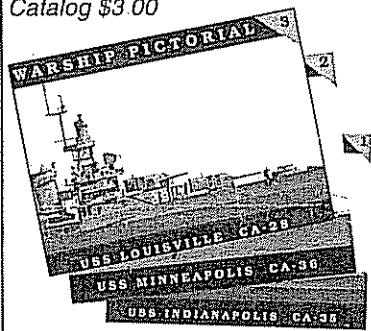


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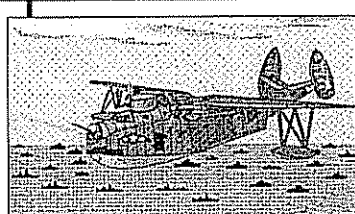
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stories of the U.S. Coast Guard, the British frigate *HMS Brave*, and the U.S. Navy in drug interdiction. Many will take umbrage at the proposition by one author that the drug war is unwinnable. This writer also argues that any great nation should be wise enough to walk away from such a war

The chapter by retired Coast Guard Rear Admiral John Linnon, from the viewpoint of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, describes in clear terms the maritime drug effort in the United States. He contends that drug use has declined 50% since 1979, and makes one ask if the war may indeed be winnable. With the help of the British, Dutch, and French navies, and massive support by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy, drug smuggling by sea in the Caribbean has been reduced severely. Admiral Linnon would say this is one we can win.

This is good reading that not only will educate the reader on the impact of illegal drug smuggling on the marine industries, but also will present clear insights into the world's efforts to combat the problem

Admiral Yost is the president of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation in Washington, DC

Secrecy: The American Experience

Daniel Patrick Moynihan. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998. 265 pp. Notes Index. \$22.50 (\$20.25)

Reviewed by Mark Shulman

"Secrecy is for losers," concludes the former vice-chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Fortunately, Daniel Patrick Moynihan now has distilled the truths behind this conclusion into a witty, erudite, and personal primer on the United States' unfortunate experience with secrecy.

Moynihan defines secrecy as "a form of regulation . . . [by which the] government proscribes what citizens may know." Even after the post-Cold War draw down, secrecy continues to expand. Referring to sociologist Max Weber's seminal ideas, Moynihan notes "bureaucracy's tendency to amass official secrets." The U.S. government creates many secrets—notwithstanding commissions, laws, and executive orders to the contrary. In 1996, the number of "official" secrets increased by 62%.

Historically, the government has resisted the impulse to classify information. Prior to World War II there were some military secrets, but the Army and Navy were remarkably open. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen

Points defined the first requirement for any peace settlement: "open covenants, openly arrived at." At the same time, however, Wilson was using the Espionage Act to clamp down on dissent at home. He signed the Sedition Act barring "profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government . . . the Constitution . . . or the flag of the United States, or the uniform of the Army and Navy." The Sedition Act remains good law today, sanctioning the thousands of secrets kept from Americans.

During World War II, the government embraced secrecy—most notably to cover up the biggest secret till then, the Manhattan Project. In the years that followed, although Alger Hiss did perjure himself, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg did give the Soviets hydrogen bomb secrets, the nation suffered a confused hysteria over the possibility of a domestic communist conspiracy because the Army refused to divulge the evidence it held. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Omar Bradley withheld the Venona decrypts of Moscow's messages to its American agents because the general did not trust the President with this information.

Throughout the Cold War, presidents recognized that "even harmless secrets were coins to power to be hoarded." The corrosive effects of official secrecy contributed to the worst strategic blunders of the Cold War: the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Iran-Contra. Most important, secrecy contributed to the persistent misunderstanding of Soviet capabilities and intentions. Also, because there are so many secrets, many well-informed citizens believe that government officials *never* tell the truth. For example, four out of five Americans believe the government is hiding evidence of extraterrestrial life, and three out of four believe the CIA assassinated President Kennedy to prolong the war in Southeast Asia.

A former sociology professor at Harvard, Senator Moynihan recently chaired the commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy. The Commission proposed reforms requiring a balancing test that weighs the public's right to know against any classification. It also would create a declassification system limiting the life of a secret to ten years unless reclassified specifically. And all secrets must expire after 30 years—unless doing so would threaten harm to an individual or an ongoing program.

The nation's most gifted scholar-statesman has produced a marvelous little book, and it should not be missed.

Dr. Shulman is author of *Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893*, published by the Naval Institute Press. He is editor-in-chief of the *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*.