

The Problem of Historical Analysis:

The Iceberg Hypothesis

Information Content and Access

- Public Open Sources
 - Declassified
 - Unclassified
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- Confidential
 - Secret
 - Top Secret
 - TS-SCI: Top Secret – Sensitive Compartmentalized Information
 - SAP: Special Access Programs
 - USAP: Unacknowledged SAP
 - “Waived” USAP (no oversight)
 - ACCM: Alternative or Compensatory Control Measures
 - Private Contractors & Cliques
 - “Them”

FOIA Accessible

Inaccessible
Unless Leaked



Source: Richard Dolan lecture, “Secret Space Program Conference”
Amsterdam 2011

The Iceberg Hypothesis

The Iceberg Hypothesis asserts that legally attainable (public open sources, declassified, and unclassified content) information about an historical topic, event, or phenomenon that is prone toward secrecy by public or private institutions for various reasons including but not limited to political, economic, or military phenomenon, represents a small fraction of the information that exists on that topic; and that this publically attainable information is subject to varying degrees of manipulation and obfuscation through the use of propaganda and disinformation; and therefore research and analysis of historical topics, events, and phenomena which are prone to secrecy will likely suffer from, at best, a vague or partial picture of events leading to a misleading analysis, and at worst, an ambiguous or incorrect picture leading to a fundamentally flawed analysis.