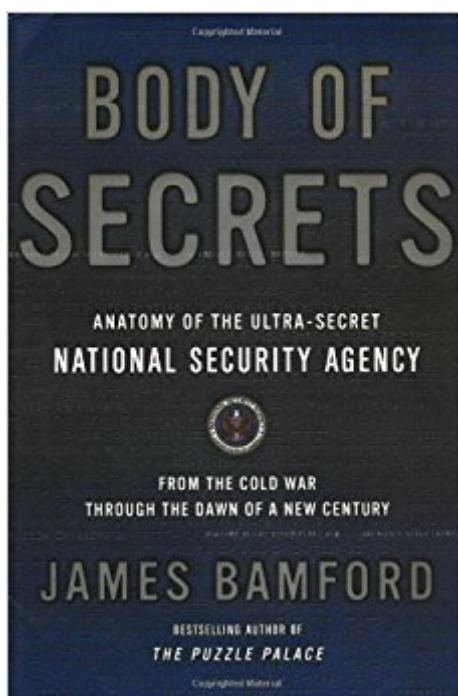


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Body Of Secrets: Anatomy Of The Ultra-Secret National Security Agency



Synopsis

A no-holds-barred examination of the National Security Agency packed with startling secrets about its past, newsbreaking revelations about its present-day activities, and chilling predictions about its future powers and reach. The NSA is the largest, most secretive, and most powerful intelligence agency in the world. With a staff of thirty-eight thousand people, it dwarfs the CIA in budget, manpower, and influence. Recent headlines have linked it to the economic espionage throughout Europe and to the ongoing hunt for the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. James Bamford first penetrated the wall of silence surrounding the NSA in 1982, with the much-talked-about bestseller *The Puzzle Palace*. In *Body of Secrets*, he offers shocking new details about the inner workings of the agency, gathered through unique access to thousands of internal documents and interviews with current and former officials. Unveiling extremely sensitive information for the first time, Bamford exposes the role the NSA played in numerous Soviet bloc Cold War conflicts and discusses its undercover involvement in the Vietnam War. His investigation into the NSA's technological advances during the last fifteen years brings to light a network of global surveillance ranging from on-line listening posts to sophisticated intelligence-gathering satellites. In a hard-hitting conclusion, he warns that the NSA is a two-edged sword. While its worldwide eavesdropping activities offer the potential for tracking down terrorists and uncovering nuclear weapons deals, it also has the capability to listen on global personal communications. Like the breakout bestsellers on Cold War espionage *The Sword and the Shield* and *Blind Man's Buff*, *Body of Secrets* is must-reading for people fascinated by the intrigues of a shadowy underworld. As one of the most important works of investigative journalism to come out of Washington in years, it should be read by everyone concerned about the inevitability of Orwell's Big Brother.

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Customer Reviews

Everybody knows about the CIA--the cloak-and-dagger branch of the U.S. government. Many fewer are familiar with the National Security Agency, even though it has been more important to American espionage in recent years than its better-known counterpart. The NSA is responsible for much of the intelligence gathering done via technology such as satellites and the Internet. Its home office in Maryland "contains what is probably the largest body of secrets ever created." Little was known about the agency's confidential culture until veteran journalist James Bamford blew the lid off in 1982 with his bestseller *The Puzzle Palace*. Still, much remained in the shadows. In *Body of Secrets*, Bamford throws much more light on his subject--and he reveals loads of shocking information. The story of the U-2 crisis in 1960 is well known, including President Eisenhower's decision to tell a fib to the public in order to protect a national-security secret. Bamford takes the story a disturbing step forward, showing how Eisenhower "went so far as to order his Cabinet officers to hide his involvement in the scandal even while under oath. At least one Cabinet member directly lied to the committee, a fact known to Eisenhower." Even more worrisome is another revelation, from the Kennedy years: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff drew up and approved plans for what may be the most corrupt plan ever created by the U.S. government. In the name of anticommunism, they proposed launching a secret and bloody war of terrorism against their own country in order to trick the American public into supporting an ill-conceived war they intended to launch against Cuba." *Body of Secrets* is an incredible piece of journalism, and it paints a deeply troubling portrait of an agency about which the public knows next to nothing. Fans of *The Sword and the Shield* will want to read it, as will anybody who is intrigued by conspiracies and real-life spy stories. --John J. Miller

The National Security Agency (NSA), writes Bamford, has made the United States an "eavesdropping superpower," capable of capturing, deciphering and analyzing "signal intelligence" communications in whatever form it may exist and from whatever nation it may be transmitted. Yet with a budget (\$4 billion a year) and staff (numbering in the tens of thousands) that dwarf its more famous cousin, the CIA, and with a headquarters, known as "Crypto City," that is its own self-contained community, little is known of NSA among the public and, more troublingly, even within other parts of government. Uncovering the secrets of NSA, its history and operations, has become Bamford's life's work, first begun in his now classic *The Puzzle Palace* (1982) and

continued in this significantly revised and expanded present volume. With remarkable access to highly sensitive documents and information, Bamford takes the reader from the beginnings of NSA during the early cold war, through its roles in such watershed events as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War, to the amazingly sophisticated developments in information technology taking place within NSA today. What Bamford discovers is at times surprising, often quite troubling but always fascinating. In his conclusion, he is at once awed and deeply disturbed by what NSA can now do: ever more sophisticated surveillance techniques can mean ever greater assaults on the basic right of individual privacy. In a computer system that can store five trillion pages of text, anyone and everyone can be monitored. Writing with a flair and clarity that rivals those of the best spy novelists, Bamford has created a masterpiece of investigative reporting. (On-sale date: Apr. 24)Forecast: Bamford will be doing national media, including NBC's Today show and NPR's Fresh Air. This is the stuff spy thrillers are made from: The Puzzle Palace was a bestseller, and this will be, too.Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Liked it but didn't suit my taste exactly--a little too dry for me. Or maybe just my mood didn't click with it...i

i have some background in this area and this answered questions i did not want to ask.

Extremely interesting book about NSA and it's roots. Having been part of that program back in the 60's while serving with the USAFSS made it pretty fascinating reading, learned much more that I ever knew about that branch of the USAF and how they tied into NSA.

This otherwise thorough history of the NSA is tainted by several major flaws. The book covers fascinating bits of history from the USS Pueblo and USS Liberty incidents to stories of electronic espionage from the arctic to central Africa. One of the problems is focus. Bamford often digresses, for example, he writes profusely about the betrayal of the bay of pigs and the cuban missile crises and when he does this, he is diverging far from subject matter of the NSA and cryptology. The quality of writing and style is most inconsistent and makes me wonder if an initially broadly researched topic was rushed towards the end of the writing process. Overall, I would only recommend Body of Secrets to those especially interested in espionage history and technology. There are amazing facts to be gleaned after sorting through the chaff.. Never thought there were so many divisions. Bamford takes the reader from the beginnings of NSA during the early cold war,

through the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War, to the sophisticated developments in information technology taking place within NSA today in the final chapter. The various directors are studied. Bobby Inmann from Texas is an interesting and odd story. Only 2 women have been deputy directors. Bamford appears to alert us as to when lying by public officials began. He tells of President Eisenhower's decision to lie to the public in order to protect a national-security secret, but he takes the story a step farther and shows how Eisenhower "went so far as to order his Cabinet officers to hide his involvement in the scandal even while under oath. At least one Cabinet member directly lied to the committee, a fact known to Eisenhower." Was this a first? One more from the Kennedy years: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff drew up and approved plans for what may be the most corrupt plan ever created by the U.S. government. In the name of anticommunism, they proposed launching a secret and bloody war of terrorism against their own country in order to trick the American public into supporting an ill-conceived war they intended to launch against Cuba." This one is truly scary. Says a lot about power. Bamford tells of the headquarters, known as "Crypto City," which has its own totally self-contained community. They are complete unto themselves. A fiefdom. What NSA is capable of certainly makes me uneasy: more and more sophisticated surveillance techniques can infringe upon the basic rights of individual privacy. In a computer system that can store five trillion pages of text, anyone and everyone can be monitored. It brings up the unspoken question: Should we do this just because we are able to? The NSA is the largest, most secretive, and most powerful intelligence agency in the world, but even it had its moment of breakdown. Not 2 weeks after NSA had survived Y2K, the complete computer system went down for 3 days. Talk about a secret! But how did Bamford find out? That is a story in itself. I would think that *Body of Secrets* is a must-read for people fascinated by the intrigues of a shadowy underworld, actually all U.S. citizens. Orwell's Big Brother has arrived.

this book opened up my eyes about so many events that went on with our government and that of others. the truth shall set you free and this book helps clear up a lot of questions many of us have had about what actually happened with regards several incidents regarding intelligence mishaps in vietnam and korea and israel. this book filled in many blanks about organizations many of us worked in yet still did not know the big picture.

Ok, so I've got a couple gripes about this book. First off, the title: *Anatomy of the Ultra-Secret National Security Agency*. This book is much more of an operational history, rather than an anatomy of the agency. It contains almost no mention of any detailed organizational structure. About the only

anatomy you get are the basic divisions. Communist Russian, Communist Non-Russian, and Non-Communist. Also I thought there would be much more in-depth technical detail. This however was also not the case. The second gripe is the recycling of material used in The Puzzle Palace. I already own a copy of that book, and have no real desire to re-read information I already own. The book is well written, I just wish it was more of what it bills itself to be.

Hard to put down once I started reading

The book presented some very interesting information, and some incredibly boring information. The information that I bought the book for was explained thoroughly. If one is interested in learning about Operation Northwoods, The USS Liberty, the capacities of the NSA, and/or various Cold War concepts/facts, then this book is one to read.

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