



# Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry

*Marc Ambinder , D.B. Grady*

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## **Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry** Marc Ambinder , D.B. Grady

There is a hidden country within the United States. It was formed from the astonishing number of secrets held by the government and the growing ranks of secret-keepers given charge over them. The government secrecy industry speaks in a private language of codes and acronyms, and follows an arcane set of rules and customs designed to perpetuate itself, repel penetration, and deflect oversight. It justifies itself with the assertion that the American values worth preserving are often best sustained by subterfuge and deception.

There are indications that this deep state is crumbling. Necessary secrets are often impossible to keep, while frivolous secrets are kept forever. The entire system has fallen prey to political manipulation, with leaks carefully timed to advance agendas, and over-classification given to indefensible government activities.

DEEP STATE: INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT SECRECY INDUSTRY, written by two of the country's most respected national security journalists, disassembles the secrecy apparatus of the United States and examines real-world trends that ought to trouble everyone from the most aggressive hawk to the fiercest civil libertarian. The book:

- Provides the fullest account to date of the National Security Agency's controversial surveillance program first spun up in the dark days after 9/11.
- Examines President Obama's attempt to reconcile his instincts as a liberal with the realities of executive power, and his use of the state secrets doctrine.
- Exposes how the public's ubiquitous access to information has been the secrecy industry's toughest opponent to date, and provides a full account of how WikiLeaks and other "sunlight" organizations are changing the government's approach to handling sensitive information, for better and worse.
- Explains how the increased exposure of secrets affects everything from Congressional budgets to Area 51, from SEAL Team Six and Delta Force to the FBI, CIA, and NSA.
- Assesses whether the formal and informal mechanisms put in place to protect citizens from abuses by the American deep state work, and how they might be reformed.

DEEP STATE: INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT SECRECY INDUSTRY IS based on the authors' insatiable curiosity for the ground truth and layered on a foundation of original and historical research as well as unprecedented access to lawmakers, intelligence agency heads, White House officials, and secret program managers. It draws on thousands of recently declassified documents and candid interviews with more than 100 military, industry, and government officials.

By the bestselling authors of *THE COMMAND: DEEP INSIDE THE PRESIDENT'S SECRET ARMY*: Marc Ambinder, editor at large at *The Week*, contributing editor at *GQ* and *The Atlantic*, who has covered Washington for *CBS News* and *ABC News*; and D.B. Grady, a correspondent for *The Atlantic*, national security columnist for *The Week*, and former U.S. Army paratrooper and Afghanistan veteran.

## Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry Details

Date : Published April 1st 2013 by Wiley (first published February 14th 2013)


ISBN : 9781118146682

Author : Marc Ambinder , D.B. Grady

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, War, Military Fiction, Politics

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## From Reader Review Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry for online ebook

### Robert says

An excellent read on the contours and depths of the security apparatus of the U.S. Government. Ambinder details why the large scope and scale of the intelligence and secrecy community makes it more difficult to keep secrets, and the tension that exists between the press and the government in revealing secret information. It's also a good reference book for various secret covernames of government programs.

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### David W Brown says

I love this book. Is it the book of the year? No—it's the book of the decade.

(But I'm also the coauthor so I'm probably biased. I think you should buy a copy and find out for yourself. In fact, buy two copies just to be really sure.)

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### Stephen says

This is fast becoming my favorite type of journalism: the ephemeral historical nonfiction. No one will read or talk about this book in 10 years, because its content is tailored to today's issues. But that's OK; it's a good overall picture of where we are now in terms of government secrecy and the intelligence community.

Actually, it already seems out of date, because although it was published after the Snowden disclosures of summer 2013, it doesn't mention them at all--my assumption is that the text was already completed by then, which is unfortunate, since the episode is another fascinating case study of the executive branch doing something because it can, rather than because it should.

Anyway, the first roughly half of the book seems to defend government secrecy and bad behavior (torture, surveillance, etc.) at all costs, while the second half does a better job of examining whether it is really necessary and what the trade-offs are for a program named "Total Information Awareness." It feels a little bipolar, and I can almost hear the authors arguing about how to present things (whether or not that's the cause, I don't know).

But overall, it's a solid recent history of secrecy in the United States, good for national security and civil liberty wonks like me.

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### Trevan Hetzel says

A pretty boring book in my opinion. There's just a lot of acronyms and terms and departments that makes it pretty difficult to keep track of everything. I was expecting to read this and get some great insight into the corruptness of the US government and scandals that go on, but had to skim a bit just to get past the setups and into the good (although still pretty boring) bits. There were a couple interesting chapters (the Area 51

chapter was probably the most interesting to me), but the rest just went on and on about all these terms that meant nothing to me. I suppose if you have a military background or are familiar with all the different departments the book might make more sense, but to an average Joe like me it's pretty hard to keep up and stay interested.

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### **Jennifer says**

I found this book to be both fascinating and even-handed; though the authors are open about acknowledging the failures of the U.S.'s current secrecy system, at the same time they point out the importance of having some means of keeping secrets. Ranging from the Cold War to the present War on Terror, it covers a lot of ground. The authors clearly did their research, and the result is well worth reading.

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### **Randall Wallace says**

Easily the most complex book I've read since Lori Wallach's "Whose Trade Organization?" This book reveals the entire US Deep State apparatus that stubbornly chooses to spy on the American people instead of the bad guys – What are the components of the Deep State and what do they each do? The overall role of the Deep State is to control people and thus dissent and knowing about it's role in detail helps Americans who don't enjoy being controlled to actually think of maybe disagreeing with it. Our heroes, the Beatles and Monty Python rebelled against authority for it's own sake on behalf of us common folk and in so doing they changed the world, AND they even safely helped the economy – Just so the common people in America should feel safe rebelling now against the authority for it's own sake of the US Deep State as it positions itself to totally control dissent when the economy heads south.

There is so many acronyms in this book it becomes more of a reference book – hard to remember everything - GGHQ, FOIA, JSOC, COMINT – thank god I don't have to read Code Breakers (Arkin) after this as a chaser. Remembering JSOC which Jeremy Scahill always talks about is important because it literally is "the secret army of the president of the United States" and is allowed only through the silence of congress. JSOC's power is scary stuff all Americans should know. This book also gets into protecting computer systems and the rush for Quantam Computer technology.

In the end we learn that legal fiction allows anyone working for the NSA or CIA to do whatever the hell he or she wants today to anyone, however innocent, without facing prosecution for lawbreaking. Charming. Honestly, pretending it is still not about control – that it's somehow - if you squint just right – still about "winning hearts and minds" was so last century. Really important book.

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### **Sam says**

An interesting, if overly detailed, overview of the growth of the American secrecy community. Could have used a touch more synthesis throughout and the author comes across as a bit of an apologist, but worth the read.

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### **Paula says**

Excellent writing by a pentagon whistle blower on the continuance of the Vietnam war.

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### **Adam Rosenbaum says**

Interesting take on the politics of secrets and the culture that makes it a tradeable currency. Will frighten some as to the liberties the NSA and the dozens of other secret agencies enact to collect data, all in the name of defense. Authors do a good job of identifying how data is collected and analyzed and by whom, and how different branches of government view the legality of intercepting the data. It also paints an often, decidedly, dysfunctional government that is incapable of keeping secrets. With so many more people having access to secrets, it will inevitably become harder and harder to maintain the current secrecy state. The last part that deals with cryptography and quantum computing is another realm that we will be hearing more about.... because he who has the best cryptographers and programmers will rule! Hello India, China, Israel.

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### **Michele says**

I didn't think I was going to like this book...but I did. It helps provide a more rounded view of how government works. Our government has been managing secrets, institutionally, for more than a hundred years. There is no transparent accounting of this part of the government budget. This book gives us just a peak inside.

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### **Patricia L. says**

I was impressed by much of the research, but did not enjoy some of the sensationalist-type claims which belong better to a newspaper "rag". Even bringing up Area 51 seemed to be a maneuver to attract the loony-tunes crowd to buy the book.

I'm certainly not dismissing the book and all its wonderful stories, it's just that I don't like the government's attempts at secrecy to be scorned when the safety of millions is at stake. If the Chinese are stealing our Defense secrets, we obviously face a crisis of secrecy in our country and need to move fast to protect our nation's military and business confidential research.

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### **Vasil Kolev says**

I expected a lot more from the book. A lot of it was boring "patriotic" drivel, with some interesting information here and there.

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### **Mckinley says**

Knowing there are state secrets is helpful. The question I am concerned with, however, is how the state is using that information and the object of the secrets.

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### **Tim Ervolina says**

Ambinder and Grady provide a clear-eyed view of the American security apparatus and the apparatchik that runs it. There is good news here: the US intelligence services are neither as scary nor as effective as they could be. Civil libertarians should rejoice. Still, considering how much we spend on this somewhat unseemly portion of our national defense, we should have better results. And as the US ponders whether or not to invade yet another Middle Eastern nation, tottering on the edge of collapse, we should pause: we really don't know what the hell we're doing when we engage in secrets gathering.

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### **Mike says**

Interesting to say the least!

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