



The Shadow State Narrative, Bureaucratic Politics, and National Resilience in the Trump Era

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Article Info:	Abstract
Keywords: Bureaucratic Politics. Deep State. Intelligence Community. National Resilience Politicisation of Intelligence.	Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the first term of the Trump administration (2017-2021) and the United States Intelligence Community (USIC), with particular attention to intelligence politicisation, bureaucratic politics, and the deployment of the “deep state” narrative. The authors argue that these dynamics are changing patterns of democratic governance and impacting the national resilience of the United States in the realms of politics, government, and security.
Article History: Received : 03-07-2025 Revised : 11-09-2025 Accepted : 30-09-2025	Study Design/Methodology/Approach: This study adopted a qualitative approach to analyze the implementation of inter-institutional competition, while a national resilience framework based on the Asta Gatra framework was used to assess the interaction between political authority, administrative integrity, and security governance.
Article DOI: 10.55960/jlri.v13i3.1239	Findings: Persistent distrust, populist rhetoric, and political intervention characterise the relations between President Trump and the Intelligence Community. These dynamics weakened analytical independence, institutional coordination, and transparency, thereby disrupting the balance between political and administrative resilience and constraining the state’s adaptive capacity in managing national security under political turbulence. Originality/Value: This study contributes to the literature by integrating bureaucratic politics and national resilience perspectives to reinterpret the Trump-Intelligence Community conflict as a test of institutional resilience, rather than a conspiracy phenomenon.
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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between political leadership and the Intelligence Community (IC) is a strategic element in a democratic nation's national resilience system. Therefore, political authority and the IC share a relational dynamic. Intelligence provides objective information and analysis for strategic decision-making, while political authority maintains policy direction based on national interests. The balanced relationship shapes the state's institutional capacity to maintain security governance and system stability, and any disruption has systemic implications for national resilience.

The tension between President Donald Trump and the United States Intelligence Community (USIC) from the 2016 election campaign through the end of his term represented a disruption in this strategic relationship. From the outset, Trump openly questioned intelligence findings, particularly regarding alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election, and this stance continued consistently throughout his administration (McLaughlin, 2021). The relationship between President Donald Trump and the USIC deviated from the practice of previous presidents, who tended to maintain institutional cooperation or voice criticism of intelligence through limited internal mechanisms. Trump instead chose a confrontational approach, questioning the IC credibility, professionalism, and independence in the public sphere (Gentry, 2021). The confrontational approach is often compared to President Richard Nixon's attitude toward the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the 1970s, with the main difference being the mechanism for expressing distrust, as Nixon channelled criticism through closed channels, while Trump conveyed it openly and repeatedly in public (McLaughlin, 2021). In government practice, Trump has occasionally used intelligence input for strategic policymaking and publicly minimised reports that ran counter to his political preferences, including challenging intelligence findings on Russian interference or an Iranian menace and undermining the professional skills of the US military (Lowenthal, 2025).

These dynamics ignore the role of strategic intelligence information in policy formulation and change the institutional relationship between executive leadership and the IC so that the governance of intelligence agencies also changes. Trump assesses the loyalty of intelligence officials based on presidential political interests so that resistance to the politicisation of reports is regulated through clearly defined limitations on authority, shifting strategic positions, and replacing leadership with figures with political ties rather than maintaining professionalism and the national interest (Stevenson, 2021). In its development, McLaughlin (2021) shows that the relationship between Trump and the USIC has moved through several phases, from distrust after the 2016 election to a systematic effort to control intelligence institutions towards the end of his term, while Gentry, (2021) views these dynamics as a form of politicisation of intelligence that goes beyond the patterns of civilian-intelligence relations in the previous period in the United States.

Institutional tensions between President Donald Trump's administration and the federal bureaucracy, particularly the USIC, have intensified through Trump's use of the term "deep state" in his political communications. Through this narrative, Trump repeatedly accused permanent officials in Washington of being involved in efforts to undermine the administration, and he framed the career bureaucracy as an organised actor seeking to undermine the presidency through legal and administrative mechanisms

(Moynihan, 2020). Deep state rhetoric then shifted the professional bureaucracy from being a public policy implementer to an entity perceived as a political adversary. (Moynihan, 2020) shows that the delegitimisation of career bureaucracies in this narrative contributes to a decline in public trust in government institutions and undermines the principle of bureaucratic neutrality. Bauer et al. (also stated that in populist governments, delegitimising professional institutions is often used to justify bureaucratic restructuring geared toward political loyalty.

The politicisation of intelligence has become a crucial dimension of the conflict, as Trump controlled the flow of information to align with his administration's political narrative by dismissing and replacing key intelligence officials, including James Comey, Dan Coats, and Joseph Maguire, with politically appreciative figures (Stevenson, 2021) (Lowenthal, 2025). This practice undermines intelligence's role as a provider of objective analysis, increases the risk of strategic information distortion and flawed policy decisions, and reduces national preparedness for real threats (Gentry, 2021; Lowenthal, 2025; Stevenson, 2021). From the perspective of Indonesia's national resilience and the *Asta Gatra* concept, this politicisation directly impacts the political, defensive, and security concepts, while simultaneously eroding the ideological and socio-political dimensions by diminishing public trust in state institutions.

Theoretically, the conflict between Trump and the IC can be analysed through Graham T. Allison (2007) bureaucratic politics model, which views policy as the result of the interaction of political and bureaucratic actors' interests, and the administrative resilience framework developed by Dalgaard-Nielsen (2017), which emphasises the capacity of security institutions to maintain professional function and integrity under political pressure. However, studies that systematically integrate these two approaches within a national resilience framework are still limited because previous research has focused more on domestic political dynamics and leadership controversies than on the institutional resilience of the intelligence bureaucracy sphere (Gentry, 2021; McLaughlin, 2021; Stevenson, 2021).

In the politics of the Donald Trump administration, a deep state is invoked as a metaphor to refer to unfounded conspiracy theories and as a political construct to frame criticism of career government employees as opposition against the president's agenda. Stevenson (2021) and Bauer et al. (2021) explain that the shadow state narrative functions as political rhetoric to legitimise interventions in professional organisations through the replacement of career officials, the delegitimisation of professional bureaucracies, and the limitation of institutional independence for the sake of consolidating power and security. From an academic perspective, the deep state is not a real or organised phenomenon so much as it is a discursive tool that shapes civil bureaucratic relations and the resilience of democratic governance. Within the framework of national resilience, the use of the deep state narrative has resulted in a decline in public trust, disruption of bureaucratic neutrality, and a weakening of the capacity of state institutions to carry out strategic functions professionally.

The urgency of this research lies in its relevance in strengthening national resilience through professional, neutral, and accountable security bureaucratic governance, along with the ongoing challenges faced by Indonesia in maintaining these characteristics amidst domestic political dynamics and global strategic environmental pressures. The USA experience shows that the delegitimisation of professional bureaucracy and the politicisation of intelligence can have a systemic impact on a country's capacity to manage

threats, maintain political stability, and maintain public trust. The dynamic, according to the *Asta Gatra* framework, has implications for the political, defence, and security sectors and has a subsequent impact on the ideological and socio-political dimensions, namely the reduction of institutional legitimacy. Therefore, this study is important to provide strategic lessons for Indonesia regarding strengthening the resilience of the security bureaucracy as a foundation for national resilience. Based on the analytical framework of bureaucratic politics and administrative resilience from a national resilience perspective, namely the *Asta Gatra* framework, the question is formulated: how can the conflict between the Donald Trump administration and the USIC be explained through the bureaucratic politics model and the administrative resilience framework, and what are the implications for strengthening Indonesia's national resilience from an *Asta Gatra* perspective?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Study

In bureaucratic politics theory, public policy is perceived as the product of political and bureaucratic actors' interests colliding either in tandem or at (Allison & Halperin, 1972; Halperin & Clapp, 2007). In the domain of national security, this means that the IC should provide objective analytic support, and political leadership will set policy direction driven by political interest and legitimacy. Consequently, divergent perspectives create tensions when intelligence assessments seem to contradict executive preferences. This dynamic is explained through the theory of administrative resilience, which emphasises the bureaucracy's ability to maintain professionalism, legality, and accountability under political pressure (Bauer et al., 2021; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017). The framework, known as administrative resilience, pertains to the bureaucracy's ability to maintain professionalism, legality, and accountability in the face of political challenges. The political administration dichotomy and the condemnation of professional bureaucracy and intelligence when they are politicised shrink the administrative resilience response, which in turn affects national resilience. Thus, both theories serve as analytical foundations for examining the Trump versus IC clash and its implications regarding *Asta Gatra*.

The "Deep State"

The term 'deep state' denotes an alleged hidden network within government institutions that is perceived to resist or subvert elected authority. Within the context of the Trump administration, the framework functioned primarily as a political construction rather than an empirically verifiable organisational reality, serving to frame persistent tensions between the presidency and the IC. Horwitz (2022) understands the narrative of the deep state as a rhetorical strategy used to justify executive hardship in controlling the intelligence community, while Moynihan (2020) shows that ongoing attacks on public institutions and marginalising professional expertise transformed ordinary bureaucratic tension into what was experienced as treason.

Empirical evidence shows that the spread of deep state rhetoric also led to politicisation of intelligence with grave implications for increased impact on policy by

the Trump Administration (Gentry, 2021; Lowenthal, 2025). Gentry (2021) asserts that 'claims of objective truth' on the part of intelligence professionals and political actors turn analytical assessments into partisan means of learning and chip away at intelligence as something apolitical in its norms. Lowenthal (2025), for example, also notes that the public denigration of institutions including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would undermine established modes of cooperation between the executive and intelligence. For example, senior officials were publicly criticised and labelled as "naïve" regarding the release of Worldwide Threat Assessments that disagreed with presidential pronouncements on North Korea and Iran (Lowenthal, 2025). Collectively, these instances confirm a key claim of the bureaucratic politics theory; they reveal how leadership style and personal activism could have a critical bearing on policy processes and institutional dynamics.

Well-publicised showdowns illustrated by the firing of the FBI director James Comey and the pointed criticism hurled at CIA director John Brennan did wonders to magnify impressions of a deep state. McCann (2019) and McLaughlin (2021) show that these fights took on institutional conviction and loyalty, which alienated the public from their security organs and left little room for an objective intelligence analysis. Here we have an example of how bureaucratic rivalry mixed with political narrative to collapse national-security governance. From a democratic point of view, such strong oversight mechanisms are still indispensable for keeping the intelligence realm in sync with constitutional accountability (Hellinger, 2019). However, deep state discourse often recast oversight as executive interference that was itself illegitimate (Hellinger, 2019, p. 22). Stevenson (2021) singles out whistleblowing as a fundamental instrument of accountability in connection with the anonymous disclosure about Ukraine that culminated in Trump's first impeachment. Whistle-blower protection is, therefore, a key bulwark for ethical norms and institutional legitimacy.

The very term 'deep state' has its origins in some of those settings that have a history of political instability and military interference, including Turkey and other coup-prone countries (Hellinger, 2019, p. 30). Normalising the us-versus-them usage of the term in mature democracies will be risky-it portrays bureaucratic obstruction as innately subversive and increases institutional distrust. Horwitz (2022) argues that elevated depiction of the IC as a deep state actor legitimises populist narratives while then delegitimising civil service expertise. The pattern was further reinforced by media dynamics, where Trump took over intelligence briefings and directed them towards personal or political interests (Leonnig et al., 2018), while the spread of politicised paranoia was later linked to the events of January 6, 2021, when the violence against Congress was rationalised as resistance to an alleged deep state conspiracy (Hellinger, 2019, p. 15).

The term "deep state" denotes an alleged hidden network within government institutions that resists or subverts elected authority. Horwitz (2022) views the 'deep state' as a political construction used by Trump to rationalise his difficulties with the IC, while Moynihan, (2020) shows that Trump's attacks on public institutions and marginalisation of expertise turned bureaucratic disagreement into perceived disloyalty. sphere (Gentry, 2021) and (Lowenthal, 2025) note that the deep-state discourse intensified the politicisation of intelligence under Trump. Gentry (2021) observes that both intelligence professionals and critics claimed exclusive access to "objective truth", turning analysis

into partisan weaponry and eroding the IC's apolitical tradition. Lowenthal (2025) similarly records that Trump's public denigration of agencies as well as the CIA and FBI fractured traditional cooperation. For instance, Trump rebuked senior officials as "naïve" after their *Worldwide Threat Assessment* contradicted his views on North Korea and Iran (Lowenthal, 2025). These confrontations exemplify the bureaucratic-politics principle that leadership style and personal agency can decisively shape policy.

National and Administrative Resilience within the *Asta Gatra* Framework

Most of this research discusses the norms and sectors without trying to analyse how the delegitimisation of security bureaucracy has affected the balance between *Gatra*, which means that topic offers a new gap as well as opening opportunity for analysis that situates political-bureaucratic conflict as one key variable in weakening national resilience. The *Asta Gatra* model defines Indonesia's national resilience as a dynamic balance between natural and social dimensions through the integration of *Tri Gatra* (i.e. geography, demography, and natural resources), and *Panca Gatra* (i.e. ideology, politics, economics, socio-culture, and defence and security) within a national strategic framework (Syadzily, 2025). The integration of these eight elements (*Asta Gatra*) forms the foundation of national stability that relies not only on material capacity but also on institutional integrity and social cohesion. From the perspective of *Asta Gatra*, Indonesian national resiliency is described as a balance between self-nature and social force as power (the neglected one which is not emasculated); this natural force should be maintained against influences generated from our vision culture. Intelligence politicisation and deep state narratives most effectively undermine *Panca Gatra* (especially the political, defence and security aspects) by impairing institutions of governance as well as strategic intelligence.

In the public administration literature, resilience has developed as an adaptive governance paradigm that emphasizes the ability of government systems to absorb disturbances while maintaining core functions. As stated by Anderson (2015) defines resilience as an analytical construct shaped by specific social, political, and institutional conditions, so that technocratic public policy approaches often attach normative assumptions to resilience even though its practice develops through specific power relations and institutional arrangements. Thus, bridging institutional stability and bureaucratic adaptive capacity and emphasizing the role of the state in maintaining public accountability and welfare, which is operationally reflected in administrative resilience as the capacity of public bureaucracies to maintain professionalism, legality, and democratic accountability under political pressure (Anderson, 2015; Bauer et al., 2021; Welsh, 2014).

The effects of the security bureaucracy as an underpinning for national resilience are systemic, related to the inter-relationships between *Tri Gatra* and *Panca Gatra* embedded within *Asta Gatra*, with implications for example, when the principle is weakened through the centralisation of authority, politicisation of appointment, and delegitimisation of oversight. While the literature emphasises the role of administrative and national resilience as a foundation for state stability, studies directly linking it to the politicisation of intelligence through the deep state narrative are still limited, particularly within the *Asta Gatra* framework. Most of this research discusses the norms and sectors without trying to analyse how the delegitimisation of security bureaucracy has affected

the balance between *gatra*, which means that topic offers a new gap as well as opening opportunity for analysis that situates political-bureaucratic conflict as one key variable in weakening national resilience.

Bureaucratic Politics as an Analytical Framework for Executive-Intelligence Relations

The bureaucratic politics model views public policy as the result of negotiations between bureaucratic actors with differing organisational interests. Therefore, the relationship between political leadership and the intelligence community inherently contains the potential for tension in the process of formulating national security policy (Allison & Halperin, 1972; Halperin & Clapp, 2007). In addition, the model explains how standard operating procedures, limitations on information, and internal bureaucratic dynamics influence organisational behaviour (Bendor & Moe, 1985; Clifford, 1990). When political stress is high, these facets of differing interests can lead to the politicisation of intelligence if executive preferences are very much in control. The marriage of the bureaucratic politics model with administrative resilience makes clear that deterring professionalism and independence within the security bureaucracy not only conflicts with policy quality; it also lessens state adaptive capacity when declaiming strategic challenges.

Therefore, although the bureaucratic politics model has been widely used to explain the dynamics of policymaking, its application to analysing the conflict between executive leadership and the intelligence community through the lens of national resilience remains relatively limited. Most research focuses on explaining institutional conflict or actor behaviour without linking it to its long-term implications for national resilience. Therefore, this study fills this gap by integrating the bureaucratic politics and administrative resilience models to explain how the Trump-Intelligence Community conflict impacts national resilience and its relevance as a strategic lesson for Indonesia, from *Asta Gatra's* perspective. Based on the literature synthesis, the conceptual model in Figure 1 summarises the relationship between political-bureaucratic conflict, politicisation of intelligence, administrative resilience, and national resilience within the *Asta Gatra* framework, which is then used as an analytical framework to interpret the empirical findings in the Results section.

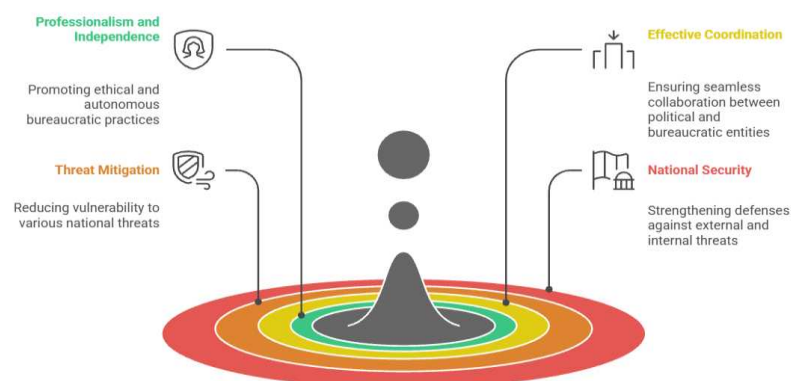


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Intelligence Politicisation and National Resilience within the *Asta Gatra* Framework

The model in Figure 1 offers the thinking pattern of how executive political leadership, politicisation of intelligence and national resilience are inter-correlated on the foundation of *Asta Gatra*. According to the model, particular preferences regarding leadership and governance of the security bureaucracy determine political-bureaucratic interactions that may trigger intelligence politicisation through discrediting professional intelligence estimates, delegitimising bureaucratic expertise, and invoking deep state discourses. This procedure will have the effect of eroding administrative resilience through two mechanisms, deskilling and reducing institutional integrity and interagency co-ordination. The decline of administrative resilience then disturbs the equilibrium of *Panca Gatra*, especially in terms of political and defence-security affairs, which has a spill-over effect on ideological and socio-political stabilities. These mutually reinforcing developments reduce national resilience by eroding institutional authority, trust and a state's ability to inscribe strategic challenges.

METHODS

The study adopts a qualitative explanatory case study developed by Creswell & Creswell (2017) and Yin (2018) to examine the political-bureaucratic dispute between the USA leadership of the Donald Trump administration and the intelligence community in 2017-2021. The justification for using this research approach is that it allows for in-depth exploration of political-bureaucratic dynamics, the construction of deep state narratives, and institutional implications through process tracing as developed by (Demiroz, 2025). The analytical framework integrates the bureaucratic politics model (Allison & Halperin, 1972; Halperin & Clapp, 2007) and the framework of administrative resilience (Bauer et al., 2021; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017). to explain the relationship between executive preferences, bureaucratic responses, and changes in intelligence governance. The results of the analysis are then placed within the *Asta Gatra* framework to assess the implications of the conflict on the Political and Defence and Security *Gatra*, along with its subsequent impact on the Ideological and Socio-Political *Gatra*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Intelligence-Policy Interaction during the Trump Administration

The findings indicate that the relationship between the Intelligence Community (IC) and political leadership during the Trump administration was characterised by mutual dependence combined with persistent institutional instability. Although intelligence institutions and executive decision-makers relied upon one another throughout the national security policy process, interactions frequently reflected tension, distrust, and inconsistent communication. Intelligence organisations continued to provide strategic assessments intended to support executive decision-making, whereas political leaders retained authority to determine policy priorities. Nevertheless, differences between professional intelligence assessments and executive political preferences repeatedly disrupted this relationship, reducing confidence in intelligence products and weakening institutional cooperation.

Consistent with Jervis (2010) p. 185), policymakers maintained high expectations regarding the predictive capacity of intelligence organisations. Expectations extended beyond the provision of information and included demands for certainty regarding complex strategic developments. When intelligence assessments failed to correspond with political preferences or anticipated policy directions, executive confidence in professional analysis declined. Intelligence products were consequently received selectively, while analytical conclusions inconsistent with political narratives frequently received limited consideration during policy deliberations. This pattern contributed to recurring institutional mistrust and reduced the effectiveness of intelligence support within the executive decision-making process.

The findings also reinforce the analytical distinction between intelligence producers and intelligence consumers. As emphasised by Gookins (2008), p. 65), intelligence analysts perform a broader function than merely transmitting information because they interpret strategic developments and translate complex security issues into policy-relevant assessments. Decision-makers, however, frequently encounter cognitive, political, and technical constraints that influence how intelligence products are interpreted and utilised. Reduced communication between both communities weakened this interpretative relationship, diminishing the practical value of intelligence assessments and limiting their contribution to executive decision-making.

Communication quality and temporal alignment further emerged as important determinants of intelligence effectiveness. Consistent with Lowenthal (2025), analytical precision alone proved insufficient when intelligence products failed to correspond with policy priorities or executive decision-making timelines. Delays in communication, differences in information requirements, and inconsistent interaction between policymakers and intelligence institutions reduced the relevance of intelligence assessments during critical decision-making periods. Misalignment between policymakers' informational demands and intelligence analysis consequently weakened institutional confidence while reducing the functional integration of intelligence into national security governance.

Patterns of Intelligence Politicisation

The findings reveal a consistent pattern of intelligence politicisation throughout the Trump administration. Political actors increasingly interpreted intelligence assessments through partisan perspectives, particularly when professional analytical conclusions conflicted with executive narratives or political priorities. As suggested by Jervis (2010) p. 190), highly polarised political environments encourage policymakers to reinterpret intelligence selectively rather than accept professional assessments independently. Under these conditions, intelligence gradually shifted from functioning as an objective source of strategic knowledge toward becoming an arena of political contestation.

Empirical evidence indicates that politicisation developed through several mutually reinforcing mechanisms. Professional intelligence assessments were frequently questioned or rejected, intelligence institutions experienced public delegitimation, and the "deep state" narrative increasingly framed career intelligence officials as political opponents rather than professional civil servants. Simultaneously, intelligence assessments became closely associated with political competition, reducing their

perceived neutrality and weakening public confidence in institutional professionalism. Rather than functioning exclusively as strategic inputs for policymaking, intelligence products increasingly became subjects of political debate and public controversy.

Media communication and political narratives further amplified these developments. Lowenthal (2025) notes that media framing, political discourse, and policy networks collectively shaped public interpretations of intelligence assessments, allowing political preferences to receive greater attention than professional analysis. Under these conditions, cognitive bias and selective interpretation became increasingly embedded within executive-intelligence interaction. The convergence of political polarisation, public delegitimisation, and selective intelligence reception therefore intensified intelligence politicisation while reducing the independence and credibility of intelligence institutions.

Administrative Disruption and Implications for National Resilience

Sustained intelligence politicisation generated broader administrative disruption extending beyond the relationship between political leaders and intelligence agencies. Delegitimisation of intelligence institutions reduced professional autonomy, weakened inter-agency coordination, and eroded procedural integrity across the national security bureaucracy. These institutional developments correspond with declining administrative resilience, defined as the capacity of bureaucratic institutions to preserve professionalism, legality, accountability, and organisational effectiveness under conditions of sustained political pressure. Reduced institutional confidence also constrained cooperation among security organisations responsible for producing and integrating strategic intelligence.

Declining trust among governmental actors further impaired coordination across security institutions, limiting their collective capacity to anticipate strategic threats, exchange information effectively, and respond adaptively to emerging security challenges. Administrative disruption therefore extended beyond organisational performance and reflected broader institutional vulnerability within national governance structures. Reduced cooperation diminished the effectiveness of intelligence coordination while increasing organisational fragmentation across the national security system.

Examination through the *Asta Gatra* framework indicates that these developments generated direct disturbances within Pancagatra, particularly the political and defence-security dimensions. Political polarisation weakened governance legitimacy, whereas deteriorating intelligence coordination reduced security preparedness and institutional responsiveness. Secondary effects also emerged within the ideological and socio-political dimensions through declining public trust, increasing societal fragmentation, and weakening confidence in professional state institutions. Taken together, these empirical patterns indicate that intelligence politicisation affected not only executive-intelligence relations but also the broader capacity of state institutions to sustain coordinated governance, preserve institutional legitimacy, and maintain national resilience under conditions of prolonged political contestation.

Discussion

Intelligence-Policy Interaction and Bureaucratic Fragmentation

Patterns of interaction between political leadership and the Intelligence Community align with Jervis (2010), who argues that excessive expectations regarding intelligence performance encourage policymakers to disregard assessments that conflict with prior beliefs or established political preferences. Rather than strengthening strategic decision-making, unrealistic expectations reduce the integration of professional intelligence into executive policymaking and weaken analytical independence. Political leaders consequently become more inclined to rely on preferred narratives than on objective intelligence assessments, increasing the gap between professional analysis and executive decision-making while reducing the effectiveness of evidence-based security governance. The findings also reinforce Gookins (2008) distinction between intelligence producers and intelligence consumers by highlighting the importance of interpretative communication throughout the intelligence cycle. Intelligence analysts generate strategic assessments by translating complex security information into policy-relevant knowledge, whereas policymakers determine how those assessments are incorporated into executive decisions. Weak communication between both actors reduces the practical relevance of intelligence products, weakens institutional trust, and increases bureaucratic fragmentation, thereby limiting the capacity of intelligence organisations to provide effective strategic support under politically contested conditions.

Within the *Asta Gatra* framework, these interaction patterns primarily undermine the Political *Gatra* by weakening governance coherence, reducing decision-making legitimacy, and disrupting institutional coordination across national security organisations. Diminished coordination also constrains the state's capacity to formulate consistent strategic responses, increasing administrative vulnerability beyond intelligence institutions alone. Reduced institutional coherence further limits information sharing and weakens coordination among security agencies, thereby constraining the government's ability to maintain an integrated response to evolving strategic threats. Consequently, executive disregard for professional intelligence should be understood not merely as an organisational challenge but as an early indicator of declining national resilience, as weakening coordination between political leadership and the Intelligence Community reduces institutional effectiveness and the government's adaptive capacity to respond to strategic threats.

Intelligence Politicisation and the "Deep State" Narrative

Patterns of intelligence politicisation identified in this study reinforce previous theoretical and empirical arguments that political intervention poses a direct threat to analytical integrity (Davis, 2006; Degaut, 2016). Selective acceptance of intelligence assessments, the public delegitimisation of intelligence agencies, and the deployment of the "deep state" narrative shifted intelligence from an independent source of strategic knowledge to an instrument of political contestation. Consistent with Lowenthal (2025), political actors increasingly prioritised intelligence narratives that aligned with ideological preferences, while media framing amplified institutional polarisation and reinforced selective interpretations of intelligence assessments. This convergence of political preferences, institutional distrust, and public contestation further reduced

confidence in professional intelligence while limiting its capacity to provide objective and credible assessments for executive decision-making. These interaction patterns also align with the bureaucratic politics model proposed by Allison and Halperin (1972), where divergent organisational interests and executive preferences increase the likelihood that intelligence assessments will be interpreted according to political priorities rather than professional judgement. Consequently, the credibility, independence, and policy relevance of intelligence products gradually declined under conditions of sustained political contestation.

Viewed through the *Asta Gatra* framework, intelligence politicisation primarily weakens the Political *Gatra* by reducing governance legitimacy, weakening institutional coherence, and diminishing public confidence in state institutions. Distorted intelligence flows also undermine the Defence and Security *Gatra* by weakening intelligence coordination and reducing institutional preparedness to respond to strategic threats. Declining institutional confidence also constrains cooperation among security organisations, reducing the effectiveness of coordinated intelligence support in responding to complex strategic challenges. These patterns indicate that intelligence politicisation extends beyond bureaucratic conflict and gradually weakens national resilience by constraining analytical independence, disrupting institutional coordination, and reducing the state's capacity to formulate coherent strategic responses under conditions of political uncertainty.

Administrative Resilience and Systemic Effects on National Resilience

Evidence from this study aligns with the concept of administrative resilience advanced by Bauer et al. (2021) and Dalgaard-Nielsen (2017), which emphasises that sustained politicisation weakens bureaucratic professionalism, limits institutional autonomy, and disrupts inter-agency coordination. Declining institutional trust consequently reduces the adaptive capacity of public institutions to maintain professionalism, legality, and accountability under persistent political pressure. Reduced organisational autonomy also constrains professional decision-making and weakens institutional consistency, making security agencies increasingly vulnerable to political influence and diminishing their capacity to preserve objective administrative processes. As administrative resilience weakens, institutional coordination becomes less effective, reducing the capacity of government institutions to respond adaptively to strategic threats.

Viewed through the *Asta Gatra* framework, these institutional dynamics primarily affect the Political *Gatra* and the Defence and Security *Gatra* by weakening governance legitimacy, reducing bureaucratic coherence, and disrupting intelligence coordination. The resulting decline in institutional effectiveness subsequently extends to the Ideological and Socio-Political *Gatra* through diminishing public trust and increasing political polarisation. Institutional fragmentation also reduces cooperation across security organisations, limiting the state's ability to maintain coherent governance and coordinated responses under conditions of sustained political pressure. These interconnected developments indicate that weakening administrative resilience generates systemic vulnerabilities that extend beyond bureaucratic performance by reducing the alignment between political authority and professional state institutions, ultimately weakening national resilience.

CONCLUSION

This study answers the research question by showing that tensions between executive political leadership and the intelligence community during the Trump administration arose from the structural dynamics of bureaucratic politics rather than the existence of a coordinated "deep state.". Fragmentation of authority and competition for business among forcing agencies speed the politicisation of intelligence and weaken resistance to turning bad by reducing professionalism and interagency checks. These fluctuations undermined the *Panca Gatra*, particularly affecting the political, defence, and security sectors, and subsequently spread to the ideological and socio-political sectors, leading to a decline in institutional legitimacy and public confidence. The findings, therefore, establish intelligence politicisation as a systemic threat to national resilience rather than a temporary governance disturbance.

This study's reliance on a single qualitative case and a document-based analysis limits broader generalisations across political systems. Therefore, future research should strengthen the empirical evidence by using comparative qualitative or mixed methods designs that integrate process tracing with quantitative measures of institutional trust, policy coherence, and resilience performance. Further theoretical development should test the integration of bureaucratic politics and resilience theory, particularly by examining trust as a mediating mechanism. Regarding Indonesia, future studies could perhaps operationalise the *Asta Gatra* framework through measurable indicators to identify how intelligence governance influences *Panca Gatra* stability. In practical terms, the results indicate the need to strengthen merit-based bureaucratic structures, protect analytic independence, and establish mechanisms of oversight that foster coordination rather than confrontation, thus facilitating the identification and communication of national resilience risks.

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