

“The Deep State”: Who Will Pull the Strings During Trump’s Presidency?

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During the campaign we heard over and over that Donald Trump was the ultimate outsider and a threat to the established order. But is he really going to shake up what Peter Dale Scott calls The Deep State?

In his conversation with *WhoWhatWhy*’s Jeff Schechtman, Scott identifies some early signs that suggest Trump and his people may already be bending to The Deep State, and explains why he thinks even some good may come from this extreme testing of the democratic process.

While in no way accepting any of Trump’s policies, and indeed sharing hopes that he will be a one-term president, Scott calls for maintaining an open mind.



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Jeff Schechtman: Welcome to Radio WhoWhatWhy. I’m Jeff Schechtman.

Over the course of the past campaign, we heard over and over and over again about Trump being the ultimate outsider; that his policies were a threat not only to the established order, but to the people and institutions of both parties that are often referred to as the permanent government. A part of what my guest Peter Dale Scott calls the deep state. The forces inside government, in intelligence agencies and the economy that really control the levers of power. But is Trump really that outsider, or only a fig leaf to cover up or at least paper over a far deeper link to the established order. No one would understand this better than Peter Dale Scott.

Peter Dale Scott is a former Canadian diplomat, a professor emeritus at the University of California Berkeley, a leading political analyst and poet, the author of numerous books and it

is my pleasure to welcome Peter Dale Scott back to Radio WhoWhatWhy. Peter, thanks so much for being with us.

Peter Dale Scott: Well, I'm always glad to be connected to WhoWhatWhy.

Jeff Schechtman: Let me ask you first of all, are you surprised by any of this? I mean as you've watched the whole Trump phenomenon unfold from the primaries -

Peter Dale Scott: I was sure for about ten days that Trump was going to be the winner and then I was a sucker for these beautiful maps that they put on and when I saw the chances of Clinton's selection ran from 70% to 84%, I fell for that. But up until about four days before the election, I had been convinced for a long time Trump was going to win.

Jeff Schechtman: What made you think that?

Peter Dale Scott: Because I believed that he was reaching people that the media weren't and particularly, this guy looks stupid to us but I decided he's actually very smart and he was doing a kind of jujitsu when he was making the *New York Times* and the big TV networks perform in a way that helped him.

Jeff Schechtman: Which really brings us to the question of the degree to which he is an outsider or not, whether he represents really a change from the forces of the deep state, the internal forces, the permanent government or whether he's just really a front in some ways, a fig leaf for all that.



Peter Dale Scott: No. I think no man can be a complete outsider and become a candidate to the presidency. We've had people who've come out of nowhere, I mean that was Goldwater, Reagan but this is why I talk about a deep state. The standard election, this one was not quite standard because we had a millionaire running, but in standard elections, first of all the candidates, the real primary is to get money. That primary selects out the people who will be the candidates; the private primary, before the public one. In this election, we had one man who could fund himself in the early stages, Trump but not in the final stages. That's why there is a powerful inside backing to Trump, which I'll get to in the moment but we also had Bernie Sanders who did a remarkable job of getting small amounts of money from a lot of people. One thing this election tells us, which I think we knew anyway and that is that the global system is in real trouble and a lot of people are not being satisfied by it and the people who are not being satisfied are speaking

up all over the world. So when we think about what happened here, we have to think about Brexit and we have to think about the challenges to the EU from inside the EU; Poland, France, etc. It's happening all over and if you do believe in democracy, and I'm not sure I always do, I do right now.

Author Prof. Peter Dale Scott (right)

I think democracy corrects things and corrections are often very painful and sometimes do stupid things but if you believe the world has to get to a different world, and that's been my whole life. We can't go on with the status quo. This is the way we stumble towards a better world. I'm not gloomy. Hillary's last speech was one of her best. We have to approach this man with an open mind and I'm sure within weeks, we're going to be very angry with him but I don't know what we'll be angry about because most of what he was saying in the campaign was to get elected, which he managed to do and I think he proved he is a politician, he knew how to get elected. The use of TV has given him skills which trumped the know-it-all opinions of people like David Brooks in the *New York Times*. I think American capitalism needs a kick in the pants and Trump is a kick in the pants. Everyone's angry, gloomy; I'm none of those.

Jeff Schechtman: To that extent, do you expect that ultimately what he's going to do is going to be fundamentally different or that it's going to even satisfy those people who were his most ardent supporters?

Peter Dale Scott: Well first of all, every candidate disappoints people. I said on my Facebook page and I'll still say it: that he will have to operate within the parameters of the deep state and that's always been the case. Let's go back though. I think we have to see the way in which Trump - there are insiders backing him. I think it was very interesting that he ended up with his finance chairman Steven Mnuchin. Many people may not have heard that name before. Steven Mnuchin, so go Google for him; he was Goldman Sachs and he took over the campaign when Trump's own money was beginning to run out and not only was he Goldman Sachs, which is like Clinton appointing Robert Rubin to be treasury secretary, before that, he was *Skull and Bones*. I don't think that the *Skull and Bones* is the only center of the deep state. The deep state is pluralistic in its own way and there are many equivalent support centers at Harvard, Princeton, all of these places. But yes, the campaign as it got more and more serious, moved in towards the center to get funding from the deep state. So, there is a mixture of new and old in Clinton and he has a whole agenda of things to do and the question is: which ones will trump the others? The word trump is very, very relevant here because you cannot simultaneously reduce taxes for the wealthy and also arrange for a wall to be built along the border of Mexico. That was pure poetry. That appealed to the worst in a lot of Americans. That wall is not going to be built and it's just a symbol for the things in his agenda. It's a mixture of the possible and the impossible. Can I say what I hope?

Jeff Schechtman: Sure, go ahead, please.

Peter Dale Scott: This is me as a poet speaking, a utopian. I hope that Putin invites him to Moscow before he becomes president and that he goes to Moscow because I do think that the one good thing as opposed to Hillary, was that Hillary and Terry, the only serious candidate I ever knew and I worked for him in Washington for six months. They're terrible in Eastern Europe, it's a campaign about Crimea and what they've been doing in Ukraine and now that NATO is having exercises in Estonia and Latvia - this is all terrible, should stop

immediately and Trump is the man who could do something about that. I'm not sure he will, but Hillary said to approach him with an open mind; I just hope he will develop because in Russia, they're very happy that he was elected and they have reason to be. The Russians have very good reasons to be frightened of America. We've got troops in Estonia. We have troops in Afghanistan. They see themselves being surrounded. So the most hopeful thing is Russia.

Then we come to two other things, which are Syria and Iran. Trump has been talking out of both sides of his mouth when it comes to Syria because on one hand, he wants to improve relations with Russia and on the other hand, he wants to do more than the worst that we've already done in the Middle East in general, Syria in particular and he's going to have a choice: whether he's going to pursue a diplomatic path with Syria, which he will have to if he wants to improve his relations with Russia or the military one because he has said things that really sound very stupid when it comes to his strategic notions. What he said about Mosul for example, that we should have done it in secret. I mean that only makes sense to somebody with an IQ of about 60. I think the military as a whole, the troops probably voted for Trump but of course, he may get a new Joint Chiefs of Staff but the present one, they're not going to take his kind of advice but I think he's smart. I think he will work with the Joint Chiefs, but I don't want to see a military solution to Syria because I don't believe there is one. Just like there never was a military solution for Vietnam, and it's outrageous that it took so long to realize that, there isn't a military solution for Afghanistan where the last of the great powers too have that experience, Russia and Britain learned it before us. So I hope he will take a diplomatic solution there.

And then we come to Iran because he wants to scrap the Iran agreement. Well, whatever he does about Iran I hope, will be conditioned by what he does about Russia because believe me, as we have surrounded – I mean America – has surrounded Russia from the east to the west, Iran is very important to Moscow. They are the border country that they have been able to work with, even though it's got Ayatollahs nominally in charge of it. So the Iran deal, he can do something unilaterally, just scrap it but then what's that going to do with its relations with Russia? So, all the way through here we don't know, we don't know. I'm just sharing my ignorance with the audience.

Jeff Schechtman: I mean I guess the other part of the question is relative to all of this Peter, is the degree to which he is a skilled enough politician to keep all of these plates spinning, to keep all of these different groups satisfied while he does all of these things because clearly, it's going to be a balancing act.

Peter Dale Scott: Well I think probably the first thing we want to see is who does he surround himself with? Who will be his Chiefs of Staff? Who will be his Secretary of State? Who will be his Attorney General? And then of course, he'll probably assemble a coalition of people who start fighting each other, to some extent because he's being so all over the map. Certainly, I think there's going to be a huge gap between what he said he was going to do and what he actually does. That's where I feel the deep state will kick in and if the president gets one thing done, like Obama Care, it's a huge achievement, with Congress the way it is. Let's talk about him first. He does certainly have skills and they're conflicting. I think he suffers from egomania; that's going to hurt him a lot; it hurt him at times in the campaign. But he's much better at reaching people than we snobs thought he was and he's smart. If he really wants to last four years, he will make some mistakes and hopefully learn from them and stumble his way – we just don't know. I don't know whether his ego or his smarts will dominate. I predict both will be part of the drama for the next four years.

Jeff Schechtman: Talk a little bit about what you see as his smarts. His smarts, how? I mean certainly he hasn't shown it in a willingness to understand or to confront or to embrace policy, either foreign or domestic.

Peter Dale Scott: No, I don't think he's really been focused on policy, he's been focused on getting elected, which he managed to do. You know, we all laughed at him. Everybody in the primaries, they didn't think he'd win the primaries. His smarts come from his having done his TV show in my mind, not from the art of the deal and his experience in real estate. Certainly, it was successful in the sense of putting Trump all over the place, and people said he doesn't even want to be president. I think, no his ego is such that he did want to be president and pasting the name Trump on buildings all over the place helped him get there. That's the kind of smarts he has and it's of use at all being president, so whether he can now turn around. He ran a TV show that was successful for many years and that means you have to work with people, so he certainly has worked with people, he's put together deals and so if he's a smart dealer for the next four years – I'm not talking about the reasons why we should be so scared of this man because they're there, believe me.

But I think it's our job now to see what – at the end of this show, we want to see what is in 2020 and I want to talk about Elizabeth Warren because I think this election has to me, vastly increased the chances not only that Elizabeth Warren will run in 2020 but that she'll be elected. I'm going to talk about the possibilities for Trump but I think that he's a one term president, I hope he's a one term president. Of course, I hoped Nixon and Reagan would be one term presidents and I was wrong both times. I think he is so inexperienced and I think probably he's given so little real thought to his policies that – let's just say I hope he's a one term president and then I think we get Elizabeth Warren, not just as a candidate but as a president.

Jeff Schechtman: Talk a little bit finally, about what do you think that the Clinton campaign and the democrats and that everybody that was so smug as you talked about before, about how this was going to play out, what did they all miss?

Peter Dale Scott: Well, I think that we have to say a bit about what's happening to both parties here, you know. The republicans used to be the party of the rich, and in this campaign they were the party of the uneducated. The democrats used to be the party of the unions and labor and they really lost that I think, going back to govern. The democratic party opened itself up to reach the middle classes and the techies and the educated. It's almost a role reversal and I do think that whatever Trump does is going to put great stress on both parties in Congress. Take the Supreme Court, for example. That's going to be a very high priority for him; to get somebody that you and me will absolutely hate and to do that, they have to be approved by the Senate and there is still a filibuster. Now what's going to happen to the filibuster? Some republicans will want to get rid of it so they can get their agenda and some are going to want to fight it. I think that the republican party is at the point of splitting into two, but I also think that the democrats, the Sanders people who are still there, I hope that they thrive. I mean they are the heart and soul of the democratic democrat party as opposed to the kind of new democrats. I mean really, both parties are sick is what I'm trying to say, really sick right now and threatened from within by the rebellions against their own leadership.

Jeff Schechtman: Are we going to see a permanent realignment to the parties in your view?

Peter Dale Scott: I wouldn't be surprised if we see a new party coming out of the rubble, if

that's what it is of the republican party. It's a bit like slavery back in 1850 and we suddenly got the republicans and you got a one term senator who was elected president; Abraham Lincoln, it'll be just at it again with Obama. I would say this is an exciting time and for people like me who say we've desperately got to get to a different America, times like this are going to be times where very bad things happen but also times of opportunity for something new and better to come out of the mess.

Jeff Schechtman: Peter Dale Scott, I thank you so much for spending time with us on Radio WhoWhatWhy.

Peter Dale Scott: Okay thank you, Jeff. I loved your questions, I loved talking to you.

Jeff Schechtman: Thank you for listening and joining us here on Radio WhoWhatWhy. I hope you join us next week for another Radio WhoWhatWhy podcast. I'm Jeff Schechtman.

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