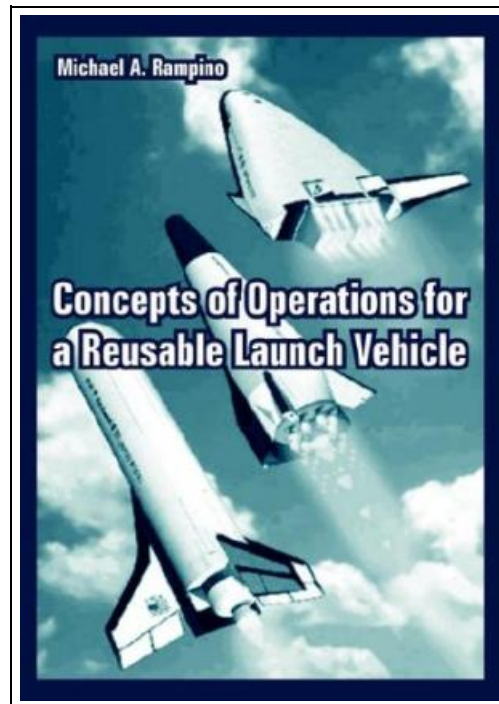


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CONCEPTS OF OPERATIONS FOR A REUSABLE LAUNCH VEHICLE (PAPERBACK)



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University Press of the Pacific, United States, 2005. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.The United States is embarked on a journey toward maturity as a spacefaring nation. One key step along the way is development of a reusable launch vehicle(RLV). The most recent National Space Transportation Policy (August 1994) assigned improvement and evolution of current expendable launch vehicles to the Department of Defense while National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA) is responsible for working with industry on demonstrating RLV technology. The purpose of this study is to help ensure the US military, especially the USAF, is prepared to take advantage of RLVs should the NASA-led effort to develop an RLV demonstrator prove successful. The focus of this study is an explanation of how the US military could use RLVs, by describing and analyzing two concepts of operations. Four major conclusions resulted from the analysis. First, RLVs have military potential. They can perform a variety of missions including responsive spacelift, reconnaissance, and strike. However, the economic feasibility of using RLVs for earth-to-earth transportation is questionable. Second, design choices for an operational RLV will have effects on risk, cost, capability, and operations efficiency. Trade-offs will have to be made between NASA, commercial, and military requirements if all three parties are to use the same fleet of RLVs. Third, increased investment in propulsion technology development is warranted to ensure success. Fourth, the top priority for the RLV program, even from the military's perspective, should remain cheap and responsive access to space. The research led to three recommendations. First, the US military should become a more active participant in the RLV program to ensure its requirements are defined and incorporated. Second, America should not pursue development of operational RLVs before the technology is ready. Third, it is not...



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