



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 4, 2018

Published in the June 4, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 11

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## They Decide What Government Does

In the classic British comedy series *Yes Minister* from the early 1980s, career civil service bureaucrats regularly promise to carry out their minister's instructions. After all, he is technically their boss. But as soon as the minister, a political appointee, is out of earshot, the career bureaucrats get right back to doing whatever it is *they* think should be done. They frequently ridicule their boss behind his back. And when the minister asks why something hasn't been done, or why bureaucrats were doing something they were ordered not to do, the senior civil service official makes excuses, obfuscates, and then carries on with whatever he thinks ought to be done. Basically, what the minister wants matters little. What really matters is the implementation phase — or lack thereof — of policy. That is in the hands of the upper echelons of the civil service. The show, a favorite of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, is hilarious, a classic example of British humor at its finest. But when it happens in the real world, a frequent occurrence, it is much less funny. In fact, in America, it is not funny at all.



Deep within the bowels of the federal government exists a small core of powerful government officials — more than two-thirds installed on their perch during the Obama administration — who largely run the machine. Sure, President Donald Trump was able to appoint a new team that includes a few thousand political appointees, who are ostensibly in charge of running the federal bureaucracies. But between those appointees and the millions of federal employees costing taxpayers trillions of dollars when regulations are factored in is a permanent buffer or barrier of senior executives. This layer essentially has the power to sabotage any potential swamp-draining. And its members, many of them Obama acolytes and Big Government loyalists, appear determined to do that. Thanks to federal civil service laws, firing them — even for poor performance or serious problems — is extremely difficult. And already, the Trump administration is butting heads with them.

## What Is the “Senior Executive Service”?

Meet the so-called Senior Executive Service (SES). This little-known group is a crucial component and tool of an apparatus that has come to be known in the public imagination as the Deep State — the Deep



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State is a shadowy network beyond the reach of voters, which *The New American* explored in more detail in the January 8 Special Issue. Officially, these are just the highest-ranked managers across the federal government, political agnostics who normally implement policy rather than set the direction of it. They are supposed to be the link between political appointees and the bloated federal bureaucracy. They have been compared to civilian “generals.” And in theory, they are supposed to follow constitutional orders that come from the people via the White House and Congress. But that does not always happen.

The SES includes most of the federal government’s managerial and policy positions above the General Schedule (GS) grade 15, the highest rank before SES. And while the feds often downplay the importance of it, when it’s mentioned at all, it is clearly a powerful group. The Congressional Research Service (CRS), for instance, described it in a 2012 report as a “centralized cadre of senior leaders in the government.” “These leaders operate and oversee nearly every Government activity in approximately 75 Federal agencies,” the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, which oversees it, explains on its website. According to data from OPM’s Enterprise Human Resources Integration tool cited by *Government Executive*, almost 70 percent of SES members were appointed to their positions during the Obama administration.

But the key role of the SES in the Deep State was long ago recognized by Deep State bigwigs. In January of 1989, shortly after taking office, President George H.W. Bush, a Deep State insider and a fervent advocate of what he called a “New World Order” run by a “credible United Nations” and its “peacekeeping” forces, spoke to the SES before anyone else. “You’re the first group that I am addressing as President outside the White House, and you’re one of the most important groups I will ever speak to,” Bush told the SES in a speech. “I believe that there is tremendous pent-up energy in the Federal Government, a powerful force for good that needs to be released. And I want to be the President to do that, to release the Federal manager from bureaucratic bondage so that together we can, as I said on the steps of the Capitol, use power to serve people.” He called on the SES to get busy on “education,” “protecting the environment,” “fighting crime,” and much more.

The stated purpose of the statute that created this permanent centralized cadre was to “ensure that the executive management of the Government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the nation and otherwise is of the highest quality.” But more than a few analysts and critics have instead referred to the SES as the “shadow government” or even the “secret government” in Washington, D.C. And in a very real sense, it is. Lawmakers are voted in and out of office every few years. Presidents and their political appointees come and go. But the Senior Executive Service transcends it all. Indeed, as the CRS put it in its 2012 report, the SES is a “centralized corps of senior leaders providing *consistent leadership across administrations.*” (Emphasis added.) This elite caste “was designed to be largely insulated from political influence,” the CRS report added.

The Deep State has always liked the idea of having consistent governance, regardless of the people’s wishes. As Deep State loyalist and Bill Clinton mentor Carroll Quigley put it in his incredibly revealing book *Tragedy & Hope*, “The argument that the two parties should represent opposed ideals and policies, one, perhaps, of the Right and the other of the Left, is a foolish idea, acceptable only to doctrinaire and academic thinkers. Instead, the two parties should be almost identical, so that the American people can ‘throw the rascals out’ at any election, without leading to any profound or extensive shifts in policy.” The SES appears to exist to help ensure that this vision of government is the



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dominant one in Washington, D.C., and beyond.

## The Shadow Government Deep State

Best-selling author Jerome Corsi, a prominent conservative whose most recent book is *Killing the Deep State: The Fight to Save President Trump*, described the SES as a crucial tentacle of the Deep State. The Senior Executive Service, he wrote, is “10,000 Deep State shadow government employees who are sabotaging the American Republic for the globalist agenda.” Writing on social media, Corsi blasted the SES network, saying it is dominated by “hard-left Democrats” who are “Obama-Clinton holdovers.” Corsi also lambasted the Jimmy Carter-backed federal law that “prevents them from being fired.”

Former Navy SEAL Matthew Bracken, who has written five novels on defending freedom from enemies foreign and domestic, was among the earliest in the patriot movement to call out the SES and its role. Indeed, more than 10 years ago, Bracken highlighted it in one of his books. “In the United States, the people that run our government are called the Senior Executive Service, the SES grade, used to be nicknamed super-grades,” Bracken explained during a more recent interview on the *Alex Jones Show*, adding that if the United States descended into chaos, SES members would become likely targets. “They’re above GS15 level. They’re the generals that never go away, they’re the civilian clothes-wearing generals of the bureaucracy. They are the Deep State.” In recent months, awareness of this SES has exploded, thanks to the efforts of American Intelligence Media, an alternative media site that has focused much of its energy recently on exposing the SES.

*Photo: AP Images*

*This article appears in the June 4, 2018, issue of The New American. [here](#).*

But even when the federal government describes the Senior Executive Service, it sounds creepy and bizarre — and un-American. “Members of a ‘corporate SES’ respected and embraced the dynamics of American democracy — an approach to governance that provided a continuing vehicle for change,” reads the description of the SES by the U.S. Energy Department’s Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer. Obviously, America is not a democracy, but a republic. And why taxpayers would want an “approach to governance” that “provides a continuing vehicle for change” was not explained.

These bureaucratic managers represent the pinnacle of the permanent pyramid of bureaucratic power in the United States. In total, there are somewhere between 7,500 and 9,000 SES members running the federal Leviathan at any given time. They are the highest-paid federal employees, often making close to or sometimes more than \$200,000 — not including their bonuses, which can dwarf the annual wages of everyday Americans. And like an elite caste, they even sport special lapel pins identifying their privileged status. Indeed, few Americans even realize that this corps of elite managers holds so much sway over the actions of what is ostensibly We The People’s federal government. It is the very essence of the “Administrative State.”

The overwhelming majority of SES members come up through the ranks of the civil service. But depending on the agency, many are also political appointees who *become* career “civil servants.” Indeed, after Obama lost the election, as others have done in the past, his administration rushed to pack the SES Administrative State with his own political minions, thereby protecting his political legacy and sabotaging the agenda of his successors. Lawmakers spoke out, with Congressman Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, demanding to know in late 2016 how



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many recent appointments the Obama administration had made to SES. He also complained that the Department of Homeland Security had been converting political appointees to career senior executive service positions, “including, but not limited to, the deputy undersecretary for science and technology and the assistant administrator for response at the Federal Emergency Management Agency.”

Obviously, plenty of SES members are decent, hard-working, patriotic Americans who take their job implementing policy in a nonpartisan way seriously. Others, though, are just as obviously moles put into place by Obama officials and other Deep State-minded bigwigs desperate to keep the federal government perpetually expanding, while liberty and sovereignty perpetually shrink. Among the high-profile SES members who were caught red-handed weaponizing the federal government, for instance, was IRS official Lois Lerner. In her role overseeing the feared tax agency’s tax-exempt organizations division, Lerner became infamous for abusing the tax code to terrorize political opponents of the Obama administration. When she got caught, she pleaded the Fifth Amendment and retired voluntarily with a six-figure pension.

Created through the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the SES is highly opaque, particularly for outsiders. But according to *Government Executive*, almost seven in 10 members rose to power during the Obama administration. That is one reason the SES has been referred to by critics as Obama’s “secret army.” Of course, Obama was hardly the only problem, as the Deep State transcends administrations. But while formal data on their political views does not exist, anecdotes suggest the overwhelming majority are left-wing Big Government mongers. Indeed, as *The New American* documented in the January 8 special report on the Deep State, some 95 percent of the donations from federal employees in the 2016 election went to Hil-lary Clinton. Obviously, the staff reflect the leadership, and vice versa.

### **Will Trump Rein In SES?**

Trump has taken an interest in the SES and in reining in bloated government, but the question remains, “What can he do about it?” With firing essentially out of the question owing to civil service laws, one potential tool available to an administration that hopes to change the direction of the federal Leviathan is to reassign SES members to roles where they do less harm. But even this has been fiercely resisted. Indeed, when Trump’s appointees have tried to implement even minor changes, the swamp fought back hard. At the U.S. Department of Interior, for example, the administration attempted to reassign some SES members. The subjects and their Democrat allies in Congress and the Deep State media complained, and the inspector general (IG) for the department got involved to “investigate.”

“Seventeen senior executives selected for reassignment questioned whether these reassignments were political or punitive, based on a prior conflict with DOI leadership, or on the senior executive’s nearness to retirement,” the IG report said. Even more troubling, the report went on to note that “twelve of the senior executives believed their reassignment may have been related to their prior work assignments, including climate change, energy, or conservation.” Among the SES members who were reassigned were some Bureau of Land Management “state directors” who oversaw obscene amounts of “federal land” and routinely terrorized honest Americans such as the Bundy ranch family. Consider that the Obama administration and its top SES leaders allocated an estimated \$100 million to destroy that one family, their attorney said.

One of the SES members at the Department of the Interior who complained about being reassigned was



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“climate policy adviser” Joel Clement. He whined that he was moved from his post “for speaking out publicly” about the alleged dangers of “climate change.” The *Washington Post*, a key Deep State propaganda outlet, even published a screed the SES member wrote complaining about being reassigned, as if he were entitled to a job feeding at the taxpayer trough and spouting his views on climate. For months, Clement blasted the “political staff” at DOI for allegedly being “blithe, thoughtless, and careless” in reassigning him to do something more productive than fear-mongering about a pseudo-scientific “theory” most Americans and their elected officials reject.

In a constitutional Republic where government is supposed to represent the people and protect their rights, there must be ways to rein in bureaucrats who are harming America. Yet it appears that many SES members are under the impression that they have some sort of divine right to work on “climate” alarmism or pseudo-environmentalism, among other absurdities, and to earn massive amounts of tax money while doing it. They also appear to believe that they are entitled to do so regardless of what the Constitution permits or what the American people vote for — in this case, a president who openly and regularly ridiculed the man-made global-warming theory as a “hoax” being used to undermine sovereignty, prosperity, and liberty.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told lawmakers he wanted to downsize his 70,000-strong bureaucracy by about 4,000. Zinke estimated that a third of the bureaucrats he is supposed to manage are not loyal to him or the president, or even the American flag. That may be an understatement. The IG report noted that a lack of documentation in the reassignment cases made it impossible to prove whether the decisions “complied with federal law” governing the SES. That left Trump’s appointees to defend their decisions as lawful in the face of a barrage of media propaganda suggesting improprieties. Similar battles are taking place in other bureaucracies.

Deep State Swamp Creatures are getting jittery about how Trump might handle SES. *Building a 21st Century SES* author Ronald Sanders, vice president of Booz Allen Hamilton, which is called a “government-services company” but is really a behemoth that obtains crony contracts to consult on government management and IT projects, said last year he did not think it was “hyperbole” to “say SES is at risk.” Among other concerns, Sanders fretted that Trump’s declared “historic government reorganization” would convince many SES bigwigs to retire. Almost incredibly, Sanders proposed to *Federal Computer Week*, a government-focused tech publication, that SES members meet with top Trump officials to “provide honest input in private, in exchange for publicly carrying out the administration’s policies.” And here the taxpayers paying SES salaries thought the job of SES bureaucrats was to implement the administration’s (constitutional) policies!

Former NSA and CIA boss Michael Hayden, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a Bilderberg attendee, also expressed concerns about reducing SES power. “We’re faced with a circumstance where the signals from our most senior executive leadership talk about the ‘deconstruction of the administrative state,’” complained Hayden. “And when faith-based policies run into fact-based individuals, you are labeled ‘the deep state’ rather than professional expertise.”

Of course, the SES is not the “be-all and end-all” of the Deep State. As this magazine documented in our January 8 special report on the subject, the Deep State is incredibly powerful. From the bureaucracies and the intelligence agencies to the shadowy organizations whose members largely control them, the Deep State is vast. The New American’s special report also highlighted the Deep State Behind the Deep State — semi-secret groups such as the Council on Foreign Relations, Bilderberg, and the Trilateral



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Commission, as well as true secret societies such as the occultist Bohemian Grove and the Order of Skull and Bones. More than a few SES members are also members of organizations that collectively make up the Deep State Behind the Deep State.

Polls show about three out of four Americans believe in the Deep State today. Now is the time for informed patriots to educate those Americans about the real nature of this Deep State — the “Swamp” Trump spoke of during the campaign — and all of its tentacles. The SES and the Deep State Behind the Deep State may feel untouchable. But an educated and activated American public that understands the Constitution and what is happening behind the curtain would be a formidable foe. And despite what its members may believe, the SES is hardly untouchable. Congress could easily pass civil service reform that would restore accountability. Congress should also shut down and defund entire unconstitutional federal agencies, solving the problems quickly and efficiently. For that to happen, though, Americans will have to speak out in massive numbers. n

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