

## Jacket Text for [Blank Check](#)

BLANK CHECK is the story of the Pentagon's secret budget--the black budget. A remarkable work of investigative reporting, this book presents the first detailed look into the multibillion-dollar cache used to fund every defense program, every espionage mission, every weapon, and every war that the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the CIA want erased from the public ledger and shielded from public debate.

Over the past three years, the black budget has consumed more than \$100 billion--\$100 million a day. In blatant defiance of the United States Constitution, this system of secret spending has stripped Congress of its power over the federal budget and robbed taxpayers of their right to know how their money is spent.

The black budget began with the secrecy surrounding the Manhattan Project and received its formal baptism with the creation of the CIA in the late 1940's. Over the years, slowly and silently, the budget grew unchecked. Then, in the 1980's, it exploded, doubling and doubling again. In 1986 *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Tim Weiner started investigating the phenomenon, and in 1988 the series of articles he wrote on the black budget earned him the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. But his series reflected only a fraction of the information and outrages revealed in BLANK CHECK.

Now, in this hard-hitting book, Weiner writes in depth about the bizarre projects, complex weaponry and wholesale corruption bankrolled by these off-the-books funds:

- PREPARATIONS FOR WORLD WAR III...AND IV. Our military strategists have secret plans to fight and win a six-month nuclear war with computers, satellites, and robot soldiers...long after most of civilization is destroyed.
- THE STEALTH BOMBER. Already obsolete, this nuclear bomber will cost taxpayers more than \$825 million per plane, enough to have each one built in solid gold.
- COVERT OPERATIONS. Buried in the Pentagon's black budget are billions for secret wars. The black budget provided seed money for the secret arms shipments to Iran and Central America. It pays for all CIA operations, including some \$500 million in arms shipped to a murderous Islamic militant who reveres the Ayatollah Khomeini.
- OPERATION YELLOW FRUIT. A secret army within the army that ran amok, broke laws and landed its leaders in Leavenworth--after siphoning \$324 million out of the Treasury.
- FRAUD, THEFT, KICKBACKS. All are the inevitable result of secret spending.

In pulling back the veil that has surrounded the black budget, BLANK CHECK raises disturbing questions about the inevitable strains between secrecy and democracy. The costs of a hidden budget are not measured merely in money, but in useless weaponry, renegade foreign policies and a citizenry grown cynical of its government. As riveting as any technothriller, but more frightening because it is true, BLANK CHECK provides a rare glimpse into the maze of secret government spending that cannot fail to shock and enlighten.