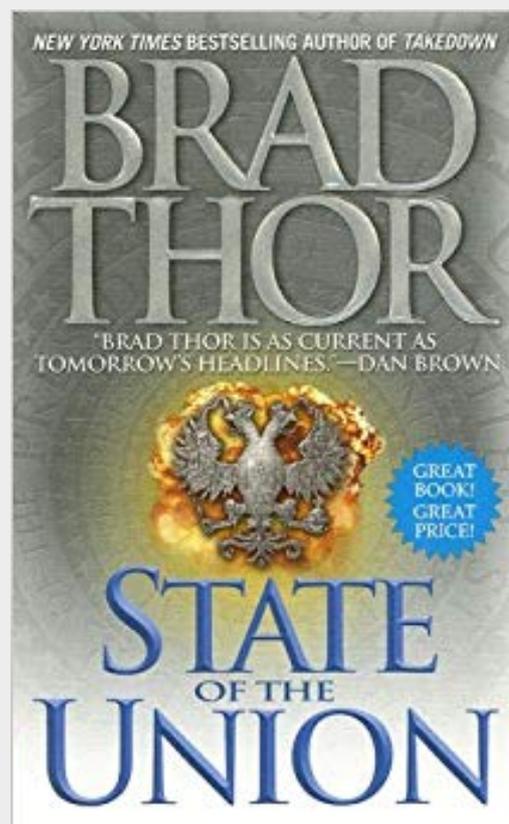


## State of the Union: A Thriller by Brad Thor



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**Author:** Brad Thor

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From the national bestselling author of *The Lions of Lucerne* and *Path of the Assassin* comes another electrifying international thriller featuring all-American hero Scot Harvath, as he plunges into the frigid heart of the Russian tundra to save the fragile state of the union.

On a cold January morning, the United States awakes to discover that an old enemy, one long believed dead and buried, has crawled out of its grave to lay siege to the world's only superpower.

With the stunning discovery that enhanced Soviet-made suitcase nukes have been secreted in America's major cities, President Jack Rutledge gathers his National Security Council to weigh the feasibility of a first strike against the Russian Federation. There's only one problem. For over two decades, the Russians have been funneling international aid money into a top secret air defense system, which has just been brought on-line and which will render any conventional attack upon their country utterly ineffective.

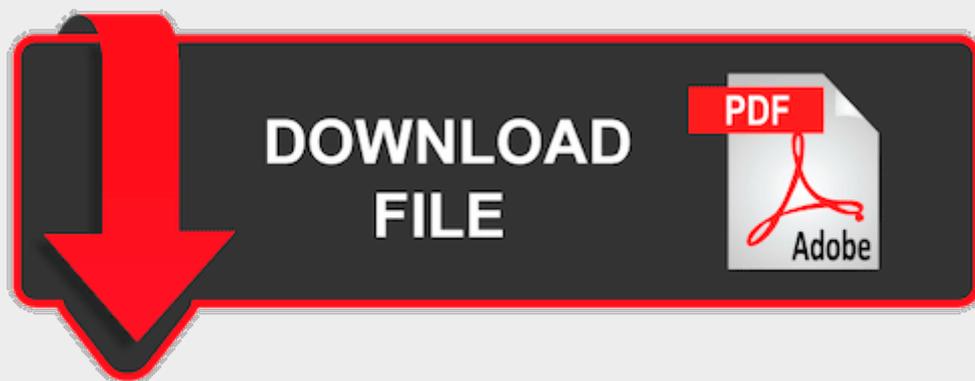
After exhausting all of his other options, and with Soviet sleeper agents preparing to detonate their deadly payloads across the United States, the president turns to the nation's final hope, ex-Navy SEAL and Secret Service Agent Scot Harvath.

Assigned to a covert section of the Department of Homeland Security and charged with defending the nation against all foreign aggressors by any means necessary, Harvath finds himself hand-picked by the president to unravel a brilliantly orchestrated, fiendishly timed conspiracy that has already shattered the fragile peace between the world's nations and which, if successful, will leave the United States in smoldering ruins.

With family friend and former Deputy FBI Director Gary Lawlor nowhere to be found and suspected of betraying his country, Harvath embarks on an adventure that will test the bonds of loyalty and reveal a nation's deepest secrets.

As high-voltage and timely as they come, *State of the Union* is a frighteningly real, headline-ripping tale of espionage and intrigue that will keep readers guessing until the last tantalizing piece of the puzzle locks into place.

With exotic international locales, hair-raising suspense, and scenes of pulse-pounding action, Brad Thor has once again reaffirmed his position as the thriller writer readers and critics alike have hailed as Clancy, Cussler, and Ludlum all rolled into one.



## Reviews of the **State of the Union: A Thriller** by Brad Thor

### 1. Cordanara

In his third offering of the Scot Harvath saga, Brad Thor finally gets around to placing Harvath in his element: counter-terrorism. In the first offering, "The Lions of Lucerne," the former Navy Seal is featured in his role of Secret Service agent. In "Path of the Assassin," he ties up loose ends from book one and transitions away from Secret Service work and into the field he was so obviously made for. Harvath has to be one of the most highly trained individuals in history, and in "State of the Union," he will need every bit to make it out alive and save millions of innocent lives.

The story really starts in the early 1980's when the Cold War was at its peak. Both the Soviets and Americans had placed sleeper agents with suitcase nukes in position to detonate them in major cities. However, mutually assured destruction (MAD) was keeping both countries at bay. Fast forward 20 years to the present (this book was published in 2004) and we meet General Sergei Stavropol. The General has waited patiently for his plan to come together, and with the completion of the Soviet missile defense system, the concept of mutually assured destruction no longer applies. The first thing Stavropol does is try to eliminate the US sleeper agents with their suitcase nukes. Almost all are killed and Gary Lawlor, formerly of the FBI and currently Scot's boss at the Office of International Investigative Assistance (OIIA), the counter-terrorism branch of the government, has gone missing.

Stavropol, operating from a position of dominance, holds the US president hostage. His ultimatum: either the US retreats from the world stage both financially and militarily and the President announces this during his state of the union address, or his sleeper agents will set off the nearly two dozen suitcase nukes spread around the country in strategic cities. Even one of the nukes could kill millions, and leaving the world stage would be devastating for the US economy. Things look bleak for President Jack Rutledge and Stavropol seems to be holding all of the cards, but Rutledge has an ace in the hole - Scot Harvath. With only one week to work miracles, Harvath sets out to do the improbable. With help from some of the CIA operatives from the previous book, as well as beautiful but deadly Soviet agent Alexandra Ivanova, who's loyalty is in question, Harvath must disable the missile defense system and find the suitcase nukes before it's too late. If one reads enough of these books, the outcome is not in question. The interesting thing is to see how Harvath goes about accomplishing his task. With equal part skill and luck, Harvath doesn't have a moment to spare when we finally reach the climax.

This book is full of action and the scenario is definitely plausible. Just like the James Bond books, Scot Harvath has a tendency to get into tight spots, and also an uncanny ability to get out of them. I enjoyed this book more than the previous two, as counter-terrorism is Harvath's niche. I liked his involvement with Meg Cassidy from the last book, but she barely makes an appearance in this one. I guess Scot's career doesn't leave much room for a personal life. Nevertheless, I rate this 5-stars as the action kept the pages turning for me. I am looking forward to book 4 in the series.

## 2. Beansend

I enjoyed the book overall, but found some of the 'leaps' in the plot to be off-putting. There were points in the story where things just plodded along in the weeds of detail but, at other (IMHO) critical junctures, there were sudden (and to me, somewhat unexplained) leaps in the story. It almost felt like those points were reached/written around dinnertime and, after Brad's long day at the computer, Mrs Thor called up the stairs and said, "Brad...we're running late...time to wrap things up" and he banged out a couple pages in 10 minutes that would have taken him 3 hours to develop earlier in the day.

### 3. Mojind

I read one of this guy's books because it was on sale; though I was not familiar with the author. At any rate, I have spent a great amount of time finding and buying all his other books. Can't go wrong with any of them. I have a total of 13 hardcovers right now and have visited his website to make sure I have everything he published in hardcover and to put them in order of publication (though I have yet to read them in order). I noticed on his site that there is a challenge to his readers to re-read his books; a goal of reading one book a month. Sorry Mr. Thor! I'd already planned on re-reading them (in publication order this time) and, I guarantee that I will read them faster than your challenge. I JUST CAN'T WAIT until you write another one. If there is not a new one soon, I'll be forced to re-read my Lee Child books (I've 19 of them now and have already pre-ordered his upcoming publication). You are extremely talented and I am glad to have found your work.

### 4. Ylonean

I have read about 5 of Thor's books and find the following is true of them all: they are weak at the beginning but then pick up steam and keep you wanting to finish. However, I find the endings also drop off poorly and do not have the kind of termination that makes you say, "wow!" or "I didn't see that coming!" Again, he sort of seems like he tires of his story at the end and just wants to finish it. I think he could do a better job of these issues and be an even stronger writer. Also, since he does a lot of books in the same genre, he is running out of new plots and story lines. I think he needs to expand his ideas and look for fresh concepts as one can only read so many stories of the same character, fighting bad guys and winning in the end. I do think he does a great job with historical background, particularly the middle East issues, and assuming they are accurate, these points add to the overall story.

## 5. Punind

Having just discovered Brad Thor after reading everything Tom Clancy has written (fiction), and all of Vince Flynn's Mitch Rapp series, as well as most of David Baldacci who kept me going with the Camel Club, Maxwell and King, and now Will Robie, I can say that I love books that satisfy my lust for revenge on "bad guys." Whether some things are improbable or not, I manage a "suspension of disbelief" if needed, and enjoy the ride! In truth, I am already reading the NEXT Scot Harvath novel in the series, and will continue until I finish the currently published novels. Maybe I am just easily pleased or maybe I am simply a vicarious adrenaline junkie!

## 6. Welen

A very ingenious plan to actually destroy America and millions of it's citizens was uncovered by an agent of the United States and involved many dedicated personnel who were willing to place their lives in jeopardy so as to resolve the plot. Lives were lost and the Russians tortured some captured agents in cruel ways, most resulting in death. The Russians threatened to use nuclear bombs, that were hidden by "sleeper cells", if the American President did not remove military forces everywhere, withdrawal from the U.N., and declare Russia as the supreme leader. The President was to deliver the State of the Union and was to make the statement within nine minutes of his address. Patriots within Russia and others working together hopefully would cause a failure.

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