

Deep state, shadow state or stealth state?

There is a long tradition in Britain of forming a 'shadow government' after an election. This shadow government consists of members of the opposition who take on the role of opposition ministers of state who are not elected by the public but rather by the major political party that is out of power. Each ministry or department has its own 'shadow' minister that follows the issues that the elected government is battling and usually has a very different opinion, as one might expect. It's a kind of 'government-in-waiting' that is ready to step in and replace the ruling party in elections.

It's actually a pretty sensible way for the opposition to counter the arguments made by the ruling party and helps to groom would-be successors to top cabinet positions. Since these top 'shadow ministers' are well-known to the public and function openly, they are not considered to fall under the other definition of a 'shadow government' that we here in America have come to know as the 'deep state'. Our deep state refers to an unelected bureaucracy that leans Left and operates below the surface, hidden from view. Its goal is to oppose anything and everything a Republican administration does that the entrenched bureaucrats don't feel fits their world view or their view of the direction America should be going, domestically.

Much has been written about the existence of the deep state. For some, the deep state is like Sasquatch, a folkloric creature that walks upright, dwells in the wilderness and leaves big footprints, but whose existence has never been proven, conclusively. Sasquatch has often been portrayed as the missing link between humans and human ancestors or other great apes. I'm no Sasquatch expert, but I do know a thing or two about the deep state, but before we go there, let me tell you a bit about our embassies where some of the deep-staters reside.

Most of you have been to a large upscale department store chain at some point. I'm willing to bet that you don't know that some departments in those stores are leased out to other firms to run. The shoe department is one. It's actually more cost-effective for the store to do so when you consider the vast inventory the department must handle just to service one type of customer, say women, for example. U.S. embassies, which are situated in foreign capital cities and U.S. consulates that are located along with embassies in the larger countries function in much the same way.

The State Department is the lessor and building manager and it 'leases out' its space to other U.S. government departments and agencies like the military, the intelligence agencies, DEA, Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, etc. STATE also maintains economic, political and public communications people there AND a big consular section that is split up into 'American citizen services' or AMCIT services, and a local component that issues visitors' visas and processes immigrant visa applications.

The AMCIT section helps U.S. citizens living in the host country with a myriad of services like filling out tax returns and assisting destitute Americans, to name just two. Consulates offer the same services but on a smaller scale and in a smaller geographical area. To staff these positions, officers must be chosen by their own department's Foreign Service agency to serve abroad and their names must be forwarded to the President for his nomination and then submitted to the Senate for approval. I was sworn in in 1984. Like everybody, I took the following oath: "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

Once assigned to a post, be it an embassy or a consulate, the officers are given extensive 'area studies training', on the country of their assignment. Some go right into language studies for those posts that are language-designated. The language training can take up to a year. Once they complete it the officers and their families head out to post and begin the process of settling in.

This includes enrolling their children in school and perhaps finding a job for what they call a 'trailing spouse.' If the officer is head of section, he or she will become part of what's known as the 'Country Team' - senior management that meets daily with the Ambassador and his deputy. Each embassy section reports both to the Ambassador and back to their Headquarters in Washington, DC. Communications is handled by telephone and telegram (cables). All classified material is handled separately and securely. In the old days, before the computer, many hard copy materials were frequently sent by embassies via the 'pouch' in sealed packages and transported on military aircraft accompanied by a designated courier. Today, many of the unclassified reports, etc. are simply sent as attachments to emails.

Security at embassies is the purview of the RSO or Regional Security Officer who is a STATE Department employee. He or she directs the Marine Security Guard Detachment along with the Gunnery Sergeant. The MSG detachment is a well-trained unit and indispensable to the embassy's safety. (I saw them in action inside the American Embassy in Copenhagen on Sept. 11, 2001.) They and the RSO liase with local security guards who are hired to supplement the MSG. These private security guards patrol the exterior and perimeter of the embassy. It may seem strange to some, but the MSG's first priority is to protect the integrity of classified material and, sure, they protect the Ambassador along with the rest of the staff.

Currently, the U.S. has 307 embassies or consulates around the world. (If you want more information on any or all of them you can log on to www.state.gov). Before I go into more detail, let's be clear on the purpose of an embassy. An embassy is a permanent diplomatic mission where a group of specially designated people represent the U.S. in the host-country - the country of their posting. The basic function of the embassy is to be a base for communication and relationship-building and to manage disputes between the two countries. There are other reasons, of course, like intelligence-gathering, military strength assessment, drug interdiction and so forth, but those are the most critical. I should mention, at this point, that we, the U.S. government, own the land and buildings on which the embassies are built. So when an asylum-seeker comes onto the embassy grounds, he or she is legally on American soil, and no host-country government can demand that that person be returned unless we agree.

Consulates, on the other hand, are like mini-embassies with smaller staffs and are located in major areas outside the main area served by the embassy. They are typically situated in larger countries with some countries having a half-dozen consulates like Germany, for example. As far as reporting goes, the consulates report directly to the embassies and the embassies report to their respective departments in Washington, DC.

Ambassadors, who are considered the personal representative of the President - yes, I said personal representative of the President - are nominated by the President, vetted and approved by the Senate. Many people don't realize that this 'personal representative' relationship exists, and that it can cause a bit of consternation when the President's policies are at odds with the STATE Department's, but it's the President that instructs his Ambassadors on how foreign policy be carried out by them and he expects them to follow his orders to the letter. When they don't, they risk removal. Ambassadors like Marie Yovanovitch, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine was removed in May because the President found her performance to be unacceptable.

There are two kinds of Ambassadors: career and non-career. The career Ambassador has come up as a Foreign Service Officer through the ranks of the State Department and the non-career Ambassador has risen to positions of power or prominence in business or government, and in some cases even Hollywood (Shirley Temple Brown and John Gavin, both actors come to mind.) Temple-Brown was Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Ghana and Gavin was Ambassador to Mexico. There have been many notable people who have had the honor of serving their country over the past two centuries. Benjamin Franklin was our official representative to France and was instrumental in raising money for our revolution as was John Adams who was our man in The Netherlands.

Edward Dudley was the first Black American to become Ambassador in 1911. More recently, JFK's father, Joseph P. Kennedy was Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

I was privileged to serve under thirteen different Ambassadors. Of this group, one career and one non-career Ambassador stand out in my mind. The best non-career Ambassador was a Miami entrepreneur and real estate developer who was once the CEO of Samsonite Corp. His name is Steven Green, and I must say that he was the perfect man for the job. Appointed by President Clinton, he arrived in Singapore a few months after me. I can still remember our first country team meeting, clearly. After his opening remarks to all of us, he went around the table and asked us to introduce ourselves. This took about fifteen minutes as there were about fifteen of us. Then we briefed him on our areas of responsibility. After that he asked, "Which one of you is my marketing man?" Everyone from the Military Attaches to the CIA representative looked at each other, and the room went eerily silent until I raised my hand and told Ambassador Green that I had operated my own advertising agency in the states before entering the foreign service.

"Great," he said. "You will work with me on every project we come up with to strengthen our relationship with the Singaporeans."

I was honored, and the other officers at the table were relieved that they hadn't been picked. Looking back, my four years working with Ambassador Green were among the most productive of my life. We engaged the Singaporeans with a number of high profile and behind-the-scenes projects that reinforced our already strong bi-lateral relationship. The one I'm most proud of was our project, "Friendshipworks" a name I came up with for a project that brought the U.S. business community, the embassy and a few Singapore charities together. The Ambassador named me to be the embassy's boots on the ground and to work with all the charities and the U.S. businesses while he concentrated on bringing the Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong and the Senior Minister, the venerable Lee Kwan Yiu, the 'father of modern-day Singapore' on board. It was a bit tricky to find just the right strategy to help Singapore's disadvantaged people without making the Singaporeans feel embarrassed that they even HAD poor people!

After all, Singapore is among the richest and most advanced countries in all of the world and we didn't want to insult them, but together we found the right recipe for success, and it was Ambassador Green's ability to make friends and influence people that insured that success. After about a year of operation which included garnering support for a special Muslim-run charity that took care of children in need, we received a letter from the White House commending us for our efforts. I'll admit, I've never been a fan of Bill Clinton, but when you get a letter from the President, singling you out for praise, politics takes a back seat.

My vote for all-time best career Ambassador is L. Paul Bremer III or 'Jerry' to his friends. Most of you will remember him as the Civilian Provisional Authority that took over the Iraqi government after the conclusion of the Iraq War. He was Ambassador to The Netherlands when I arrived in The Hague in the Summer of 1984. He had been there a short while before me. It was my first Foreign Service posting and I was green and nervous. Everything was so new. I remember first meeting him in his office in the old embassy on the Lange Voorhout. (The new embassy is located in the community of Wassenaar, on the municipal border of The Hague.)

I thought that I had traveled back in time as Jerry (I didn't call him that at the time) had the face of a young JFK and a slim athletic build to go with it. His smile was engaging and he LISTENED to you. His back story was impressive, but what intrigued me most was how he was able to accomplish so much in such a short period of time: Foreign Service Officer in Afghanistan, Deputy Chief of Mission in Norway, Head of Henry Kissinger's Secretariat. Impressive. I later discovered his secret...he was smart, dedicated to his work and he didn't waste any time. He also had a unique talent for bringing people together and making friends, easily. The Dutch loved him because he took the time to learn their language and spoke it well and often.

He was Ambassador when we were trying to convince our European allies to place our Cruise Missiles on their soil. It was a tough sell for many of our Ambassadors, but Jerry managed to get the Dutch to agree though they were never placed there. I remember a bumper sticker that summed up the Dutch position. It said, in Dutch, "Liever een raket in de tuin dan een Rus in de keuken." Translated, that means, "Better to have a rocket in the garden than a Russian in the kitchen."

Over those three years I'm proud to say we became friends. We trained for marathons together and ended up running five of them in different European cities. Jerry was the quintessential Ambassador. He loved his country and he loved his job, but nothing compared with his love for his son, his daughter and his now deceased wife, Francie. When President Bush tapped him to be the Civilian Provisional Authority in Iraq, I felt relieved. Bush had chosen, wisely. Jerry would give it his all, but his year there was fraught with problems. We all know the story, so I won't repeat the challenges, suffice it to say, I was doubly relieved when he came back in one piece.

Now to the Deep State...

There is a seamy side to the Foreign Service and to our bureaucracy, however, and this side is buried beneath the fancy trappings of the job. I worked with dozens of STATE Department officers overseas for 20 years, and I can tell you that the deep state walks among us and is real.

It's not some secret society whose members swear blood oaths, wear hoods and meet in forests, chanting and offering human sacrifices. It is, instead, a loosely-knit band of brothers (and sisters) who believe in Liberal values and actively oppose those Administrations they feel would take America down a path of more literal adherence to the parts of the Constitution that they disagree with. They are devotees of endless talk (they call it diplomacy) and abhor actual action that would strengthen America's position on the world stage. They move subtly, using devices like slow-walking a conservative Administration's directives and paying only lip-service to positions that would make America stronger, lest they get on the wrong side of their host country friends. The CIA calls the transfer of allegiance from one country to another as being 'turned.' In Foreign Service speak it's called, 'clientitis.'

An article, "Bureaucratic Resistance and the National Security State" in the Iowa Law Review states, "...On this account, the bureaucracy is the modern incarnation of the traditional separation of powers, reining in the President from abuses of power in areas where the courts and Congress have fallen down on the job. The other camp views the bureaucracy as a self-interested, power-hungry cabal of conspiratorial operators, a "deep state," acting in darkness to wield the vast military and surveillance powers of the state at the expense of the accountable, elected leadership, namely the President." The writer calls these different approaches the "benevolent constraints" and "deep state" models of bureaucratic behavior.

Behind closed doors, deep staters even joke about conservative thought and values as if they were a direct assault on their Foreign Service oaths and their personal sensibilities. I have witnessed this on several occasions. Some have been known to reproach colleagues who indicate and demonstrate loyalty to Republican U.S. Presidents and espouse conservative views of America. One such example of the deep state doctrine is their unshakeable belief that the U.S. must be a global citizen first and look out for our country's interests second. Evidence of that is the Obama Administration's insistence on joining the International Criminal Court of Justice that would have allowed our citizens to be prosecuted and convicted ex-U.S. soil, thereby surrendering our sovereignty to a foreign power in contravention of our Constitution. The other was the U.S.' membership in and signatory to the Paris Climate Accords, which effectively ignored Congress' responsibility to ratify treaties. (Obama got away with this by calling the Paris Climate Accords an 'agreement' instead of a treaty.)

The deep state of the STATE Department is comprised of thousands of Democratic Party loyalists in Washington, D.C. at 'Foggy Bottom' headquarters and around the world at our Embassies and Consulates. These deep-staters are tough to spot. They don't wear their allegiances on their sleeves or sport the Democratic Party symbols in their lapels. Instead, they work at computer terminals, writing cables and reports that reek with innuendo, gross generalizations and misrepresentations. While they do perform their required duty to deliver foreign policy démarches that come to them from Main STATE (WASHDC HQ), they do it in such a way as to assure their host country counterparts that they, themselves, do not actually agree with the messages they're conveying. By choosing this approach, they are, in effect, opposing the very Administration that expects them to be vigorous in imparting U.S. government initiatives.

One of their principal tools as I mentioned is 'slow-walking' everything and anything that doesn't pass Liberal muster. These deliberate delaying tactics buy them time from implementing actual actions. By claiming that certain issues or directives require further study and that more time is needed to convince their counterparts of the U.S. position, they are actively attempting to thwart the Administration's goals.

Congress is hearing from a few Foreign Service Officers today, and it will be interesting to hear how they describe the Trump/Zelensky phone call. Yesterday, they heard from a member of the military who had 'concerns' about it. I'm sure that hundreds if not thousands in the State Department are all abuzz with the thought that they are 'finally being able to play their part in taking down the President.' To borrow a phrase from one of their heroes, THEY are the basket of deplorables.

The deep-staters have become adept at operating in the shadows, but every once in awhile they succumb to an invitation, usually from a Democrat-dominated Congress, to appear in public to tell 'their' truth about the evil Republicans. We've seen it from the likes of Sally Yates, the former Deputy Attorney General, James Comey, former FBI Director and others who simply cannot resist the spotlight and the chance to slay the conservative dragon.

Public testimony gets them noticed by the Left wing media. Publishers rush to them with book deals and Left-leaning universities send invitations to paid speaking engagements. Most, however, prefer to work behind-the-scenes under the cover of their day jobs. They leave us little in the way of solid clues to their true identities as they have become really good at sweeping away any traces of their subterfuge. They opt for the telephone instead of emails (they've learned a valuable lesson from their old boss, Hillary Clinton's email mistakes). Emails can be deadly, and if discovered can expose them as the disingenuous actors they are. The deep-staters are learning fast and becoming better at avoiding the trip wires set up by their own Inspectors General. The deep state at STATE and in other government departments and agencies has been with us for a long time, at least since the Cold War when opinions differed sharply on how we should tackle the threats from the former Soviet Union, but membership in their ranks has grown exponentially since Donald Trump's election as they see him as an existential threat to their power.

Make no mistake, the deep state is gearing up for the Democrats' impeachment push. Some will blow their own cover and sacrifice their anonymity to make their voices heard to the 'right' Congressmen or their staffers. Conspiracy theorists may have exaggerated the size, scope or influence of the deep state, but they are right when they say it's real. The question is, what are we going to DO about it?

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