

The Deep State

The title may sound like it is related to psychology or something but it's not. In this article, we are going to see things in the geopolitical context. Now, let me explain it in simple words.

A deep state is a group of people who are comparatively less powerful (on paper) than the head of state but still hold a heft in the affairs of a state.

Deep State has its presence in all governing systems, from Monarchy to Democracy. Even if there is a state, a government, a governing system, institutions, courts and bureaucracy, still the power to take the major decisions related to an event is in the hands of a cluster of highly intellectual and influential people. The deep state governs the nation without being elected. Nations will collapse, expand, form unions, and go through regime changes, but the deep state concept will be relevant in every scenario.

A common man perceives the prime minister, president, or head of state as the most powerful figure. But the real question is, is the power they possess on paper just a formality or can they exercise it independently against the will and interest of the deep state?

Now, I will prove that the deep state isn't a hoax and it does exist. It would take a year if I start explaining it concerning

every nation. But I would like to explain a few cases where we can see its presence.

1] Pakistan – Pakistan is an ideal example of a failed state. Unfortunately, the common man in Pakistan has suffered a lot because of the deep state's economic, diplomatic and geopolitical blunders. Also, the tussle between Pakistan's Deep State and the government has immensely harmed Pakistan's internal security. Pakistan's deep state is highly corrupt as well. Failure of CPEC and large Dam projects testifies to it. Even China "The so-called Iron Brother of Pakistan" is annoyed with Pakistan's constant bureaucratic failure and mismanagement. China has not earned a penny by investing in Pakistan. They tried to compensate for their loss by taking some of Pakistan's worthless land assets on the lease. Now, you might be frustrated with me for using the term "Deep state" several times and not mentioning exactly what is it in the case of Pakistan. It's no wonder that the deep state, in this case, is Pakistan's ISI, Pakistan's generals, retired army chiefs, people who hold big stakes in the army, or people who have a huge influence on the army. Pakistan is a dictatorship in the garb of democracy. All the major decisions are taken by the ISI, ISPR, and Pak core commanders, and of course, the Pakistan army chief has the right to overturn any decisions. Whenever diplomats or ministers visit Pakistan, they make sure that they give a visit to GHQ (General Headquarters), Rawalpindi. This is because the Prime minister doesn't hold any powers. I don't know how that country still runs in such an ecosystem where an

individual boasts the power to overturn a decision favouring 22 crore people. It's a unique case (Of course, not a good one), where an institution sacrifices the burning needs of a population to secure its interests. There are several cases where the Pak army has intervened in politics and changed the governments. Some examples are the fall of Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, and the mysterious deaths of powerful members of the opposition. Even there were some reports that Imran Khan got slapped by the current ISI chief's secretary during his tenure for violating Bajwa's order to appoint a new ISI chief. If that's true then I can't even imagine the situation of judiciary. Whenever this country needs monetary aid or wants a package from IMF or the West, the army chief calls for support. Have you ever seen a nation that makes its army general ask for help from other nations? It happens only in Pakistan. Countries have stopped taking the Pakistani government seriously. Joe Biden hasn't called or congratulated Imran Khan or Shahbaz Sharif yet. This is because the US government knows that it's a puppet government and it would be the waste of time to entertain them. Rather, it would create more complications as the Pakistani government is also equally corrupt. It's funny how they directly contact Gen. Bajwa for all major dialogues, deals, and projects. I can write a whole book if I start to mention all such incidents. I think I had provided enough evidence to justify my argument in this case. I am not 100% sure about the incident in which Imran Khan was slapped.

But you can always verify. Let's see if this concept applies to major powers as well.

2] The USA – First of all, the concept of the deep state is an American concept.

We know that the United State of America is the world's largest economy (in nominal terms), has a huge military and is the oldest democracy. The US always tries to set a narrative which portrays them as they are the only ones with moral high ground.

The world sees the POTUS (President of The United States) as the most powerful person on the planet. But is POTUS that powerful?

In my humble opinion, the answer is **NO!!!!!!**

And as usual, I will provide evidence to support my arguments. So, let's dive deep into it.

President Obama during his tenure maintained a slight left-leaning liberal stance and designed state policies according to it. For Obama, Arab World was more important than Israel in the Middle East. He always had a soft corner for Islam. If you want to quickly gain influence in the Muslim world, then you have to distance yourself from Israel. He took a few steps which were not exactly in favour of Israel and indirectly threatened Israel's security. For example – Iran Nuclear Deal. Obama and Netanyahu's relations worsened after Iran nuclear deal. Obama tried his best to cut the supply of Iron Dome defence system to Israel but couldn't pull it off. Israel was still very important for USA's ambitions in the middle

east. Israel was important to keep a check on Iran and several other Arab Nations. The deep state probably had a briefing with President Obama on this issue. Within a week, the proposal of providing the Iron Dome was approved.

Netanyahu thanked the US for Iron Dome. This was quite embarrassing for President Obama. Despite several attempts from democrats, government officials, and the head of state himself, the Deep State ensured that US-Israel relations are always moving on a forward trajectory. Israel had, has, and will play an important role in USA's grand strategy in the Middle East. A president cannot solely manipulate bilateral ties. Deep State will not allow that to happen. The fundamentals of bilateral ties are grand strategy and the immediate interests of a nation. Core foreign policy, defence policy and economic policies cannot be altered by an individual even if the individual is the Head of the state itself. Of course, there will be some minor changes in the policies, but my point is that the major changes in these three policies can only be implemented if the deep state gives a green signal. Another famous incident was the "Donald Trump and Qatar debacle". The USA always had deep relations with Saudi Arabia. The USA controlled crude oil rates for several decades by wooing the Saudi monarchy. Trump during his tenure took many positive steps which favoured Saudi Arabia. He did everything in his capacity to stand with Saudi Arabia. On 5th June 2017, Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies (UAE, Bahrain and Egypt) suspended diplomatic relations with Qatar. The reason given by the alliance was the support of the Qatar government to media houses, terrorist groups

and various sectarian outfits which destabilized the Middle East. The alliance tried to isolate the Qatar regime diplomatically and economically to fulfil their objectives. Trump opted to support the Saudi alliance on this issue. Trump called Doha “A funder of terrorism at a very high level”. Trump administration was making a strategic blunder, and perhaps a grave one. It was true that Iran and Qatar were getting closer but Trump forgot that the largest military base of the US military middle eastern command was in Doha, Qatar. There was so much at stake. If the relations with Qatar would have worsened, it would have turned out to be a big strategic blunder. The US would have to pull out their troops and give up their one of the largest military bases and all of its ambitions in the middle east. Qatar would have deepened relations with Russia, China, Iran, Syria, etc. There was a possibility of Qatar joining an anti-US alliance. This statement alarmed the deep state and it started to control the damage done by Trump’s reckless statements. Trump was always a big supporter of Saudi Arabia and hence wanted to support the Saudi alliance and pressurize Qatar but USA’s national interests favoured a neutral stand. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are both equally important to the United States. Hence, it was important for the US to act as a mediator and resolve this issue as soon as possible. The secretary of state tried his best to mediate this situation. The White House and the Pentagon were constantly in touch with the Qatar embassy to whitewash Trump’s statement. Even though Trump wanted to favour Saudi Arabia, the state took a neutral position.

In the current scenario, even if Joe Biden is willing to send troops to protect Taiwan, I don't think that the deep state will allow that as there would be serious repercussions if the major powers are fully involved in a military conflict. The same happened in Ukraine as well. The USA didn't send a single troop or a weapon of mass destruction to Ukraine as it would mean a direct military confrontation with Russia. The USA wasn't completely wrong if we see events from a neutral perspective. It couldn't afford to put its economy and national security at stake to protect a small country like Ukraine. (Note – I am against the war. I condemn the deaths of non-combatants and I am also against the idea of territorial expansion. The above statement might sound spineless but I don't want to sugar-coat things either.) POTUS cannot take decisions unilaterally. The deep states brief POTUS before taking any actions.

So, these were some of the incidents which proved the presence of the deep state in the US.

3] Russia – There is no doubt that the biggest stakeholder in the Russian deep state is the FSB (Federal Security Bureau).

[Note – In the Soviet era, KGB was the Soviet intelligence agency. After the Fall of the USSR, KGB was dissolved. Now the Russian intelligence agency is called as Federal Security Bureau. The agency holds similar powers which were once enjoyed by the KGB.]

FSB is the intelligence bureau of the Russian Federation. It is one of the best if not the best intelligence agencies in the

world. In the cold war era, KGB was at par with the CIA. Putin who was a member of the KGB has ruled Russia for almost two decades and is still enjoying the power. FSB is the brain of the Russian Federation.

Aleksandr Dugin is said to be the brain of Putin. Dugin wrote a book which is said to be the bible for policymakers in Russia. People like Dugin don't have executive powers but still have a big influence on world leaders and thus hold power to manipulate state policies and global affairs.

In Russia, the FSB controls and monitors policies. It secretly governs the country. Retired members of the KGB hold prominent positions in all of the major institutions. Although, Putin is the head of state still there are multiple power centres in Russia. If Putin loses the support of the deep state, he would no longer survive in Russian politics. He could be either arrested or assassinated or it would be a peaceful transfer of powers. Putin is a former KGB member and hence knows the significance of the deep state in the power structure. He knows that if he continues to take actions which are against the will of the deep state, the other power centres in the deep state could join hands and remove him from his position. Also, there were some attempts to assassinate Putin. Putin got lucky every time and thus managed to survive. Such attempts cannot be executed without the support of powerful politicians and the people who influence government. Such incidents might infer that some of the members of the government or the deep state are against aggressive policies of Putin. The moment Vladimir

Putin loses the support of Russians, the deep state will remove him from his position. FSB cannot afford to lose its hold on the government. There are high chances of violent protests and regime change when a leader who has lost public support still rules the nation. There are several incidents where Putin took decisions which secured national interests but destroyed his image globally. Putin has his limitations. Even though he is a former KGB member, he has to take decisions after briefing the deep state. Russian President has to undergo briefings from FSB, military generals, NSA, diplomats, intellectuals, top-level bureaucracy, Russian oligarchs, economic experts, etc. He simply can't give radical orders to the military or any other departments. Putin came into power with the help of the deep state. As the deep state can bring someone into power, it can also remove him from power. The Russian government is itself formed with the help of the deep state. Hence, there is no doubt that the deep state exists in Russia.

4] India – India is the world's largest democracy. In India, President is the head of the state but, when it comes to governing, Prime Minister holds the executive powers. In this case, the deep state mostly refers to the non-military security establishment including intelligence agencies like CBI, NIA, ED, R&W, IB, National Security Advisor, state secretaries, intellectuals, defence experts, policymakers, and senior bureaucracy. The Indian Foreign Services is a vital part of the Indian deep state. Indian Armed Forces don't hold much influence in the deep state. Rather, I would say it is purposely

kept away from the deep state to avoid a military coup. Even though advisors and senior-level bureaucracy come under the prime minister, they can put massive pressure on the head of state to overturn his/her decision. The ministers are mostly unaware of the outcomes of a certain policy. The deep state explains to them the constraints and repercussions of their policies or actions. When it comes to giving a military response to Pakistan then the NSA, defence secretary, foreign secretary, CDS, and R&W chief are the ones who brief the PM. A minister is incompetent to take a decision solely. He has to follow the advice of the intellects to avoid any geopolitical blunders. Let's assume that tomorrow PM Modi decides to take back Aksai Chin from China. He gives orders to the military general to be ready for the two-front war and to capture Aksai Chin. Will the deep state allow PM Modi to wage a two-front war in such a critical situation where the country's economy is exponentially growing with a growth rate of 13%? The answer is no. The deep state will hold a meeting with the prime minister and will explain to him that it's not possible to wage a war in the current scenario. Even if PM uses all of his executive orders, the deep state will not allow the war unless our national interests are in favour of the war. Remember the time when Indira Gandhi (Iron Lady) ordered General Sam Manekshaw to attack west Pakistan and to help Mukti Vahini? Gen. Manekshaw refused to attack at that moment as the weather was adverse and it would be a blunder to attack in such a condition. He respectfully disobeyed PM's order. Indira Gandhi also understood the

situation. A military general who is under the command of a minister disobeyed his order and the minister didn't get a chance to counter. Now, that's the power of the deep state. Sometimes multi-billion-dollar companies influence the decision taken by the government. The state cannot afford to disappoint these billionaires. Hence, the deep state tends to secure the interests of big businessmen. So now we can safely conclude that the deep state exists in India as well.

China – There cannot be a bigger stakeholder of the Chinese deep state than the CCP itself. Mostly the deep state draws power from intelligence agencies and the military. But in this case, the deep state is the group of influential members of the CCP and the military generals of the PLA (People's Liberation Army). Elder members, former heads of state, and veterans of the CCP have a huge influence on the party. Deng Xiaoping, the former president of China carried huge heft in the internal power construct of the CCP. After completing his tenure, he ensured that the candidate with the conservative ideology remains in power. He wanted a candidate who will not hamper his economic reforms. Also, he wanted the president to go hard on people and violently curb protests. He wanted a president who deals with the people with an iron fist. Hence, to ensure this he pressurized and eliminated several members from power. There are many examples where the former Chinese presidents rigged the elections to ensure the continuation of the same policies. Since China follows the one-party system, there is no scope for opposition. Businessmen don't have a big role to play.

They are persecuted even if they raise their concerns (For eg Jack Ma). PLA is under the control of the Chinese Communist Party. The ones who hold powerful positions in the government, senior leaders, heads of intelligence agencies, military generals, and senior bureaucrats make up the deep state. Recently, world media wrote many articles about Xi Jinping being arrested. Was Xi really on house arrest? We can't say clearly. But, looking at the incidents we can predict that it was a warning from the deep state. Xi Jinping is losing public support because of his unwarranted aggressive policies are isolating China diplomatically, economically and militarily. Under his leadership, China worsened its relations with great powers like India, Japan and USA. His unprecedented policies led to a decline in the economic growth of China. The deep state has sent a message to the president that even if you have removed the barrier of limited terms for the president, we still hold the capability to remove you from power. [Note – This is my assessment. Why would so many military vehicles head to China? And, why would 60% of the flight from Beijing get cancelled without any justification? Also, there were some tensions in the CCP.] Decisions taken by Xi were rash and his policies are ultra-aggressive. This is not good for a state. He must have been briefed by the deep state to change his stance and soften his policies. Usually, the deep state of any country tries to solve issues internally and ensures that such things aren't covered by the media. There would be so many incidents where the deep state had disobeyed orders from the head of state and threatened to remove him from power if he goes beyond the

realms of the national interests. Such incidents are never covered by the media as the deep state tends to keep them highly confidential. And, here we are talking about a communist regime. If we can't expect transparency from the government itself, how can we expect it from the Chinese deep state?

Crux – The deep state monitors and assesses state policies to ensure that the national interests are being secured. The deep state emphasizes more on diplomatic and defence policies. In most cases, the deep state works in favour of the national interest.

But there are also some cases where it has total control over the policies of the government. It even has control over domestic politics. Where the deep state works to fulfil the greed of a few individuals rather than working for growth and development of the nation.

Example – Pakistan

The stakeholders of the deep state may differ in each case. In most countries, the biggest stakeholders are the intelligence agencies, senior bureaucrats and chiefs of armed forces. In some cases, big industrialists and companies are in a position to alter policies.

[USA and Russia are accused of initiating wars to enjoy profit by selling weapons. Many people call them war-mongering nations. US defence industry earns billions of dollars each

year by selling their weapons to the countries which are involved in a conflict.]

There are fault lines in every state which can be exploited under certain circumstances. Hence, it becomes important for it to brief the head of state about the repercussions of the steps taken by them.

Let me give you an analogy. We know that the world is circular in shape. But in geopolitics, the world is not circular. It has sharp edges. A politician cannot see beyond those edges. The deep state has to brief the president about it. The deep state dictates the president how to hit, where to hit and when to hit a nation. A president is incompetent to take a major decision unilaterally. It tells him the secrets of the state and the extent to which a state can favour or go against a nation. It briefs him about the realities of the world. Let's assume a situation where a hardcore leftist who aims to harm India and Israel becomes the president of the United States. Can he take any huge steps against Israel or India? The answer is a big **NO!** Even a hardliner cannot change a state's grand strategy unless there is a sudden geopolitical turn of events or the deep state wants to change the policies.

So, in a nutshell, a deep state is an enshrined part of the power structure of every nation. It can become a liability for a state in some cases (Pakistan). But mostly it ensures that the interests of the nation are secured. It keeps a check on the ones who are holding power. It ensures that the policies are not ultra-radical or weak. In most cases, the deep state benefits a nation. But if a deep state is controlling every

policy of a nation, then the common man must be concerned. In such cases, a common man must raise his voice to ensure that the deep state holds limited power. The deep state shouldn't interfere in the domestic politics of a state. We as a citizen should ensure that this doesn't happen.

I would like to conclude this article here. I hope you learned something new.