

SPYING WITHOUT SPIES

Origins of America's
Secret Nuclear
Surveillance System

Charles A. Ziegler
and David Jacobson

Spying Without Spies: Origins of America's Secret Nuclear Surveillance System (16)

By David Jacobson, Charles A. Ziegler

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This is the first description of the formation of America's nuclear surveillance system. Drawing on interviews with participants and the little documentation available under the Freedom of Information Act, Ziegler and Jacobson tell a story not told before. They shed new light on questions raised in earlier interpretations of the early Cold War years and reveal the origins of a surveillance activity that is implied, but not explained, in today's headlines.

This book provides the first documented description of the genesis and institutionalization of America's nuclear surveillance system. It traces the development of covert technical methods for assessing the nuclear capability of foreign powers from the introduction of these techniques in World War II to 1949, when they were successfully employed to detect the test of Russia's first atomic bomb. Ziegler and Jacobson examine the planning for the system as well as the technical and organizational obstacles that had to be overcome before it could be implemented. They describe the government decision-making processes and the ways individuals and groups with different beliefs and interests were mobilized in support of the program. They also explore the relationships between the intelligence and scientific communities that were forged in this process.

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Spying Without Spies: Origins of America's Secret Nuclear Surveillance System (16)

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- Rank: #2907209 in Books
- Published on: 1995-01-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .63" w x 6.14" l, 1.11 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 256 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb on August 29, 1949, signaling the end of the U.S. nuclear monopoly and the start of the postwar arms race. Despite Soviet efforts to conceal their test, it was detected by a long-range surveillance system with origins in WWII. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, the authors of this accessible study describe the organization of the responsible agency--called by several names through the years, it is currently the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC), headquartered at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida--and the development of radiological, sonic and seismic technology that has monitored nuclear activity worldwide for over 40 years. The study fills a gap in the historical record, revealing America's nuclear surveillance capability and its pervasive, though unheralded, effect on foreign policy and the arms race. Ziegler and Jacobson both teach anthropology at Brandeis University.

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Review

"Drawing on a wide variety of sources, the authors of this accessible study describe the organization of the responsible agency--called by several names through the years, it is currently the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC)...--and the development of radiological, sonic and seismic technology that has monitored nuclear activity worldwide for over 40 years. This study fills a gap in the historical record..."- Publishers Weekly

... "the definitive account of the systems evolved by the US to track down other potential nuclear weaponry..."-The Jerusalem Post

"This is a fine, well-researched book that will delight historians of American bureaucracy and the military."- Technology and Culture

"Ziegler and Jacobson offer an excellent model for historians of modern technical intelligence collection. Their book is solidly researched, sound in narrative, effectively organized, and judicious...in its conclusions."-American Historical Review

"Charles A. Ziegler and David Jacobson's outstanding study further illuminates this interaction by depicting US intelligence's complex efforts to establish a long-range surveillance system that could track Soviet nuclear weapons developments, initially by detecting atomic tests.... This fine study is one of the intelligence revelations of the year..."-The International History Review

"Charles Ziegler and David Jacobson use declassified records and participant interviews to produce this remarkable account.... Spying Without Spies provides the first description of the creation and institutionalization of America's nuclear detection system and the relationship it forged between the science and intelligence communities. Thus, the book makes a unique contribution to intelligence literature."- Airpower Journal

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..,"the definitive account of the systems evolved by the US to track down other potential nuclear weaponry..." -The Jerusalem Post

"Ziegler and Jacobson have done a first-class job. Their work fills a gap in our post-World War II history that needed to be filled." - Dr. Roderick W. Spence Former Head, Radiochemical Group Los Alamos National Laboratory

"The organization of the narrative portions is excellent. Everything is to be found where one would expect it. The technical material is presented with confidence, but not smugly--as so often occurs when the writers know so much more of the technical details of a topic than the reader...For me, of course, the most interesting account is the inner workings (or failure to work) of the RDB...None like it yet exists in the historical literature." -Dr. Allan A. Needell Historian of American Science

"Ziegler and Jacobson have provided the first detailed view in the open literature into a sector of that extensive system created following the Second World War to provide scientific expertise and guidance to U.S. military and civilian agencies. Theirs is an important contribution to our understanding of the operation of the national security state in its early stages of development. The presentation is clear and direct, with the added virtue of an historical/anthropological approach that sees the situation from the inside." - Dr. Paul Forman, Curator for Modern Physics National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution

"Unreserved compliments to Ziegler and Jacobson on a wonderful documentary. I was very impressed by the extent and thoroughness of their investigative reporting and their ability to capture the essential features of this intriguing story. Reading the book I relived many of the episodes of high political-scientific drama that led to the detection of Joe-1...Aside from the pleasant memories their book evoked, I was naturally prompted to compare my recollections of things with their description of them. For most of the items I could only exclaim Right On!" -Dr. Gerard Leies Former Technical Director Air Force Technical Applications Center

From the Back Cover

This book provides the first documented description of the genesis and institutionalization of America's nuclear surveillance system. It traces the development of covert technical methods for assessing the nuclear capability of foreign powers from the introduction of these techniques in World War II to 1949, when they were successfully employed to detect the test of Russia's first atomic bomb. Ziegler and Jacobson examine the planning for the system as well as the technical and organizational obstacles that had to be overcome before it could be implemented. They describe the government decision-making processes and the ways individuals and groups with different beliefs and interests were mobilized in support of the program. They also explore the relationships between the intelligence and scientific communities that were forged in this process.

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