



**Researched and written by Fateh Sami**

**23 May 2025**

# **The Deep State: Institutional Power, Historical Precedents, and Global Influence**

## **Part- 2**

### **Abstract**

This paper examines Afghanistan's chronic instability as both a product of internal fragmentation and an outcome of international deep-state interventions. Through historical and strategic analysis, the article contextualizes Afghanistan's crises within a broader pattern of foreign-imposed regimes, covert intelligence operations, and proxy warfare. Focus is given to the U.S.-led Operation Cyclone and its long-term consequences, including the rise of extremist networks. By dissecting the post-2001 state-building project, this study argues that managed instability, rather than democratic sovereignty, has shaped modern Afghanistan. The article concludes by proposing a moral and structural roadmap rooted in national dignity, civic engagement, and pluralistic reform.

### **Introduction**

The concept of the "Deep State" refers to a covert or semi-visible layer of governance comprising military, intelligence, bureaucratic, financial, and technological entities that exercise substantial influence over public policy, often beyond the reach of democratic oversight. While popularly invoked in political rhetoric or conspiracy theories, serious scholarly inquiry and historical evidence point to the reality of a permanent governing structure operating in parallel to formal political leadership. Across Western democracies, this structure does not seek attention or electoral legitimacy but is nonetheless instrumental in steering

critical national and international affairs. This article seeks to demystify the Deep State by exploring its institutional architecture, operational mechanisms, and enduring influence on democracy and global politics.

## **1. Historical Case Studies and Intelligence Networks**

Intelligence services have long functioned as the operational nerve centres of the Deep State. Agencies like the CIA (United States), MI6 (United Kingdom), and Mossad (Israel) conduct operations that often bypass public scrutiny and even formal executive control.

Declassified documents reveal programs where intelligence agencies funded and trained extremist groups, manipulated public narratives, and interfered in foreign elections under the justification of national security.

In Latin America, covert CIA operations played a central role in undermining left-wing governments deemed unfriendly to U.S. corporate or geopolitical interests. The 1973 coup in Chile against democratically elected President Salvador Allende, orchestrated in coordination with local military leaders, is one of the most well-documented examples. The subsequent Pinochet dictatorship was characterized by repression, torture, and human rights abuses — all tolerated or supported by Western powers due to Cold War pragmatism.

In Africa, covert actions during the post-colonial period saw similar patterns. Leaders like Patrice Lumumba of the Congo were targeted due to their nationalist or socialist leanings. Lumumba was assassinated in 1961 after repeated interference from both the CIA and Belgian intelligence, clearing the way for decades of kleptocracy under Mobutu Sese Seko — a ruler more aligned with Western interests.

These case studies demonstrate a key feature of the Deep State: the use of covert operations not just to protect national interests, but to secure ideological or economic dominance for elite interests.

## **2. Financial Influence and Economic Governance**

While intelligence and military operations represent one arm of Deep State power, economic dominance forms another. In this domain, private financial institutions and transnational corporations shape government policy through campaign financing, strategic advisory roles, and control of global capital flows. The phenomenon of “regulatory capture” — whereby private entities influence and direct the very institutions meant to regulate them — is widespread.

Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, and BlackRock are frequently cited as examples of financial entities whose influence extends beyond markets into governance itself. Their executives regularly transition into governmental roles. Notable examples include former Goldman Sachs CEO Hank Paulson becoming U.S. Treasury Secretary during the 2008 financial crisis, and Mario Draghi, a former Goldman Sachs executive, heading the European Central Bank and later becoming Italian Prime Minister.

The 2008 global financial crisis illustrated this dynamic starkly. While large banks received multi-trillion-dollar bailouts, ordinary citizens faced foreclosures, unemployment, and austerity. In countries like Greece, democratic mandates were overridden by EU and IMF-imposed economic reforms, which prioritized debt repayment over social welfare.

Moreover, global institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have long been accused of enforcing U.S. and Western economic hegemony. Through structural adjustment programs, they have imposed conditions on developing nations, often demanding privatization, deregulation, and reductions in public spending. These policies have disproportionately benefited multinational corporations and financial elites, while undermining local industries, labour rights, and public services.

Thus, economic policy in many parts of the world has effectively been outsourced to unelected technocrats and financial institutions whose interests do not align with those of the general population.

### **3. Mechanisms of Control: Surveillance and Information Warfare**

The rise of digital technologies has transformed how the Deep State manages and controls populations. Surveillance, both overt and covert, has become a normalized feature of modern life, justified in the name of national security. Edward Snowden's 2013 revelations about the NSA's PRISM program revealed just how far these practices have gone. Tech giants such as Google, Apple, Meta (Facebook), and Amazon collaborate with intelligence agencies to collect, analyse, and sometimes exploit user data.

Palantir Technologies, founded with early CIA investment, has become central to law enforcement, immigration control, and battlefield intelligence. These companies are no longer neutral platforms; they serve as digital extensions of state power. Their control over communication infrastructure enables them to moderate or suppress dissenting voices, influence election discourse, and manage public perception.

In addition to surveillance, psychological operations (psyops) have evolved. Governments now deploy narrative management through social media campaigns, bot networks, and controlled leaks. The British Army's 77th Brigade, for instance, specializes in online information warfare.

Mass media also plays a crucial role. Media conglomerates often reinforce elite agendas. The Iraq War in 2003 remains a key example: major Western media outlets uncritically repeated government claims about weapons of mass destruction, facilitating public support for a war later proven to be based on falsehoods.

## **4. Global Implications of the Deep State**

Though often cantered on Western democracies, the Deep State's influence extends globally. In Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia, covert operations, financial pressure, and diplomatic manipulation have subverted local governance.

In Venezuela, the U.S. has imposed sanctions, funded opposition groups, and supported attempted coups. In Bolivia, the 2019 ousting of President Evo Morales involved irregularities and external interference. These interventions often align with resource extraction and corporate interests.

Africa has witnessed covert military operations and proxy conflicts influenced by foreign intelligence services. In the Sahel region, U.S. and French military activities continue under the guise of counterterrorism with little democratic oversight.

China and Russia also maintain their own versions of the Deep State, with strong security agencies, surveillance infrastructure, and state-aligned corporations. This shows that the Deep State is not exclusive to liberal democracies but is a structural feature of power in the 21st century.

## **Section 5: Afghanistan and the Global Logic of Managed Instability**

Afghanistan's protracted instability must be understood not only because of domestic misrule but as part of a wider geopolitical architecture built on covert manipulation, proxy governance, and strategic external interference.

Likewise, Afghanistan's current chaos did not emerge in a vacuum. The seeds of instability were sown through centuries of external interference and internal mismanagement. The colonial legacy, notably the artificial state borders imposed during the Anglo-Afghan conflicts, disrupted ethnic, tribal, and cultural cohesion.

During the Cold War, Afghanistan became a proxy battleground for the Soviet Union and the United States. This militarized Afghan society, polarized ideologies, and set the stage for the extremism and state fragility that define its present.

One of the most consequential episodes, as mentioned earlier, was *Operation Cyclone* a covert U.S. program conducted by the CIA throughout the 1980s. Framed as a strategy to counter Soviet influence, the program funnelled billions of dollars in arms and support to the Mujahideen, an umbrella group that included radical Islamist factions. While effective in short-term geopolitical terms, these actions created a heavily armed and ideologically radicalized environment. Among the unintended outcomes was the empowerment of militant transnational networks, including precursors to Al-Qaeda, whose later global reach was shaped in part by this intervention. These developments are now acknowledged in declassified documents and former intelligence briefings as classic examples of "blowback"—unintended consequences of covert operations that ultimately threaten long-term stability.

This pattern of *external interference through covert operations* is not unique to Afghanistan. Comparative historical analysis reveals similar interventions by Western intelligence agencies in Latin America and Africa.

In the case of Afghanistan, such actions entrenched the logic of indirect control and proxy governance, whereby external actors funded local militias or ideologues to serve foreign objectives. The result was a hollowing out of indigenous political agency and the proliferation of war economies. What emerged was not a national governance structure but a contested, transactional landscape governed by whoever held foreign favour, arms, and funding. The Afghan population, repeatedly denied autonomous self-determination, became collateral in global ideological wars.

This broader pattern of covert manipulation—sometimes referred to as a manifestation of a "deep state" logic in international relations—illustrates how sovereignty can be systematically subverted through unofficial means. Afghanistan's trauma must be contextualized not only as the result of domestic dysfunction, but as part of a **global architecture of control**, where intelligence agencies, ideological agendas, and economic imperatives converge to produce managed instability under the guise of security.

## Conclusion

The Deep State is not a myth but a systemic reality, operating through bureaucratic continuity, secrecy, financial influence, and digital infrastructure. It

functions independently of electoral cycles, shaping policy according to elite and strategic interests.

As this article has shown, the Deep State thrives where there is little accountability, limited public awareness, and a blurring of lines between public institutions and private power. To preserve democratic governance, systemic reforms are essential: stronger transparency laws, campaign finance reform, independent media, and robust civil oversight.

Ultimately, democratic resilience depends not only on the integrity of institutions but on the awareness and vigilance of citizens who must be empowered to question hidden power structures and demand accountability at every level.

## ***References***

- 1. Baker, Peter.** ‘The Pentagon’s Budget and the Military-Industrial Complex’, *The New York Times*, 7 October 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/07/us/politics/the-pentagons-budget-and-the-military-industrial-complex.html> [accessed 20 May 2025].
- 2. Chomsky, Noam.** *Who Rules the World?* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2013).
- 3. Cloudwards.** ‘What Was the PRISM Program? NSA, Edward Snowden and Government Surveillance in 2025’, *Cloudwards*, 2024, <https://www.cloudwards.net/prism-snowden-and-government-surveillance/> [accessed 20 May 2025].
- 4. Ganser, Daniele.** *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- 5. Greenwald, Glenn.** *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014).
- 6. Herman, Edward S. and Chomsky, Noam.** *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).
- 7. Klein, Naomi.** *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007).
- 8. Lopez, German.** ‘The CIA’s History of Overthrowing Democratically Elected Governments’, *Vox*, 20 August 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/8/20/12514270/cia-coups-history> [accessed 20 May 2025].
- 9. Poitras, Laura.** *Citizenfour* (2014) [Film].

10. **Robinson, William I.** *Global Capitalism, and the Crisis of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
11. **Scahill, Jeremy.** *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield* (New York: Nation Books, 2013).
12. **The Intercept.** ‘The NSA’s PRISM Program: A Timeline’, *The Intercept*, 6 June 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/06/06/nsa-prism-program-timeline/> [accessed 20 May 2025].
13. **Walsh, Lawrence E.** *Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).
14. **Zengler, Thomas.** ‘The Role of Big Tech in Surveillance and Data Privacy’, *Harvard Business Review*, January 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-role-of-big-tech-in-surveillance-and-data-privacy> [accessed 20 May 2025].
15. **Coll, Steve.** *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).
16. **Higgins, Andrew.** ‘U.S. Secretly Supported Taliban Offensive in Afghanistan’, *The New York Times*, 17 September 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/17/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-us-support.html> [accessed 20 May 2025].
17. **Blum, William.** *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995).
18. **Dixon, Robyn.** ‘Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: A History of the Conflict,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 3 February 1989, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-02-03-mn-212-story.html> [accessed 20 May 2025].
19. **Zinn, Howard.** *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005).
20. **Foley, Michael.** *The War on Terror: A Geopolitical and Military History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

### **All Rights Reserved.**

No part of this article may be quoted, reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without explicit attribution to the original author and researcher. Unauthorized use without proper acknowledgment is strictly prohibited.