us. The Japanese threat was simple enough: if the U.S. provided no help, the Japanese would go ahead and build the plane on their own. Shear, though, argues that they did not have the capability to do so—until U.S. myopia, greed, and a whole lot of stupidity entered the picture. And he seems generally right. He provides some useful accounting of Japan's industrial history, too, though one wonders if he paints the Americans as a bit too stupid, and the Japanese as operating from motives far too honorable. Brian McCombie