

# The view from the bridge

**Robin Ramsay**

*As always, thanks to Nick Must and Garrick Alder  
for editorial help with Lobster.*

*\*new\**

## **The times they might be a-changin'**

**O**ne day in July I was reading 'CIA has a long history of empowering monsters' by the editor of *Covert Action Magazine*, Jeremy Kuzmarov. True, of course, but predictable from that source. That same day I saw this paragraph:

For decades, American presidents have waged illegal wars, plotted to assassinate foreign leaders, unlawfully detained and tortured people, toppled democratic governments, and supported repressive regimes without any possibility of legal accountability in either domestic or international courts.

Kuzmarov could have written that. In fact it was in *Foreign Affairs*, of all places, the house organ of the Council on Foreign Relations.<sup>1</sup>

*\*new\**

## **Same old same old**

**I**n her first statement to the House of Commons, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, showed how well she had absorbed the lessons she learned while working at the Bank of England. There was almost nothing in what she said, proposed or implied that could not have been said by Tory chancellors of the last 50 years. She received raspberries from both left and right. Among the dissenting voices in the *Guardian* was Adita Chakroborty.<sup>2</sup> Alas, among his many valid points he referred to the UK as 'one of the richest

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<sup>1</sup> Oona A. Hathaway, 'For the Rest of the World, the U.S. President Has Always Been Above the Law' at <<https://shorturl.at/IZ6WX>> or <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/rest-world-us-president-has-always-been-above-law>>.

<sup>2</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/zQ0UX>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/aug/01/george-osborne-osbornomics-labour-party-public-sector-cuts-rachel-reeves>>

economies in the world'. No it isn't, I'm afraid, as I have been pointing out in this column for years now. And if he hasn't grasped this fundamental point, why should we take him seriously?

Then there was Nick Timothy, former chief of staff to Tory PM Theresa May. Trying to big-up the outgoing Conservative Party's economic record, he asserted:

Inflation, borrowing and unemployment are all lower than when Labour last left office. Debt is lower than in the 1950s, and lower than in countries including France, Italy and the United States. The economy is growing.<sup>3</sup>

UK inflation in 2010 was 2.5%<sup>4</sup> and this year has recently dropped to 2%. So his first claim is true (but would have been false three months ago). But in 2010, when Labour left office, UK public debt was 69.6% of GDP.<sup>5</sup> Today it is around 90% of GDP.<sup>6</sup> Yes, it is true that government debt was higher in the 1950s, but HMG was then still paying off the debt created fighting WW2. Desperate stuff from Mr Timothy.

*\*new\**

## **The Israel lobby**

**I**n this column in *Lobster* 88, under the subhead **Labour and the Israel Lobby**,<sup>7</sup> I noted the role of Morgan McSweeney and the organisation Labour Together in the rise of Keir Starmer to leadership of the Labour Party. I also noted the significant sums of money Labour Together had received from members of the Israel lobby in the UK. In the *London Review of Books* of 15 August, Peter Geoghegan has a long piece, 'Labour and the lobbyists'.<sup>8</sup> Although this is an excellent account of the money Starmer's faction has taken from lobbyists, Geoghan has omitted the fact that much of the money for

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<sup>3</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/7n4zp>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/07/22/we-have-lost-control-of-our-economy-rachel-reeves/>>

<sup>4</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/hvH8c>> or <<https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/GBR/united-kingdom/inflation-rate-cpi>>

<sup>5</sup> <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/282841/debt-as-gdp-uk/>>

<sup>6</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/ElwAP>> or <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/april2024#:~:text=>>

<sup>7</sup> <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/88/the-view-from-the-bridge-51/>>

<sup>8</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n16/peter-geoghegan/labour-and-the-lobbyists>>

Labour Together came from the Israel lobby in the UK. I wonder why.

Not a million miles from which . . . as far as I can see BBC News, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* have not reported the arrest of Richard Medhurst and Sara Wilkinson under anti-terrorism legislation for their reporting of Israeli actions in Gaza. The UK *Press Gazette* warned in 2015 of the dangers the legislation presented to the media.<sup>9</sup>

*\*new\**

## **The blessed Tony**

**T**ony Blair was interviewed in the *Observer* on 12 September and he said:

The day I left office in 2007, we had improving public services, a strong economy, we were America's closest ally, we'd won the bid for the Olympics, we had peace in Northern Ireland, and \$2 to the pound.<sup>10</sup>

Very striking that he thinks it worth boasting that the pound was worth two dollars (actually \$2.07 at its peak in 2007). A strong pound is bad for the British manufacturing economy, making exports expensive and competing imports cheap. But Blair (and Chancellor Brown) didn't care about manufacturing – or simply didn't understand the impact the value of sterling had on it – or both. After all, we had the knowledge economy, didn't we? We didn't need to make things. Thus it was that manufacturing was 20% of UK GDP in 1997 when NuLab took over and 10% when Labour lost the 2010 election.<sup>11</sup>

*\*new\**

## **From Dallas to Kiev**

**P**rofessor Jeffrey Sachs has written about some of the recent consequences of US foreign policy.

Here is not the place to revisit all of the foreign policy disasters that have resulted from U.S. arrogance towards Russia, but it suffices here

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<sup>9</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/BHcdf>> or <[https://pressgazette.co.uk/media\\_law/media-lawyer-warns-looming-problem-terrorism-act-being-used-see-out-journalistic-sources/hh](https://pressgazette.co.uk/media_law/media-lawyer-warns-looming-problem-terrorism-act-being-used-see-out-journalistic-sources/hh)>

<sup>10</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/Z0iOT>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/sep/01/tony-blair-on-leadership-book-interview-starmer-ai-trump>>

<sup>11</sup> For details see, for example, <<https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/manufacturing/who-killed-british-manufacturing/>>.

to mention a brief and partial chronology of key events. In 1999, NATO bombed Belgrade for 78 days with the goal of breaking Serbia apart and giving rise to an independent Kosovo, now home to a major NATO base in the Balkans. In 2002, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty over Russia's strenuous objections. In 2003, the U.S. and NATO allies repudiated the United Nations Security Council by going to war in Iraq on false pretenses. In 2004, the U.S. continued with NATO enlargement, this time to the Baltic states and countries in the Black Sea region (Bulgaria and Romania) and the Balkans. In 2008, over Russia's urgent and strenuous objections, the U.S. pledged to expand NATO to Georgia and Ukraine. In 2011, the U.S. tasked the Central Intelligence Agency to overthrow Syria's Bashar al-Assad, an ally of Russia. In 2011, NATO bombed Libya in order to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi. In 2014, the U.S. conspired with Ukrainian nationalist forces to overthrow Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. In 2015, the U.S. began to place Aegis anti-ballistic missiles in Romania, a short distance from Russia. From 2016 to 2020, the U.S. supported Ukraine in undermining the Minsk II agreement, despite its unanimous backing by the UN Security Council. In 2021, the new Biden administration refused to negotiate with Russia over the question of NATO enlargement to Ukraine. In April 2022, the U.S. called on Ukraine to withdraw from peace negotiations with Russia.<sup>12</sup>

After Sachs, read the striking essays by the always interesting James diEugenio on his new substack.<sup>13</sup> In one he gives us a detailed account of JFK's foreign policy thinking and – once again – shows in detail that, far from being just another cold warrior, as he is conventionally presented, JFK really was trying to take US foreign policy in a new direction.

Far from perpetual war, Kennedy refused to go to war in Cuba—even when he had two opportunities to do so—he also refused war entry into Laos, and Vietnam. He did not believe in American Exceptionalism, as he foresaw a multi-polar world, including the rise of former Third World states. He thought America could cooperate with those rising states. In fact, far from Perpetual War, in his American University speech in June of 1963, he was propagating for Perpetual Peace.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, 'How the Neocons Chose Hegemony Over Peace Beginning in the Early 1990s' <<https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/jeffrey-sachs-a-front-row-seat-to>>

<sup>13</sup> <<https://jamesanthonydieugenio.substack.com/p/jfk-and-the-rise-of-the-neocons-pt>>

<sup>14</sup> <<https://jamesanthonydieugenio.substack.com/p/jfk-and-the-neocons-pt-3>>

Of particular interest in the third of diEugenio's essays is his account of the way Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney worked to kibosh detente with the Soviets in the 1970s, preparing the way for the neocon revival of the Soviet 'menace' under Ronald Reagan and his successors.<sup>15</sup> The actions listed by Sachs have their immediate roots in the mid 1970s and ultimately – diEugenio would argue, I think – on Dealey Plaza in 1963.

## **Oh-oh**

**B**y some distance the biggest story I have seen recently is that told on CBS's 60 Minutes series recently, Scott Pelley's 'Havana Syndrome mystery continues as a lead military investigator says bar for proof was set impossibly high'.<sup>16</sup> Which headline must win a prize for the biggest under-selling of a story in recent memory. In fact Pelley offers what is close to proof that the Russians have developed a microwave weapon and are using it on US military, diplomatic and security personnel. Hundreds of them, in the US and abroad, have been attacked and disabled, some permanently. Which creates big problems. Diplomatically: is this an act of undeclared war? Not quite. We are in new territory here. How do US personnel defend themselves against such a weapon? Who would volunteer to go abroad for a diplomatic posting if the consequence might be permanent injury and disability?

This is an enormous step by the Russians. Hitherto in the various contests between them and NATO members, individual state personnel on either side have not been attacked. That line has now been crossed.

Previously it was unclear if it was a microwave beam or a sonic beam which was being used. One little detail in the piece tells us it is microwaves. A FBI agent who was attacked reports that the beam caused her phone's battery to expand and break the phone's casing. I know nothing of the physics involved here but a sound beam surely would not expand a battery.

## **Dallas again**

**M**ore from Robert Morrow. He reproduces a recent email from Abraham Bolden, the first black Secret Service agent, who was on the White House

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<sup>15</sup> This episode is described in detail in Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Detente* (Pennsylvania State University, 1998) which I reviewed at <<https://shorturl.at/RS2Wx>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/45/killing-detente-the-right-attacks-the-cia/>>.

<sup>16</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/V3LQ3>> or <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/havana-syndrome-culprit-investigation-new-evidence-60-minutes-transcript-2024-07-07/>>.

detail with JFK.<sup>17</sup> Around the time of the assassination Bolden saw things he should not have; and ended up in jail on a bogus charge. Arguably, he was lucky: others got killed.

Notably, Bolden describes hearing a row between the Kennedy brothers and Vice President Johnson about the Kennedys trying to use the Billy Sol Estes scandal against him. This is Bolden verbatim.

1. On or about June 28, 1961, a secret service agent [Bolden] guarded the main door leading into the Oval Office. At about 7 pm, Vice President LYNDON B. JOHNSON entered the office shouting vulgarities toward President John Kennedy and Attorney General ROBERT KENNEDY, who were waiting inside.

LBJ was livid.

"You bastards trying to send me to jail"? He shouted as he closed the door. The voices became muffled, but it was clear that Johnson was furious. The three engaged in a heated discussion, mostly between Bobby Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. The meeting lasted for about 20 minutes. As he left the office, Johnson turned toward the Kennedys, who were standing next to the Oval Office desk, and shouted "Yall better stop fucking with me, you son of a bitches."

As he left the office, Johnson made eye contact with the agent.

Johnson's driver was meandering in the hallway leading to the Oval Office.

"Who is that boy standing over there by that goddammed door?"

Johnson asked the driver.

The driver explained that he did not know the person but the person would have to be an FBI or Secret Service Agent to stand there.

Related to which is Morrow's reproduction of the text of a 1984 report in the *Dallas Morning News* which includes this:

Former Texas Atty. Gen. Will Wilson said Tuesday that federal authorities refused to cooperate with the state in a 1962 investigation of the death of an Agricultural Department official [Henry Marshall] who was looking into the business dealings of Billie Sol Estes [ . . . ]

'It became quite evident to us early in the investigation that Marshall's death was not a suicide, and secondly, we had a great deal of opposition

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<sup>17</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/Lw7rj>> or <<https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2024/06/1961-attorney-general-robert-kennedy.html>>

from the federal government in cooperating with us at all,' said Wilson, 70, who is now retired and living in Austin.

It is reasonably well established that Marshall was murdered by 'Mac' Wallace, a member of LBJ's entourage. Morrow suggests that the hostility to the investigation coming from the Kennedy White House was a desire to avoid something which might embarrass the Democratic Party.

There are two recent large rehashes of the LBJ-dunnit thesis. One is by Ron Unz, who does a competent job running through the literature.<sup>18</sup> Much better, though, is M. C. Armstrong's 'Murder Most Foul: The Role of Lyndon Johnson in the Murder of John F. Kennedy',<sup>19</sup> which presents the evidence (but ignores some of the difficulties). Armstrong joins that very small band of academics who have taken the assassination literature seriously. If you want an introduction to LBJ-dunnit, this would be as good a place as any to start.

However, neither Armstrong nor Unz mention Chauncey Holt in their accounts. Holt's role – as unwitting CIA technical support in the assassination conspiracy – means that the story must include both LBJ and the Agency. The only Agency figure to have talked of that was E. Howard Hunt, just before he died. The serious assassination researchers have chosen to dismiss Hunt.

## Assange

In all the mainstream media coverage of Julian Assange's release from Belmarsh prison, I saw no mention of the fact that Assange/Wikileaks had been careful to remove the names of US personnel from the leaked files before they were released. However, an unredacted form of the files was accessible – but only to possessors of a password held by Assange. That password was published by David Leigh and Luke Harding in their 2011 *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy*.<sup>20</sup> To my knowledge, neither Leigh nor

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<sup>18</sup> <<https://www.unz.com/runz/american-pravda-the-jfk-assassination-part-ii-who-did-it/>>

The unz.com website is anti-semitic and ran an essay arguing that it was the Israelis who shot JFK. I referred to this in my 'View from the Bridge' in *Lobster* 88 (under subhead **Dallas and Dimona**).

<sup>19</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/scq2S>> or <<https://www.wrath-bearingtree.com/2023/06/murder-most-foul-the-role-of-lyndon-johnson-in-the-murder-of-john-f-kennedy/>>

<sup>20</sup> This was discussed by Bill Goodwin in 2020 in his 'WikiLeaks published unredacted cables after password was disclosed in book'. <<https://shorturl.at/4nyWU>> or <<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252489382/WikiLeaks-published-unredacted-cables-after-password-was-disclosed-in-book>>

Harding have commented on their publication of the password; and, as you would expect, none of the major media referred to this in their rehashes of the affair.

## **Who's left?**

**D**r. Roger Cottrell has published a large diatribe about the British left over the past four decades of so: 'Watch that man! Frank Furedi and the new fascist right in Britain and Europe'.<sup>21</sup> Here's part of a relatively toned down paragraph.

### **The Legacy of Stalinism: Those Who Transgress From Left to Right**

. . . . In short, there is a relatively short step from the global anti-capitalist movement and populist left railing against a non-existent "globalisation," to Fiore or Marine Le Pen condemning global capitalism and "globalism" as a threat to national cultural identity. The war in Ukraine has acted as a catalyst to this process with many such as Max Blumenthal of *Grayzone* crossing into the fascist camp and even Noam Chomsky singing the praises of Donald Trump over Ukraine (44). It is within this context, in which George Galloway also shared a platform with Nigel Farage, that Furedi finally nailed his fascist colours openly to the mast by championing the racist immigration policies of the fascist Viktor Orban regime in Hungary and in his latest book defending the existence of national boundaries (Furedi, 2020)

Cottrell noted in an email to me that he needs an editor. He certainly does. Nonetheless this is interesting and entertaining.

## **The lobby news**

**I**n an email from the excellent *Declassified UK*,<sup>22</sup> John McEvoy wrote:

I went through the register of interests of every MP in the last parliament, revealing that 180 of Britain's 650 parliamentarians had accepted funding from pro-Israel lobby groups or individuals during their political career. That amounts to over 1 in 4 MPs.

One of those MPs is Wes Streeting, who by Friday is likely to be the UK health secretary. Matt [Kennard] revealed how Streeting has received

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<sup>21</sup> <<https://rogercottrell.substack.com/p/watch-that-man>>

<sup>22</sup> <<https://www.declassifieduk.org/>>



nearly £30,000 from the Israel lobby, and another £175,000 from companies linked to private healthcare.<sup>23</sup>

So there you go: the new Health Secretary has been bought by the private healthcare lobby. How very NuLab.

## All Trussed up

**A**ndrew Rosthorn spotted a very interesting essay by Jon Moynihan on capx.co: 'Did Liz Truss really cause the bond market rout?'.<sup>24</sup> A venture capitalist, Mr Moynihan knows his way around the City of London and argues that the real cause of the turbulence in the money markets which led to the fall of the Truss government was not her desire to increase government borrowing and reduce personal taxes but the effect of leveraged Liability-Driven Investment (LDI) funds owned by UK pension funds. Mr Moynihan explains:

In its simplest form, the bet is 'borrowing short' and 'lending long'. Borrowing short means the interest you pay on your borrowing changes rapidly; when interest rates rise fast you pay much more per month. 'Lending long' means buying, with the borrowed money, assets that yield a fixed and initially higher rate than your interest costs (in this case the assets were government bonds, known as gilts). Their value varies as long rates go up or down. If you have to sell these gilts at the wrong moment, you lose a lot of money, well below 100% of what you paid for them – but you still have to pay back 100% of the borrowings that funded your purchase of gilts.

The bet that you'll be OK is variously known as the fool's bet, the carry trade or – most evocatively – the widowmaker. Some describe it as 'picking up nickels in front of a steamroller'.

Essentially: pension funds borrowed money from banks at low interest rates and bought government bonds – gilts – with it. These gilts paid a fraction more than the interest on the loans used to buy them, so the funds were making money. Then interest rates were raised by the Bank of England; so the interest rates on the borrowed money rose; and thus a lot of public debt – gilts – had to be sold to make the interest payments. This selling pushed down the value of those gilts.

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<sup>23</sup> McEvoy has subsequently updated and expanded this at <https://consortiumnews.com/2024/07/10/israel-lobby-funded-half-of-new-uk-cabinet/>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://capx.co/did-liz-truss-really-cause-the-bond-market-rout/>

The LDI issue was discussed in a subscription-only bulletin distributed by Reuters in March 2023 which I cannot quote.<sup>25</sup> The IMF followed with a paper 'Lessons from the United Kingdom's Liability-Driven Investment (LDI) Crisis' in July.<sup>26</sup> This analysis laid the *immediate* cause of the crisis firmly at the Truss government's door.

The September 23 [2022] "mini-budget" unnerved the UK's core financial markets. While aimed at promoting growth, the £45 billion unfunded tax cuts were delivered against the backdrop of historically high inflation. In addition, unlike a standard budget, the "mini-budget" was not accompanied by an assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the fiscal watchdog. The market's concerns about fiscal sustainability, skepticism around growth objectives/impact, and increased uncertainty around how inflation would be brought down, triggered a swift selloff in UK assets. By the following trading day, the pound fell to its lowest-ever level on record (1.03) against the dollar, while gilt prices collapsed. . . .<sup>27</sup>

Subsequently, to protect the pension funds which were engaged in this 'carry trade', and to prevent ripples of selling into other areas of the wonderful world of corporate debt, the Bank of England bought large amounts of government debt to stop the value of gilts falling.

In his essay for the CPS Moynihan concludes:

While it's politically convenient and conventional to blame the whole thing on Liz Truss, we should really be pointing the finger at foolish regulators and the Bank of England, both of whom failed to stop the industry's leveraging short/long practice at the start, and to notice that the whole edifice had been tottering for some time. The Truss government had no reason to know of this emerging problem, and had not been warned by the Bank of England. What was bound to happen – mini budget or no mini budget – did happen.

This won't quite work. Even if there was no specific in-house knowledge of the large volume of LDIs, some of the people around PM Truss and Chancellor Kwarteng must have known enough about the financial situation to be aware that there were risks in the policies being proposed and that, at a minimum,

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<sup>25</sup> 'Regulatory and legal issues in leveraged liability-driven investment: accounting rules, repos and swaps'

<sup>26</sup> <<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2023/253/article-A002-en.xml>>

<sup>27</sup> 'Gilt yield' is explained at <<https://shorturl.at/1lexq>> or <<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/investing/article-11292641/What-gilt-yields-Investing-Explained.html>>.

there were would be resistance to the simultaneous creation of more government debt and reduced taxation.

Moynihan's essay appeared on a subsection of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) website, the intellectual heart of what we might still call Thatcherism. To find it carrying an essay arguing for *more regulation of the City of London* might raise an eyebrow.

### **By their omissions . . .**

**M**ichael Gove, the outgoing Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, passes for an intellectual in today's Conservative Party. In May he delivered a speech on anti-semitism.<sup>28</sup> He made some interesting points. This paragraph, for example:

There are no BDS [Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions] campaigns directed against Bashar Assad's Syria, the regime guilty of killing more Muslims in living memory than any other. There are no student encampments urging university administrators to cut all ties with China given what is happening in Xinjiang or Hong Kong, or what happened in Tibet. I know of no efforts to organise marchers in their thousands to demand immediate action to stop the persecution of the Rohingya or Karen people by Myanmar's Government. I may have missed it, but agitation to end the war in Sudan, or in the Democratic Republic of Congo or Mali or Ethiopia does not seem to energise our campuses.

But he also offered this in his conclusions:

And yet Israel succeeds. Why? Because of its values. A belief in courage, enterprise and endeavour. A belief in the worth of every individual's soul. A robust democracy. A market economy. A commitment to liberty.

What has Gove omitted? American money, for one: since its foundation, 'about \$310 billion (adjusted for inflation) in total economic and military assistance', according to the Council on Foreign Relations recently.<sup>29</sup> And American weapons for another, notably nuclear technology which has enabled Israel to be the only nuclear power in the Middle East.

The story of Israel's acquisition of nuclear technology, and in particular the role in that enterprise of the CIA's James Angleton, has been recently told

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<sup>28</sup> <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/secretary-of-states-speech-on-anti-semitism>>

<sup>29</sup> <<https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts>>

again by the excellent Jefferson Morley in 'The CIA and Zionism: A Complex History'.<sup>30</sup> It might profitably be read in conjunction with another essay on the same website about anti-semitism in the CIA, 'An Antisemitic History Lies Buried at CIA'.<sup>31</sup> This discusses the US and CIA role in the post-WW2 Middle East and only uses the word 'oil' once. By their omissions . . . .

## **Back to paper? (as if)**

**A**t the IT Governance blog on 2 May, one Neil Ford reported that there had been '9,478 publicly disclosed incidents' of cyber intrusion thus far in 2024, resulting in '35,900,145,035 known records breached'.<sup>32</sup>

## **Bubbles**

**C**onsortiumnews carried an interesting piece by Patrick Lawrence on the death of Moorhead Kennedy Jr., one of the U.S. hostages in Iran in 1979/80.<sup>33</sup> Kennedy Jnr.'s experience as a hostage led him to understand and empathise with his Iranian captors and, on his return to the US, he moved from being an American diplomat to a radical critic of US foreign policy. Lawrence wishes more American politicians and officials could make a similar empathic leap where Russia is concerned. He quotes some recent comments by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov: "They live in a bubble," he said of the Biden regime's policy cliques, "and do not perceive outside signals that go against their preconceptions." He went on to say of 'the US-led bloc', 'We feel not an ounce of trust, which triggers political and even emotional rejection.'

Mr Ryabkov and Patrick Lawrence are also living in bubbles if they cannot understand why the NATO members distrust Russia. In the last 20 years, as well as invading Ukraine and killing tens of thousands of people so far, Russia invaded Chechnya twice, more or less levelled Chechnya's main city, Grozny,<sup>34</sup> and did something similar to Aleppo in Syria. Plus there have been constant so-called 'hybrid warfare' attacks on the Baltic states, and there is an on-going

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<sup>30</sup> <<https://www.spytalk.co/p/the-cia-and-zionism-a-complex-history?>>

<sup>31</sup> <<https://www.spytalk.co/p/an-antisemitic-history-lies-buried>>

<sup>32</sup> <<https://www.itgovernance.co.uk/blog/global-data-breaches-and-cyber-attacks-in-2024>>

<sup>33</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2024/06/04/patrick-lawrence-opening-us-diplomats-eyes/>>

<sup>34</sup> For a brief account see <<https://shorturl.at/5ZFDk>> or <<https://www.npr.org/2022/03/12/1085861999/russias-wars-in-chechnya-offer-a-grim-warning-of-what-could-be-in-ukraine>>.

struggle with the West in Georgia: EU and US money versus violence from Russia-supporting groups.<sup>35</sup>

Mr Lawrence (and others of his inclination in the West) are treating today's Russia as if nothing has changed since the Cold War. Then it was true – at any rate could be plausibly argued – that the Soviet Union had no aggressive military intent and had developed its nuclear arsenal in response to NATO's. The Russia of today is an aggressive, violent, kleptocracy, willing to kill tens of thousands of people – including its own citizens – in pursuit of geopolitical ends and the personal wealth of its leaders.

## Russiagate

'Russiagate' centres on the claim that Russia tried to influence the 2016 American presidential election which saw Trump elected. I referred to contributor Will Banyan's writing on the subject in this column in *Lobster* 84, under subhead **Russiagate**. Since when, Banyan has written two further parts of his study.

Three years after Trump's election, the inquiry into the Russiagate allegations, the *Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election* – the Mueller report – was published. Just before its publication, a statement *about* the report was issued by Trump's Attorney General William Barr who poo-pooed it: nothing to see here, folks, move along. Banyan quotes a slew of American writers and intellectuals, many on the liberal left, who accepted Barr's summary of the report without actually reading the report itself. Banyan notes this very odd incident as

. . . a unique moment in conspiratorial lore: perhaps for the first time ever, conspiracists could support an official report into allegations of illegal and corrupt activity by the holder of the highest political office in the land that *exonerated its powerful subject*.<sup>36</sup> (Emphasis in the original.)

Banyan quotes Andrew Weissmann, the lead prosecutor in the Special Counsel's office which did the investigation:

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<sup>35</sup> On which see see the piece on *Byline News* by Will Dean, 'Georgian Officials Accused of "Whitewashing" State Violence With Trip to London' at <<https://bylinetimes.com/2024/06/07/georgian-officials-visit-london-foreign-influence/>>. For the anti-NATO/EU viewpoint see Kit Klarenberg's 'US-EU assets pushing color revolution in Georgia' at <<https://thegrayzone.com/2024/05/26/us-eu-color-revolution-georgia/#>>.

<sup>36</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/CWZxU>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2020/02/24/the-truther-temptation-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-1/>>

Barr repeatedly stated that the special counsel 'did not find' that the Trump campaign conspired with the Russian actors. What actually happened is that *we did not find sufficient evidence of a conspiracy to bring a criminal case*—which requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt. *It is not true we did not find any evidence . . .*<sup>37</sup> (Emphases added.)

Parts two and three continue the detailed analysis of who said what and why. Centrally, Banyan works through the assertions and theories of those denying the existence of Russian meddling with the election.<sup>38</sup>

'Deep State coup' theorists had been disputing the Russian hacking allegations since 2016, deploying two main lines of attack. The first was to reject the US intelligence community's claims on the grounds they had a history of lying *and* they had failed to provide any evidence. The second line of attack was to suggest there was actually an elaborate 'Deep State' conspiracy involving CrowdStrike, the FBI and US intelligence agencies, to falsely blame Russia, in a bid to hide the fact the hacking [of the Democratic National Committee files] was actually an 'inside job'.

Banyan has done a really impressive piece of research, far too big and complex to be adequately summarised here.

## **Elsewhere . . .**

**The *London Review of Books*** is the last publication to which I subscribe. Even though I think there's a pretty good chance it is funded by the CIA, every once in a while it publishes something no other hard copy journal would. An example is Tom Crewe's analysis of the Conservatives in government since 2010. His near 10,000 word 'Carnival of Self-Harm' is very good indeed (and, happily, available to non-subscribers).<sup>39</sup> As is, in the same issue, an excellent piece by Adam Shatz on the Israeli genocide in Gaza.<sup>40</sup>

Salon.com carried two striking pieces about spending in the US by the

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<sup>37</sup> *Where Law Ends: Inside the Mueller Investigation* (2020) p. 335; emphasis added. Cited in part 3 <<https://shorturl.at/uXEoe>> or <[https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/10/20/the-vindicated-and-the-vanquished-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-3/#google\\_vignette](https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/10/20/the-vindicated-and-the-vanquished-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-3/#google_vignette)>.

<sup>38</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/tIU2j>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2020/09/30/collusion-or-coup-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-2/>>

<sup>39</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n12/tom-crewe/carnival-of-self-harm>>

<sup>40</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n12/adam-shatz/israel-s-descent>>

American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). In one they noted:

A fundraising arm of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has shoveled nearly \$5 million into opposing incumbent Rep. Jamaal Bowman, D-N.Y., in his upcoming congressional primary as the group targets progressive critics of Israel's invasion of Gaza.<sup>41</sup>

In the second they quoted the *New York Times* describing how 'Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs organized and paid for a digital campaign to influence U.S. lawmakers, especially Democrats who are Black'. The campaign included

'fake news websites and hundreds of fake accounts on X, Instagram, and Facebook that posted pro-Israeli messages, trying to push lawmakers such as Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., the House minority leader, Rep. Ritchie Torres, D-N.Y., and Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., to fund Israel's military and support its war efforts . . .'

<sup>42</sup>

All stories about political spending by the Israel lobby in the US raise the central mystery in this: since several Arab states are infinitely wealthier than Israel, why don't the Arabs simply outspend the Israel lobby in the bribing of American politicians?

A couple of interesting essays about the CIA recently. *Covert Action* has editor Jeremy Kuzmarov's account of the joint CIA and New Zealand SIS surveillance operations in the 1980s against the New Zealanders who opposed the expansion of US bases in their country.<sup>43</sup> *The Intercept* describes how the CIA used the murder of its Athens station chief, Richard Welch, in 1975 to discredit not only defecting CIA officer Philip Agee but also, more importantly, Democratic Senator Frank Church, who was the focal point of demands within the Democratic Party that the Agency should be more accountable to the politicians.<sup>44</sup>

Now, with Welch's assassination, the White House and CIA quickly realized they had been handed a political gift — a martyred hero whose death they could lay at the feet of liberal Democrat Church. It didn't matter that Welch's murder had nothing to do with the Church

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<sup>41</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/fmc8cz6e>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2024/05/24/very-abnormal-expert-worries-pro-israel-megadonors-trying-to-make-dems-a-pro-netanyahu-party/#>>

<sup>42</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/29veyc37>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2024/06/06/israel-funding-covert-influence-campaign-to-push-democrats-to-back-on-gaza-ny-times/>>

<sup>43</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/hlKYj>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2024/06/05/cia-collaborated-with-new-zealand-intelligence-service-to-spy-on-peace-activists-who-protested-expansion-of-u-s-military-base-network-in-new-zealand-in-the-1970s/>>

<sup>44</sup> <<https://theintercept.com/2023/05/09/cia-frank-church-richard-welch-book/>>

Committee. It didn't matter that [CIA officer] Estes had told CIA headquarters that the Greek intelligence service had leaked Welch's name and address to the Greek press as revenge for U.S. policy in Cyprus. Largely through innuendo, the White House and the CIA blamed the Church Committee for Welch's death, claiming that its investigations had somehow led to his exposure.

Church duly lost his Senate seat.

The intelligence service of the US State Department, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), has had very little attention. (There are only two references to it in *Lobster* in 40 years.) An essay on vox.com shows how the INR was almost always right about the big issues in American foreign policy from Vietnam onwards but had little influence – because, compared to the CIA and the military, the State Department itself had little influence.<sup>45</sup>

There is a good piece by George Monbiot on his website about the Anglo-American network of so-called think tanks which have delivered the disastrous free market nonsense around the world.<sup>46</sup> Many of them are sponsored and/or funded by the Atlas Network,<sup>47</sup> named after *Atlas Shrugged*, the novel by the American novelist/political writer Ayn Rand, whose brand of individualism has been influential in sections of the American and British conservative movement. In some ways Thatcher's children really are Rand's offspring. It was Rand who first said 'There is no such thing as society',<sup>48</sup> echoed by Thatcher in 1987.<sup>49</sup> Whether or not Thatcher had read Rand is, as far as I know, still unclear. Nevertheless Mrs Thatcher wanted to take Britain back to the way it was before WW2 and the arrival of the socialist virus. And here we are, well on the way back.

## **Were troops used in the miners' strike?**

This is a minor detail, perhaps, but nonetheless less an interesting one: did the British state use soldiers dressed as policemen during the miners' strike of 1984? I was prompted to write this by the recent statement below.

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<sup>45</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/ab2Yo>> or <<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/351638/the-obscure-federal-intelligence-bureau-that-got-vietnam-iraq-and-ukraine-right>>

<sup>46</sup> <<https://www.monbiot.com/2024/01/08/the-programme/>>

<sup>47</sup> <<https://www.atlasnetwork.org/>>

<sup>48</sup> See <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhJvOKJCYP4>>.

<sup>49</sup> See <<https://shorturl.at/pq3XM>> or <<https://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-4/neoliberalism-more-recent-times/margaret-thatcher-theres-no-such-thing-as-society>>.



## Peter Lane

Former 1. RAF Technician/Weapons Manager Trident Subs. Feb 28  
Well, this is my take on the situation, I have no interests in Trade Unions or coal mining. I was a Sergeant in the RAF at the time. I managed a Test Bay for High Altitude Equipment. A Corporal who worked for me went to an RAF Station up north for a Junior NCOs course. He said when he returned he saw various Army personnel changing into police uniforms and they said they were going to control the picket lines. I just thought that was what the Government did in those sort of situations and never thought much of it until years later. It seems amazing if this was covered up nobody has verified this. They must have all signed the official Secrets Act, specifically for this circumstance: nobody seems to have come forward. As I said previously, I thought it was normal procedure for potential riots. We are a Democracy, we can't have Troops on the streets. Not after Peterloo.<sup>50</sup>

This is unusual in coming from a named former member of the military. But nevertheless it is a second-hand report.

There are other second-hand reports on the Net<sup>51</sup> and there is Tony Benn's account on pp. 479/80 of his *The End of an Era: Diaries 1980-1990*, where he describes meeting a man who said he was a soldier during the strike and had been in a sixty strong group of soldiers deployed in police uniforms on the picket lines. Most significant is Peter Sanderson who, during the interviews for 'The British Gladio and the murder of Sergeant Speed' in *Lobster* 81, told me that groups of unemployed Territorial Army (TA) men from Teesside would rendezvous at his business premises where they were given police uniforms to work on the picket lines.<sup>52</sup> Sanderson was in the TA.

## **Unbecoming American**

**Dr** T. P. Wilkinson wrote a dozen or so striking essays for *Lobster*. Some of them are included in a collection of his essays, *Unbecoming American: A War*

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<sup>50</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/KII0W>> or <<https://www.quora.com/Have-any-of-the-soldiers-who-were-dressed-as-police-to-quell-the-miners-strike-in-the-UK-come-forward-with-testimonies-yet>>

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, <<https://skwawkbox.org/2016/11/08/exclusive-compilation-of-new-orgreave-evidence/>> and <<https://harrypaterson.com/2015/02/01/did-thatcher-use-soldiers-during-the-miners-strike/>>

<sup>52</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/fwkFR>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/81/the-british-gladio-and-the-murder-of-sergeant-speed/>>

*Memoir*, available from Amazon.<sup>53</sup> About the collection he writes:

The context of these essays, the cultural history of the United States, is also one of a country that has been at war for most of its history. This is a war memoir, but one written by a non-combatant. Based on more than forty years of travel, work, and scholarship, this book is a reflection on what it has meant to be intimately connected to the 'front' and yet neither armed nor a helpless refugee. Eschewing the ambulance chasing of contemporary journalism and popular history, this is an attempt to synthesize a perspective in which the entire duration of the US as nation-state forms the time frame for examining everyday life, culture, art, politics, economics and the imagination in which past, present and future are enveloped.

### ***Notes from the Borderland***

Rummaging through the 40 years of paper I have accumulated, I came across some old copies of Larry O'Hara's magazine *Notes from the Borderland*. 'Wonder what happened to that?', I thought. And, blow me, a few days later a new edition arrived, issue 12. This is 64 A4 pages, with lots of photographs and reproductions of newspaper cuttings, leaflets etc. on the British far right. Half of those 64 pages are taken up with O'Hara's 'A modern witch-finder general? Matthew Feldman and the National Action trials'. This is the *first sentence* of the introduction to that essay:

Emeritus Professor Matthew Feldman (formerly Director of the now vanished Centre for Analysis of the Radical right: CARR) captured my attention because, with more than a passing interest in post-war British fascism (my PhD subject the National Front 1986-90 and I have analysed Neo-Nazi group Combat 18), I was perturbed at the variable quality of his expert academic testimony in the now concluded trials involving both members/alleged members of the Neo-Nazi group National Action (NA) (proscribed in December 2016) and off-shoots such as the FeuerKreig/SonnenKreig Divisions (FKD/SKD).

O'Hara needs an editor and a proofreader and . . . . But I said all that in my comments on issue 11.<sup>54</sup> In the 7 or 8 years between issues 11 and 12, *Notes from the Borderland* has changed not one jot. But have a look at the website

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<sup>53</sup> <<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D2TCL5PS>>

<sup>54</sup> See under subhead **Notes from the Borderland** at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/View-from-Lob-73.pdf>>.

<[www.borderland.co.uk](http://www.borderland.co.uk)>. It's rather good. The pity is that whoever is doing the website isn't producing the hard copy magazine.

## **NuLab old and new**

### **The new vision**

To state that Keir Starmer wrote an article for the *Daily Telegraph* in December last year presumes that he writes his own material; and the chances are good that he doesn't. Leaders of major parties are usually too busy for such chores, especially in the final few months before a general election. So let's just say his name was on an article in the *Telegraph*, near the beginning of which was this striking paragraph.

Every moment of meaningful change in modern British politics begins with the realisation that politics must act in service of the British people, rather than dictating to them. Margaret Thatcher sought to drag Britain out of its stupor by setting loose our natural entrepreneurialism. Tony Blair reimagined a stale, outdated Labour Party into one that could seize the optimism of the late 90s. A century ago, Clement Attlee wrote that Labour must be a party of duty and patriotism, not abstract theory. To build a 'New Jerusalem' meant first casting off the mind-forged manacles. That lesson is as true today as it was then.

The historian David Edgerton<sup>55</sup> commented:

Starmer suggests Attlee and Blair's strengths were their submission to duty and patriotism, and the fact that they both changed Labour. Attlee rejected abstract theory (presumably meaning socialism), and Blair a stale, outdated Labour Party (presumably meaning Attlee's).

However, he continues:

Far from unleashing natural British entrepreneurialism, this has been a period characterised by historically slow emergence of significant British firms, and of a historically unprecedented entry of foreign capital (and entrepreneurialism) into nearly all parts of the British economy. Since Thatcher, there has been a high negative balance of payments paid for by capital flows into the country, and much higher inequalities in income and wealth and between regions than in the 1970s. The past 40 years have seen a politics of redistribution to the top, to London and to

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<sup>55</sup> <<https://www.davidedgerton.org/>>

wealth.<sup>56</sup>

Which is true, but could be put more plainly. It is now 45 years since the arrival of PM Thatcher and the free market nonsense. In that time, the UK has been in continuous relative economic decline (when measured by GDP per head) from around 10th to 25th? 27th? on the world list. Are the Stormtroopers unaware of this? Or merely unwilling to mention it?

### **Foreign policy**

**As** I write this, it looks likely that Labour will win the general election. In that event, David Lammy will probably be Foreign Secretary. He gave us a glimpse into what that might look like in an essay he wrote for *Foreign Affairs*, 'The Case for Progressive Realism'.<sup>57</sup> (Now there's a catchy little phrase!) It apparently means this:

Progressive realism advocates using realist means to pursue progressive ends. For the British government, that requires tough-minded honesty about the United Kingdom, the balance of power, and the state of the world. But instead of using the logic of realism solely to accumulate power, progressive realism uses it in service of just goals—for example, countering climate change, defending democracy, and advancing the world's economic development. It is the pursuit of ideals without delusions about what is achievable.

So far, so much well-meaning guff. But there is some meat here, too.

. . . the United Kingdom must seek a new geopolitical partnership with the EU. The centerpiece of this relationship should be a security pact that drives closer coordination across a wide variety of military, economic, climate, health, cyber, and energy security issues—and that complements both parties' unshakable commitment to NATO, which will remain the foremost vehicle for European security. The United Kingdom should also double down on its close relationships with France, Germany, Ireland, and Poland. It should, for example, pursue a British-German defense agreement to go along with the similar Lancaster House treaties it signed with France in 2010.

'closer coordination across a wide variety of military, economic, climate, health, cyber, and energy security issues' – this is a proposal to rejoin the EU without actually saying so.

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<sup>56</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/buPW5>> or <<https://www.redpepper.org.uk/political-parties-and-ideologies/labour-party/keir-starmers-bad-history/>>  
Simon Matthews spotted this.

<sup>57</sup> <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-kingdom/case-progressive-realism-david-lammy>>

## **The original NuLab**

**I** noticed recently that just after the election of the original NuLab, in 1997, I commented that Labour was led by three 'not very bright Thatcherites'.<sup>58</sup> One of them, Gordon Brown, is still talking about poverty here without betraying the slightest awareness that he had any role in this country's economic decline.<sup>59</sup> Hey Gordon, you were in charge of economic policy for 13 years as Chancellor and then Prime Minister.

## **Spycops**

**T**he spycops inquiry – formally the Undercover Policing Inquiry – is still going, providing lots of well paid, easy work for another bunch of British lawyers. There are now thousands of documents to read on-line. I began on the oldest and quickly came across a 1968 report, 'Penetration of extremist groups', by one Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon,<sup>60</sup> a guide for new recruits to the so-called Special Demonstration Squad on how to infiltrate the left. On the fourth page is this:

The incompetence of the British left is notorious, and officers must take care not to get into a position where they achieve prominence in an organisation through natural ability.

Dixon did not explain why, if the British left was so incompetent, it was necessary to penetrate it.

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<sup>58</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/P7vJv>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/34/back-to-the-future-the-1970s-reconsidered/>>. Peter Mandelson was Thatcherite number 3.

<sup>59</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/an2Vx>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/may/14/british-children-poverty-tories-gordon-brown>>

<sup>60</sup> <[https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MPS\\_0724119.pdf](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MPS_0724119.pdf)>