

HOW DEEP IS YOUR STATE?

The term “deep state” has been bounced around quite a bit the last few years--sometimes vigorously dribbled. The implication usually intended is that it is an undesirable, slightly mysterious entity that is resisting or defying the elected government.

This view indicates a lack of understanding of how a modern civilized government works. Any reasonably large country needs thousands of employees to run efficiently, well beyond the number of elected or appointed top officials., in an entire range of specialties, just like a large private business.

In more primitive times many of these jobs were awarded as political favors, to donors, supporters, and their family and friends. Whether one was properly skilled or trained was secondary, and the future of the job depended on their boss’s re-election.

The US, and other sensible governments, replaced this system with a merit-based civil service system, with applicants competing on tests and qualifications. As a result, each position is filled by the best applicant, who can expect to be retained or promoted according to performance.

A major advantage of this is that every new elected administration can count on having career experienced workers providing continuity regardless of who it appoints to head the department.

THAT is what the “deep state” is. We should be extremely grateful that we have one. It means that we, the people that it serves, don’t have to start over with clueless new personnel every 4 or 8 years. If policies change, they can explain the difference between the old and new ones. And, if things begin to go wrong, they have the experience to be able to report it.

When we hear an administration complain about the deep state, it is likely because it is attempting a radical change to the purpose of an agency. Those, for example, who have spent years working for clean air and water, may object when they are told to ignore those things. It’s then up to the people to listen to their warnings.

Don’t worry about the deep state. Worry about one that is too shallow.

--CosmicRat Oct. 15, 2020

