

The "Deep State" Conspiracy
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A popular notion among conspiracy lovers is that there is a secret government that really runs our country. They currently call it the Deep State, but it has been known in the past by comparable concepts, such as the Jewish Conspiracy (a worldwide money cult that runs everything). One idiot on the Washington, DC city council actually believes that weather is secretly controlled by the Rothschild family (another Jewish conspiracy.) This family, he believes, can create storms and bad weather. He doesn't say why they should want to do this.

Radical leftists are certain that their privacy is invaded by a secret cabal from our Intelligence community. The Tea Party folk believe that liberals conspire to attack their culture and denigrate religion.

These conspiracies are not exclusive to the United States. Before the US became the great superpower after World War II, the British were considered the masters of secret governance. In many third-world countries, a sparrow could not fall from a tree without the British being blamed. When the Ayatollah Khomeini seized control of Iran in 1979, many Iranian immigrants in the US insisted that "the British did it." The idea that Iranians themselves were hoodwinked, stupidly voting for an Islamic Republic in a yes-or-no referendum, was not considered. Blame the usual suspect.

Most conspiracy theories arise among people who feel helpless, powerless against changes that come too rapidly, needing to find someone or something to blame. When the systems that we live in seem too complex to comprehend, the fallback is to believe that malevolent forces are out to get us. We see this problem today, among people who want to believe that there is a hidden government behind the government we elect that is managing our lives.

Too few of us really understand how our built-in complexity and division of powers protects us from becoming a dictatorship (a system that government haters prefer). A good Civics class would help clarify this.

We all know that our government is balanced among three equal powers: an elected president who is there for four or eight years; a congress (House of Representatives elected for two-years terms and a Senate for six year terms, thus balancing the power of urban and sparsely population rural areas; and judicial (County courts with elected judges, to state courts, Federal courts (judges appointed) and finally the Supreme Court with life-tenured judges. This divided system provides laws, norms, and practices that have overall served us well, and has no way of becoming "deep state" because of oversight by a free, competitive press.

What is most dimly understood is the kind of power vested in the presidency, who presides over "administration." Administration consists, among other things, of the Justice Department (law), State Department (diplomacy), Intelligence Community (CIA for intelligence on foreign nations and FBI for both intelligence and policing internally), and the Defense Establishment (military and all its branches).

The paranoia about these administrative branches comes from the secrecy in which they sometimes have to operate. The president is always briefed by these agencies to enable him to steer the ship of state. Lest there be a conspiracy between the President and Intelligence or Defense Departments, Congress has oversight through special committees, their actions also covered by the press.

Our best Presidents come into office with the aim of making life better for all of us. They generally have optimistic views of progressive improvements of our institutions. We no longer have slavery, segregation, unequal rights for men and women, or public executions. We now have universal suffrage, which we did not have for the first century of our history. Would we want any of these institutions back?

Optimistic presidents, however, need the input of their special agencies: the State Department with historic continuity of diplomacy and knowledge of the world; Intelligence agencies, who deal in reality of what evil can face us both internally and externally, and the courts, which promote precedence and continuity but also provide progressive and evolutionary justice.

The Deep State does not exist; what does exist is an ingenious system for making us a great social experiment.

684 words

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