OMNI

US NATIONAL SECRECY and LYING NEWSLETTER
#2, January 15, 2017.


Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace.
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Contents of US Secrecy Newsletter #1 at end

Contents US Secrecy and Lying Newsletter #2

Secrecy and Lying, a Few Snapshots of the Diseases

Secrecy, US Government

National Government

D. B. Grady’s (David Brown) Books on Secrecy, Deep State

Scott, The American Deep State

Engelhardt, Shadow Government

Schuessler, Deceit on the Road to War

Turse, Tomorrow’s Battlefield and The Changing Face of Empire

Greenwald, No Place to Hide

Judith Resnik, Judges for Secret Rulings

Schoenberg, Bin Laden Corpse Photos Classified Secret

State Governments
Peter Moskowitz, Stopping Filming at Farms

**Secrecy, Corporations**

Corporate Europe Observatory

Google Search

**Lying**

*Past, Lest We Forget*


**Today**

*Commercial and Political Deception*

From an Insurance Ad to Social Media, to Political Ads, with analysis by President Obama

Presidential Lying

Alterman, Trump Compulsive Liar

Personal Effects of Presidential Lying

Google Search

**Resistance: Whistleblowers and Leakers for Truth and Open Government**

Tomgram: Whistleblowers vs. Secrecy

Contents of #1

**SECRECY**

*Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry*

by Marc Ambinder (Author), D.B. Grady (Author)
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, 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 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.

The American Deep State: Wall Street, Big Oil, and the Attack on U.S. Democracy by Peter Dale Scott

Shadow Government: Surveillance, Secret Wars, and a Global
In 1964, a book entitled *The Invisible Government* shocked Americans with its revelations of a growing world of intelligence agencies playing fast and loose around the planet, a secret government lodged inside the one they knew that even the president didn't fully control. Almost half a century later, everything about that "invisible government" has grown vastly larger, more disturbing, and far more visible. In his new book, Tom Engelhardt takes in something new under the sun: what is no longer, as in the 1960s, a national security state, but a global security one, fighting secret wars that have turned the president into an assassin-in-chief. *Shadow Government* offers a powerful survey of a democracy of the wealthy that your grandparents wouldn't have recognized.

Review

"Tom Engelhardt is an iconoclast, but he also is the latest exemplar of a great American tradition. Like George Seldes and I. F. Stone before him, he has bypassed conventionally minded newspapers and magazines, and with his remarkable website and in books like this, found a way of addressing readers directly about the issues central to our time. Again and again, he goes to the heart of the matter, drawing on his awesomely wide reading, his knowledge of history, and his acute political radar system that uncovers small but deeply revealing nuggets of news and often makes me feel, enviously: how could I have missed that?"
—Adam Hochschild, author, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*

"This is a book about secrets and surveillance, but I’m here to tell you one secret its contents won't. For more than a dozen years, Tom Engelhardt and his website or blog or postnewspaper wire service Tomdispatch.com have been one of the great forces on the side of clarity, democracy, openness, and really good writing. Tom himself, a legendary book editor, is also one of the country's most eloquent and tenacious political writers, electronically publishing three essays a week for all these years and writing many of them himself. This collection, focused on the new Orwellianism, is some of the finest writing and finest public service gathered together in book form for your portable pleasure and outrage."
—Rebecca Solnit, author, *Men Explain Things to Me*

About the Author

**Tom Engelhardt** created and runs the TomDispatch.com website, a project of the Nation Institute, where he is a fellow. He is the author of *The American Way of War* and *The United States of Fear*, both published by Haymarket Books; a highly praised history of American triumphalism in the cold war, *The End of Victory Culture*; and of a novel, *The Last Days of Publishing*. He lives in New York.

**Glenn Greenwald** is a columnist on civil liberties and US national security issues for *The
Deceit on the Road to War: Presidents, Politics, and American Democracy by John M. Schuessler


In Deceit on the Road to War, John M. Schuessler examines how U.S. presidents have deceived the American public about fundamental decisions of war and peace. Deception has been deliberate, he suggests, as presidents have sought to shift blame for war onto others in some cases and oversell its benefits in others. Such deceit is a natural outgrowth of the democratic process, in Schuessler's view, because elected leaders have powerful incentives to maximize domestic support for war and retain considerable ability to manipulate domestic audiences. They can exploit information and propaganda advantages to frame issues in misleading ways, cherry-pick supporting evidence, suppress damaging revelations, and otherwise skew the public debate to their benefit. These tactics are particularly effective before the outbreak of war, when the information gap between leaders and the public is greatest.

When resorting to deception, leaders take a calculated risk that the outcome of war will be favorable, expecting the public to adopt a forgiving attitude after victory is secured. The three cases featured in the book—Franklin Roosevelt and World War II, Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War, and George W. Bush and the Iraq War—test these claims. Schuessler concludes that democracies are not as constrained in their ability to go to war as we might believe and that deception cannot be ruled out in all cases as contrary to the national interest.

http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100222140


The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and... By Nick Turse
Renting Judges for Secret Rulings

*Judith Resnik, The New York Times*

Resnik writes: "Instead of open proceedings, filings would not be docketed, the courtroom would be closed to the public and the outcome would be secret.

READ MORE


[Dick: The government’s familiar argument (disclosure poses a risk to national security) has locked up democracy’s needed open government sunshine. The court’s ruling if generalized will be disastrous to a free press and transparent government, for telling the truth often offends somebody, especially the friends of somebody murdered by our government. The way to prevent violence against citizens of the US and US “interests” (US military interventions, occupations, atrocities, and assassinations) is to avoid illegal, atrocious behavior that elicits retaliation.]

Photos of Osama bin Laden’s corpse and burial at sea were properly classified by U.S. officials and can be withheld from the public, a federal appeals court ruled.

The *U.S. Court of Appeals* in *Washington* today rejected arguments by *Judicial Watch Inc.*, a conservative litigation group, that the Central Intelligence Agency failed to show that releasing images of bin Laden’s body -- specifically those showing it cleaned and prepared for burial -- would harm national security or reveal classified intelligence strategies.

“It is undisputed that the government is withholding the images not to shield wrongdoing or embarrassment, but rather to prevent the killing of Americans and violence against American interests,” according to the ruling by U.S. Circuit judges Merrick Garland, *Judith Rogers* and Harry Edwards.

The lawsuit, filed under the Freedom of Information Act, involves 52 images of bin Laden after he was killed during a raid by U.S. special operations forces on his compound in Abbottabad, *Pakistan*, in May 2011. Those images were classified as top-secret by the CIA.
“The court’s interpretation would allow terrorists to dictate our laws,” Tom Fitton, Judicial Watch president, said in an interview. “The decision seems to acknowledge the photos were improperly classified but gives the Obama administration a pass.”

**Classification Procedures**

The appeals court agreed the CIA may not have fully followed classification procedures for the images. Even so, the finding by a top CIA official that they had been correctly classified “removes any doubt” about the propriety of the designation, the court said.

In an interview in May 2011 with the CBS program “60 Minutes,” President Barack Obama said release of the “very graphic” photos of the al-Qaeda leader’s corpse might be used by extremists as propaganda to incite violence.

“We don’t trot out this stuff as trophies,” the president said, according to a CBS transcript.

The government argued that the photos and any video are exempt from disclosure because they reveal secret intelligence operations and foreign activity and would pose a risk to national security. A lower-court judge sided with the government and dismissed Judicial Watch’s lawsuit in April 2012.

**Post-Mortem Pictures**

Judicial Watch argued in court papers that during the Bush administration there were instances when graphic post-mortem pictures of war targets were made public without resulting in harm to national security.

The group pointed in court filings to photographs of the deceased sons of Saddam Hussein released by the Defense Department in 2003. A “gruesome, post-mortem” photo of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Iraqi insurgent leader, was displayed in a gold frame by the Army during a press conference in 2006, the group said.

Judicial Watch questions why written descriptions of the bin Laden’s burial have been unclassified while the images remain under wraps. The group cited an e-mail released to the Associated Press from a rear admiral who was present during the burial describing the event.

Some of the images being sought depict “a somber burial in which the body of the mastermind of the most deadly terrorist attack of the U.S. was treated with the utmost dignity and respect,” Michael Bekesha, a lawyer for the group, said in court papers.

‘Grave Harm’

The appeals court said the government properly weighed the concerns of senior military and intelligence officials who thought that “releasing images of American personnel burying the founder and leader of al-Qaeda could cause exceptionally grave harm.”

The decision refers to declarations from these officials citing prior violence and deaths due to an incorrect report by Newsweek that military personnel at Guantanamo Bay had desecrated the
Koran and publication of a Danish cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad.
“The CIA’s predictions of the violence that could accompany disclosure of the images provide an adequate basis for classification,” the judges said.
To contact the reporter on this story: Tom Schoenberg in Washington attschoenberg@bloomberg.net.

STATE GOVERNMENT
Idaho Gov. Signs 'Ag-Gag' Bill Into Law
Peter Moskowitz, Al Jazeera America
Moskowitz reports: "Idaho on Friday became the first state in two years to pass a bill aimed at stopping filming at farms and dairy producers."
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A Perspective from Europe
Corporate Europe Observatory
Exposing the power of corporate lobbying in the EU

Google Search, 1-15-17
How Delaware kept America safe for corporate secrecy - Reuters
www.reuters.com/.../us-usa-delaware-bullock-specialreport-idUSKCN10...
Russian dolls: Why not knowing who owns and controls companies is a huge problem. Anti-corruption activist Charmian Gooch argues that corporate secrecy and political unrest are connected — and that ending anonymous companies is a step towards global stability.

The Danger of Corporate Secrecy – Mark Sanborn Keynote ...

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Dec 9, 2016 - Multinational companies and governments to make concrete commitments and steps to improve corporate transparency such as beneficial ...

Corporate Secrecy and Political Accountability - JStor

Panama Papers shed light on corporate secrecy at home - StarTribune .
The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq is the comprehensive source on the administration's campaign of disinformation before, during, and after the second Gulf War. From the careful linking of Saddam Hussein with Al Qaeda, to the WMD canard, to the September 2003 damage-control sideshow, AlterNet.org's Christopher Scheer and Lakshmi Chaudhry team up with renowned journalist Robert Scheer to take the full measure of official deception.

They not only lied, the authors conclude; the pattern of obfuscation, misstatement, and half-retraction amounted to a devious entrapment of the American people. The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq offers the first analysis of this pattern, underscoring that the lying was highly managed. The public did not commit troops, and dollars, to the invasion acting on the best information its government could provide. Instead, we fell victim to a marketing campaign conducted by a small group of influential radicals inside the Bush administration, who were pursuing their own narrow, hubristic agenda.

With U.S. soldiers still losing their lives, Bush's ongoing doublespeak is outrageous. In the authors' words, "The Bush administration continues to stand firm on the bodies of its own soldiers, who are paying a high price for its lack of reason. . . . The soldiers themselves are simply exhausted, homesick, and disillusioned with both their generals who sold them the shining lie of a quick war of liberation and the nation that seems unwilling to be rescued."

REVIEWS

"Setting out to prove that 'every major assertion that our government put forward to justify the conquest of Iraq has proved false,' this broadside (more akin to a long article than a short book) reviews the evidence (or lack thereof) for linking Iraq to al-Qaida and 9/11, and reveals what the authors say is the inflation of Iraq's weapons capabilities and the erroneous assumptions about how long the war would take. Even sympathetic liberals may find the description of 'the losing end of a long war of attrition' to be overstating the case. The concise account by veteran journalist Robert Scheer, his son and Chaundhry, editors of AlterNet.org, deftly incorporates dozens of other media sources, including very recent materials like Gerald Posner's Why America Slept." —Publishers Weekly

"Highly readable and tightly argued, The Five Biggest Lies does more than devastatingly refute the mendacity of the Bush Administration's Iraq policy. Christopher Scheer and his cohorts present a chilling portrait of the cabal of neo-cons who have commandeered American foreign policy, revealing the arrogance, assumptions, and contradictions that have had such disastrous consequences for our nation—and the world." —Arianna Huffington, author of Pigs at the Trough: How Corporate Greed and Political Corruption are Undermining America

"Christopher Scheer and Robert Scheer have documented the depth of deception of all the president's henchmen who misled America into war against Iraq. This book will become the required text for the coming wave of campus teach-ins and mass protests over US policy in Iraq. The Scheers have written the truth and the truth sets us free to reclaim our nation." —
LYING TODAY

FROM STATE FARM INSURANCE ADVERTISING TO FACEBOOK COMMUNICATION DURING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2016 by Dick Bennett, 11-29-16

The State Farm ad on The Weather Channel featured blatant deceit via fear-mongering. A consumer is depicted loving a couch for sale; "got to have it," she says. Immediately scene changes to late-night thieves in her home. Voice over something like this: For every person like her there’s a thief wanting to steal her possessions. "Got to have it," says the thief.

Shortly afterward I read the article by David Remnick, “It Happened Here,” about the election 2016. On p. 57 Remnick relates Obama’s and his staff’s analysis of how disinformation over social media was used to influence an ignorant GOP base. For example, a small group of young people published more than a hundred pro-Trump Web sites producing “wildly sensationalist” stories from recycled right-wing sources, with hundreds of thousands of Facebook followers.

My point is that the saturation of commercial and political deceit disenables a large number of the US electorate to evaluate critically the countless rapid messages on TV or online. Were the public trained from K through 12 to question claims and demand evidence they could more quickly scorn the wildly exaggerating State Farm ad or the online message, “Pres. Obama was not born in the United States,” or “Pope Francis endorsed Trump.” Obama’s assessment: “An explanation of climate change from a Nobel Prize-winning physicist looks exactly the same on your Facebook page as the denial of climate change by somebody on the Koch brothers’ payroll. And the capacity to disseminate misinformation, wild conspiracy theories, to paint the opposition in wildly negative light without any rebuttal—that has accelerated in ways that much more sharply polarize the electorate and make it very difficult to have a common conversation.”
WHO’S THE GREATEST PINOCCHIO OF THEM ALL?
TRUMP


A summary of Trump’s and the GOP’s lies and attacks on the media. Mainstream journalism faces innumerable obstacles in trying to carry out its constitutional and professional responsibility to inform the public. Newspapers’ economic weakness is exploited by wealthy enemies who sue to shut them down. The number of newsroom employees is “now less than half what it was in 1990.” The proliferation of fake news sites has made the search for truth an increasingly difficult job. The cable-news networks enjoy massive increases in viewership and profits by reporting Trump’s “lies, threats, and megalomania.” Trump’s Twitter feed, “filled with falsehoods,” enjoys wide access. And mainstream journalists “don’t know how to report on a president who is a compulsive liar.” --Dick

Micah Uetricht. “The Local Labor Leader Who Defied Trump.” ITT (Feb. 2017), 32. When Trump slandered a labor opponent, the victim received “threats via e-mail, social media and” with some “reference to his children” from Trump supporters. --Dick

Google Search
Trump Team Caught In A Lie As President-Elect Met With Comey ...
www.politicususa.com/.../trump-team-caught-lie-president-elect-met-com...
3 days ago - Lies weren't being fed to the public from the media as much as they were from theTrump team. … When CNN reported that Trump was briefed on the allegations last week, Kellyanne Conway was quick to say that, no, the president-elect knew nothing about it. … It's during that pull aside ...

Trump: When the President-elect Lies, the Media Should Say So ...
fortune.com/2017/01/03/media-trump-lies/
Jan 4, 2017 - The only way to deal with a serial liar like President-elect Donald Trump is to call his statements what they are.
PolitiFact: Fact-checking US politics

www.politifact.com/

The Obameter: Tracking the record of President Barack Obama. The Obameter: ... Trump's first news conference as president-elect, checked. Trump's first news ...

Donald Trump's file | PolitiFact

www.politifact.com/personalities/donald-trump/

Donald Trump was elected the 45th president of the United States on Nov. 8, 2016. He has ... Trump's statements were awarded PolitiFact's 2015 Lie of the Year.

On the Russia scandal, Trump's lies start to pile up | MSNBC

www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow.../the-russia-scandal-trumps-lies-start-p...

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Trump Holds First Press Conference as President-Elect - Attn

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4 days ago - These sort of lies have been a fundamental element of Trump's campaign ... lying, ATTN: spotted at least three obvious moments where Trump ...

Are Clinton and Trump the Biggest Liars Ever to Run for President ...

www.politico.com/.../2016-donald-trump-hillary-clinton-us-history-presi...

Collectively, his falsehoods won PolitiFact's 2015 "Lie of the Year" award. ... As Trump and Clinton head into a general election battle, it's tempting to ... Presidential campaign lying in the United States dates to the earliest days of the republic.

Fact-checking President-elect Trump's news conference - The ...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../fact-checking-president-elect-trumps-n...

4 days ago - Here's a guide to 15 fishy and often debunked claims made by President-elect Donald Trump at his news conference.

FactCheck.org

www.factcheck.org/

In his first press conference since July, President-elect Donald Trump repeated some false and misleading claims on jobs, health care and his tax returns.

Searches related to President-elect Trump's Lies and Lying

politifact trump
fact check trump
list of trump lies
fact check presidential debate
interesting facts donald trump
is politifact biased
trump lies versus clinton lies

RESISTANCE: In Honor of Whistleblowers, Leakers, Fact-Checkers, and All Who Tell the Truth

Tomdispatch@nationinstitute.org

September 17, 2013
Tomgram: Engelhardt, How to Build a National Security Blowback Machine

Letter to an Unknown Whistleblower
How the Security State’s Mania for Secrecy Will Create You
By Tom Engelhardt

Dear Whistleblower,

I don’t know who you are or what you do or how old you may be. I just know that you exist somewhere in our future as surely as does tomorrow or next year. You may be young and computer-savvy or a career federal employee well along in years. You might be someone who entered government service filled with idealism or who signed on to “the bureaucracy” just to make a living. You may be a libertarian, a closet left-winger, or as mainstream and down-the-center as it’s possible to be.

I don’t know much, but I know one thing that you may not yet know yourself. I know that you’re there. I know that, just as Edward Snowden and Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning did, you will, for reasons of your own, feel compelled to take radical action, to put yourself in danger. When the time comes, you will know that this is what you must do, that this is why you find yourself where you are, and then you’re going to tell us plenty that has been kept from us about how our government really operates. You are going to shock us to the core.
And how exactly do I know this? Because despite our striking inability to predict the future, it’s a no-brainer that the national security state is already building you into its labyrinthine systems. In the urge of its officials to control all of us and every situation, in their mania for all-encompassing secrecy, in their classification not just of the millions of documents they generate, but essentially all their operations as “secret” or “top secret,” in their all-encompassing urge to shut off the most essential workings of the government from the eyes of its citizenry, in their escalating urge to punish anyone who would bring their secret activities to light, in their urge to see or read or listen in on or peer into the lives of you (every “you” on the planet), in their urge to build a global surveillance state and a military that will dominate everything in or out of its path, in their urge to drop bombs on Pakistan and fire missiles at Syria, in their urge to be able to assassinate just about anyone just about anywhere robotically, they are birthing you.

In every action, a reaction. So they say, no?

Give our national security managers credit, though: they may prove to be the master builders of the early twenty-first century. Their ambitions have been breathtaking and their ability to commandeer staggering amounts of our taxpayer dollars to pay for those projects hardly less so. Their monuments to themselves, their version of pyramids and ziggurats -- like the vast data storage center the National Security Agency is building for almost $2 billion in Bluffdale, Utah, to keep a yottabyte of private information about all of us, or the new post-9/11 headquarters the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency built, again for almost $2 billion, so that its 16,000 employees could monitor our system of satellites monitoring every square inch of the planet -- are in their own way unique. In their urge to control everything, to see everything from your Facebook chatter to the emails of the Brazilian president, they are creating a system built to blowback, and not just from the outside or distant lands.

Chalmers Johnson, who took “blowback,” an obscure term of CIA tradecraft, and embedded it in our everyday language, would have instantly recognized what they’re doing: creating a blowback machine whose “unintended consequences” (another term of his) are guaranteed, like the effects of the Snowden revelations, to stun us all in a myriad of ways. Click here to read more of this dispatch.
Lying and Secrecy are inseparable in their subversion of democracy.

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Contents: US Secrecy and Lying Newsletter #1

http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2013/05/us-secrecy-newsletter-1.html

(Citations arranged roughly in reverse chronological order according to its content.)

Rev. Scahill, US Secret Dirty Wars
Pierce, US Secret Wars
Priest and Arkin, *Top Secret America*
Trevor Paglen, 2 Books
  *Invisible*
  *Blank Spots*
Moyers, Reagan and Contras
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END US SECRECY AND LYING NEWSLETTER #2

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Dick Bennett

Blog: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
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