

The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

Thanks to Nick Must (in particular) and Garrick Alder for editorial and proof-reading assistance with this issue of Lobster.

new

Very Wareing

Ah yes, the John Ware film for Panorama in July attacking the Corbyn-led Labour Party as 'anti-semitic'. I recorded it and eventually watched about half – which was enough to see that the torrent of critical comments it has provoked was entirely justified.¹ Ware has form when it comes to doing hatchet jobs on people who are a threat to the powers-that-be. He spent years systematically distorting what Colin Wallace was saying, rehashing the MOD line on him, and ignoring all the evidence – lots of it from me – which showed that what the MOD had been saying was disinformation.² At the time this puzzled me because one of his former colleagues at World In Action, whose opinion I took seriously, told me that Ware was the best TV investigative journalist of his generation. Looking back on his behaviour towards Wallace – and towards the London Labour left in the same period³ – it is obvious now that Ware was and (still is) simply a journalist. Thus there was no way he was going to challenge the British state over Wallace – or anything else for that matter: too much potential career damage.

Listed as Executive Producer at the end of the Ware film was Neil Grant – another faint echo from the late 1980s. When I met him he was working for

¹ A collection of such comments is at <<https://tinyurl.com/y3wgtu74>> or <<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/the-panorama-programme-a-compilation-of-critical-comments/>>. See also <<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/panorama-papers-1/>>.

² Enter 'Ware' into the *Lobster* site's search box for all those stories.

³ He did a piece on the 'hard left' in London around the time he was smearing Colin Wallace. See Simon Matthews' piece, 'Baa Baa, White Sheep' in *Lobster* 39 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/online/issue39/lob39-13.htm>>.

Ken Livingstone MP as a researcher and it was to Grant that Colin Wallace supplied the material that Livingstone used in the House of Commons and elsewhere. Then we heard that Grant had left his job as a teacher, joined Panorama as a researcher and stopped working for Ken. And when Grant stopped handling the Wallace material, so did Livingstone.⁴ At the time this seemed to me an example of the subtlety of the British secret state. Got an MP asking awkward questions? Give the researcher devising the questions a better job than he had and Hey presto! the awkward questions stop.

There is one other ironic/comic incident in my brief contact with Ken Livingstone. In 1989 Unwin Hyman published his book *Livingstone's Labour* in which there is material on the intelligence and security services. Ken sent me that chapter in draft form. It was full of errors. I duly corrected them and returned it. When I received my copy of the book from Ken I discovered that none of my corrections had been used. Nonetheless he wrote in the preface: 'Robin Ramsey [sic] kindly read and corrected the section on MI5 and MI6'. If any of his readers read the preface and noticed how crappy that section is, I carried the can for it. Thanks Ken!

new

Spooks and hacks

In the late 1970s, when I first got interested in the role of the secret state in British society, one of the major contributors to the little that was then known about the subject was Paul Lashmar, sometimes writing in tandem with David Leigh.⁵ What a pleasure then to see that Lashmar's 2015 PhD thesis on the subject of the British press and the spooks, 'Investigating the Empire of Secrecy', is now available on-line.⁶ I have only skimmed through it thus far but I noticed this conclusion:

'Based on my own experience from 1978, the historic [sic] record and the evidence considered above, I would argue that in the UK the news media

⁴ The Ware film was the third assault on the Corbyn group that Grant has produced. See <<https://tinyurl.com/y3qtu7rv>> or <<https://tompride.wordpress.com/2019/07/12/same-executive-producer-on-three-channel-4-and-bbc-anti-corbynite-programmes-revealed-as-former-labour-activist/>>. For an account of Grant before the Ware film see <<https://tinyurl.com/yxj4394z>> or <<https://medium.com/@GregHadfield/bbc-panorama-and-channel-four-dispatches-the-eye-of-a-media-storm-and-the-epicentre-of-the-battle-4ac62069207d>>.

⁵ With James Oliver, Lashmar was co-author of the first book about IRD: *Britain's Secret Propaganda War 1948-77* (Stroud [UK]: Sutton Publishing, 1998).

⁶ <<https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/11222/1/FulltextThesis.pdf>>

became effective, if inconsistently so, in the period 1960 to 2000 in bringing intelligence to account. It was ad hoc, as there was no attempt at a long term strategy of revelation, either across the media, or in individual news organisations.’ (p. 73)

The difficulty lies in the notion of ‘to account’. There is no formal accountability. The House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee remains an under-resourced body with no formal powers. The major media is generally willing to be guided by the Defence and Security Media Advisory Committee⁷ (informally the D-Notice committee) and most of it is willing to be steered by the British, American and Israeli states and secret states. So, yes, things have *improved* since the late 1970s when Lashmar began; but I do not believe that the UK news media has become effective in holding the ‘Empire of Secrecy’ to account.

new

Laffer minute

So President Trump presented the Presidential Medal of Honour to economist Arthur Laffer,⁸ who came up with the Laffer Curve.⁹ (That faint sound you can hear is economists guffawing.) Essentially Laffer said that the way to get economic growth in a capitalist society was to give the rich tax cuts – a proposition that fails to withstand any examination. That it has been taken seriously by so many on the political right shows that one of the chief functions of free market economists is coming up with reasons why the rich shouldn’t pay taxes.

Who are Laffer’s fans in the UK? The Institute for Economic Affairs, of course. The IEA has been the leading proponent of free market fantasy economics since the 1950s. Mark Littlewood, IEA director-general, asked ‘Who has the political courage and skill to sell tax cuts for the rich?’ in the *Times* on 17 June. The answer to Littlewood’s question is – suitably – our new prime minister, Boris Johnson. He used Laffer’s famous ‘curve’ to justify tax cuts for

⁷ See <<https://tinyurl.com/y3u7odnl>> or <<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-and-security-media-advisory-committee>>.

⁸ <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/19/us/politics/arthur-laffer-medal-of-freedom.html>>

⁹ See, for example, <<https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-laffer-curve-explanation-3305566>>.

the rich last year.¹⁰ Mind you, that was then. Johnson will have forgotten the article long ago – if he actually wrote it himself.

new

A new Con?

When I was more interested in the British spooks than I am now, I used to buy the *Sunday Telegraph* to see the latest MI6 disinformation that was being run through Con Coughlin, the *Telegraph's* main MI6 contact at that time.¹¹ Looking at a recent piece of his I noticed that, as well as now being the *Telegraph's* Defence Editor, he is a 'Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute'.¹² Gatestone is the leading source of intellectually semi-respectable scare stories about Islam in Europe. It is possible that 'Distinguished Senior Fellow' means as little as 'contributing editor' does in an American media context. Nonetheless this is rather striking.

new

This is good news?

Al Jazeera carried this story on 31 July.¹³

UK says 2018 was 'best year ever' for its arms exports
*Britain won defence orders worth 14 billion pounds in 2018,
the highest since records began in 1983*

Considering that the UK now manufactures so little, and is running a considerable trade deficit with the EU,¹⁴ if a Labour government tried to reduce the domestic arms industry, what would happen? The arms people would simply relocate (taking with them most of their engineers and scientists). And the arms industry would be replaced by which export-oriented manufacturing? Answer: no-one has any idea. So the arms industry will continue, regardless of

¹⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/ycfywagl>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/09/dont-put-taxes-cut-reward-strivers-give-economy-jolt-energy/>>. Polly Toynbee demolishes the idea at <<https://tinyurl.com/y2q539gs>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jul/16/boris-johnson-tax-cuts-tory-leadership-laffer-curve>>

¹¹ It was Coughlin who took part in the MI6 operation to smear Gaddafi's son. See <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/mar/30/davidshayler.comment1>>.

¹² <<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org>>

¹³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yywsdwey>> or <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/uk-2018-year-arms-exports-190731074142657.html>>

¹⁴ Hence, in part, the falling value of sterling.

which government is in office.

new

Paranoid? *Moi*?

There is now a considerable academic industry engaged in analysing the conspiracy theories believed by people (especially in the USA) and the role of social media in creating and/or spreading them. But, as I have asked before in these columns, is there anything new going on? More than twenty years ago, in *Lobster* 36, before social media, I reported this:

'November's *Nexus* reports a poll conducted in the US last year which found the following:

1. 51% believe it is either very likely or or somewhat likely that federal officials were "directly responsible" for the assassination of JFK.
2. More than 33% suspect that the US Navy, either by accident or design, shot down TWA flight 800.
3. More than 50% believe it is possible that the CIA "intentionally permitted Central American drug dealers to sell cocaine to inner-city black children".
4. 60% believe that the government is withholding information about Agent Orange and other military abuses in the Vietnam and Gulf wars.
5. Nearly 50% suspect that FBI agents deliberately set the fires that killed 81 Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas.
6. More people believed that US government were covering-up information and technology from aliens *after* the US Air Force report last year that the "alien bodies" allegedly seen at Roswell were test dummies, than before the report's release.¹⁵

The opinions quoted above expressed a profound distrust of the American state, which was entirely rational, given its post-WW2 history. The report quotes Curtis Gans, the Executive Director for the Washington Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, on this poll:

'Paranoia is killing this country. It is essentially reducing cohesion in our society and is creating fear in the minds of our citizenry.'

Almost identical things are said regularly these days, twenty plus years later. Social media *has* changed things somewhat. The word 'theories' is hardly justified for some of the stuff that is heard today (we need a new word for it) but theories and propositions get circulated much more quickly than they used to. Then they get expanded and amended by everybody and their incompetent

¹⁵ <https://issuu.com/mufonnexus/docs/nexus_-_0506_-_new_times_magazine>

cousin. These days we have collective conspiracy theory formation. But the really big change isn't technology: it's the input of party politics and religion. Both the big recent US net-based conspiracy theories, Pizzagate and QAnon, contain anti-Democratic Party and Christian or Christian-derived paranoia about the Devil and/or non-Christian religions. In one chapter of his *The United States of Paranoia*,¹⁶ Jesse Walker discusses conspiracy theory in the late 1970s and early 80s – when I first got interested in it – a world of little newsletters. Walker reminded me that, entertaining though the likes of the late Mae Brussel¹⁷ and Robert Anton Wilson¹⁸ may have been, when measured against their equivalents on the American Christian Right, they were utterly insignificant. Hal Lindsey's 1970 *The Late Great Planet Earth*, for example, sold 28 million copies in two decades.

new

Quigley

Bernard Porter wrote this on his blog recently:

'The "Round Table" group, as it was called, also formed a secret society to further their grand British-American imperial ends. An American historian called Carroll Quigley *inferred* from this that America's foreign policy was unduly influenced on the side of Britain by this transatlantic conspiracy. That is nonsense, of course.'¹⁹ [emphasis added]

Quigley didn't do a whole lot of 'inferring'. As he notes on p. 950 of his 1966 magnum opus, *Tragedy and Hope*:

'I know of the operations of this network because I have studied it for twenty years and *was permitted for two years, in the early 1960's, to examine its papers and secret records.*' [emphasis added]

The public front of this network were the Rhodes Scholars. In the most recent study of the Scholars,²⁰ the authors briefly discuss and dismiss the suspicions on the American Right that the Scholars are some kind of anti-American conspiracy. They do refer to Carroll Quigley, but only as a tutor

¹⁶ New York: HarperCollins, 2013

¹⁷ See <<http://www.maebrussell.com>>.

¹⁸ See <<http://www.rawilson.com>>.

¹⁹ <<https://bernardjporter.com/2019/07/29/a-special-relationship/>>

²⁰ Thomas and Kathleen Schaeper, *Cowboys into Gentlemen: Rhodes Scholars, Oxford and the Creation of an American Elite* (New York and Oxford: Berghan Books, 1998).

who had impressed Bill Clinton when he was a student. They must have worked hard not to notice *Tragedy and Hope*. It is quoted at length in Gary Allen's *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*,²¹ one of the two books they cite as propounding the great conspiracy. The only academic I know of who has taken Quigley on board is Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his *Empire and Emancipation*, an extract from which, about Quigley, was in *Lobster* 13.²²

Tragedy and Hope used to be very hard to find and expensive to buy. It's now available on-line for free.²³ It is a very odd book from an academic: 1350 pages with no sources. Quigley's earlier book, *The Anglo-American Establishment*, written before he was given access to the Round Table's archives, but published *after Tragedy and Hope*, does have sources. That is the place to start.²⁴

A picture is worth a thousand words

Ah yes, Iran is threatening the US. Of course it is. That's why Iran is surrounded by US military bases. Take a look at a map of the area, for example the one at

<<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2012/04/2012417131242767298.html>>.

BAP

Tom Easton steered me towards an April piece on the always interesting truepublica.org.uk about the British American Project (BAP).²⁵ The article – by anonymous author 'truepublica' – wonders if the BAP is at the centre of the anti-semitism psy-op being run against Jeremy Corbyn. This thought is provoked by the fact that one of the most prominent of those in the Parliamentary Labour Party claiming that the Corbyn faction of the party is riddled with anti-semitism, is Ruth Smeeth MP and she is married to Michael Smeeth, a member of the executive body of BAP. Personally, I don't think BAP is at the centre of the anti-semitism psy-ops and the article offers no evidence

²¹ Seal Beach [California]: Concord Press, 1971

²² <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/online/issue13/lob13-03.htm>>

²³ <http://www.carrollquigley.net/pdf/Tragedy_and_Hope.pdf>

²⁴ Or try the site now devoted to him and his work <www.carrollquigley.net>.

²⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/y366p4gt>> or <<https://truepublica.org.uk/united-kingdom/is-this-the-epicentre-of-corbys-antisemitism-story/>>

other than the Smeeth-BAP link. But it is always useful to remind people, as truepublica does, of Smeeth and her role as an American agent as described in a US cable released by Wikileaks:²⁶

5. (C/NF) Perhaps most damaging of all, however, Smeargate effectively ended what may have been Brown's plan to call a general election this spring, based on the rise in the polls he received following his solid performance at the G-20. Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Burton Ruth Smeeth (strictly protect) told us April 20 that Brown had intended to announce the elections on May 12, and hold them after a very short (matter of weeks) campaign season. Labour had been "just" 7 points behind the Conservatives in some polls taken right after the G-20 Summit, which other Labour contacts had told us was close to an acceptable standing from which to launch a campaign, but the drop in Labour's poll numbers following Smeargate forced Brown to abandon his plan, a despondent Smeeth said. (Note: This information has not been reported in the press. End note.)

Tom Easton also reminded me that it is now 22 years since the publication of his ground-breaking study of BAP, 'The British American Project for the Successor Generation' in *Lobster* 33.

The sewer not the sewage

For 50p I picked up a copy of the autobiography of Chapman Pincher, *Dangerous To Know* (London: Biteback, 2014). Pincher is largely forgotten now but for 30 years or so he was a very significant figure in the British media, notably as an outlet for information and disinformation from the British military, intelligence and security services. The most significant of Pincher's books to me was his 1978 *Inside Story*, a compendium of snippets about British politics and the intelligence and security worlds. I don't think I have looked at it since the 1980s but I flipped through it and noticed a short chapter called 'Disinformation and Defamation', in which, on p. 197, is this:

'In the psychological warfare against the IRA, the Army ran an "Information Policy" operation in which false stories were foisted on newspapers to such an extent that an official was forced to leave for

²⁶ The cable is from 2009 when, N.B., she was merely a *prospective* parliamentary candidate (she finally became an MP in 2015).

overdoing it.’

That, I think, was the first published reference to Information Policy, which was a serious secret at that point; and the ‘official’ who had to leave was Colin Wallace. Pincher omits the fact that he was among those who had false stories foisted on him²⁷ and gets the reason for Wallace’s dismissal wrong. This mixture of revelation and rubbish is about par for the course with the man.²⁸

Bilderberg

The annual Bilderberg meeting seems almost quaint these days with vast global corporations wielding the power that they do and the Chinese economy slowly taking over much of the world. Nonetheless Bilderberg still meets and it still creates controversy. One student of Bilderberg is contributor to these columns, Will Banyan. In a recent piece on this year’s meeting,²⁹ Banyan describes in detail the way the American conspiracist Right – the Birchers, for example – are having trouble dealing with the new (relative) openness of Bilderberg. Banyan quotes three of this year’s participants – who all work in the media and have reported on the meeting’s agenda. That agenda is more or less what you would expect to find: China, the future of the EU (due to the rise of nationalism), climate change, ‘The Weaponisation of Social Media’, etc.³⁰

We’re with Uncle Sam

Boy, the world has changed. When *Lobster* began in 1983 we were collecting

²⁷ Two such stories were discussed in *Lobster* 16 in ‘Wallace clippings planted on Chapman Pincher’.

²⁸ The late E. P. Thompson reviewed *Inside Story* in the *New Statesman* in 1978 and this review was reproduced in Thompson’s *Writing by Candlelight* (London: Merlin, 1980). That review begins:

‘Mr Chapman Pincher has been employed by the *Daily Express* for over thirty years as a common conduit through which “government ministers, defence chiefs, directors of security and Intelligence, senior civil servants and others” have leaked their official secrets, scandals and innuendos to the readers and to each other.’

I thought it was Thompson who came up with ‘the sewer not the sewage’ to describe Pincher but cannot find the reference if he did.

²⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/y3zah3qc>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2019/06/20/corrections-please-william-jasper-on-the-bilderberg-cover-up-that-wasnt/>>

³⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/y3zah3qc>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2019/06/20/corrections-please-william-jasper-on-the-bilderberg-cover-up-that-wasnt/>>

fragments from here and there and trying to reassemble them into a (slightly) larger whole. We had almost no access to the overseas media and the most useful tools were *Who's Who* and the *Times* annual index. Now there is too much to read in almost any field you care to name. So things get lost. Even so I am surprised that I missed the report by reprise.org.uk, *BRITAIN'S KILL LIST*. This documents UK involvement, going back over a decade, in the compilation of the list of people to be killed by US drone strikes (the UK is not yet, apparently, doing its own killing).³¹

Murray less than mint

I am a big fan of Craig Murray but occasionally he overcooks it. For example, he wrote this:

'Something else. . . which again did not get nearly the media attention it deserves, was Matt Kennard's stunning revelation of the way the Guardian has been taken over by the security services. I have been explaining for years that the Guardian has become the security services' news outlet of choice, and it is very helpful to have documentation to prove it.'³²

The *Guardian* 'taken over'? Hardly. Kennard reported the minutes of the Defence and Security Media Advisory Notice Committee – formerly the D-Notice Committee – of 15 December 2018 which said:

'The Chairman thanked Paul Johnson for his service to the Committee. Paul had joined the Committee in the wake of the Snowden affair and had been instrumental in re-establishing links with the Guardian.'³³

The committee gives advice which it hopes the media organisations will follow. Or not, as in the Snowden event. Hence the break between the Committee and the *Guardian*, I presume. Whoever is running their eyes over Murray's material before he posts it – assuming there is someone – deserves a smack.

³¹ <<http://tinyurl.com/yxr288ok> > or <https://reprise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016_04_09-PUB-Britains-Kill-List.pdf> This is subtitled 'OFFICIAL DISSEMBLING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LIST OF PEOPLE WE WANT TO ASSASSINATE AND THE NEED FOR A FULL AND TRANSPARENT INVESTIGATION'. Boy, do I hate caps!

³² <<https://tinyurl.com/yx8javwl>> or <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2019/06/the-broader-view-reveals-the-ugliest-of-prospects/>>

³³ See also <<http://tinyurl.com/y6ldkfjr> > or <<https://www.sott.net/article/415201-The-Guardian-compromised-by-UK-MoD-Deputy-editor-thanked-for-re-establishing-links-post-Snowden-leaks>>.

Ufology

Intellectually disreputable though it is to many, there is much of interest in the UFO thing. All manner of fascinating trails run in and out of it – intelligence agencies, media manipulation, disinformation and the big question: what can be known? Can we sort out the shit from the Shinola? The big recent news in the field is the appearance of a 15-page set of notes, apparently of a conversation in 2002 between retired U.S. Admiral Thomas Ray Wilson and Dr Eric Davis, a physicist and UFO-believer.³⁴ The conversation between Wilson and Davis is difficult to follow: lots of military insider talk, short-hand, acronyms, nicknames and initials. In essence Wilson is telling Davis some of his experiences while trying to track down those in the US military-industrial complex who have had experience in dealing with crashed UFOs. At one point Wilson describes getting in touch with an 'aerospace technology contractor . . . the best one of them':

Wilson: I told [sic] I read their program record in the OUSDAT [Office of the Under Secretary for Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Linguistics] special program records group and wanted to know about their crashed UFO program, what their role in that was, what they had etc. Also asked if they heard of MJ-12 or some such organization code relating to crashed/recovered UFO craft.'

Here's a former head of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) talking about crashed UFOs – hence the excitement among the UFO-believer community.

This 'Wilson conversation' is being taken very seriously by sections of the UFO community in America.³⁵ Richard Dolan and members of the Disclosure Project are treating the notes as genuine and a really big deal. And, if genuine, they are indeed.

First question is, obviously: are the notes genuine? Dr. Michael Salla

³⁴ The notes are at <<https://imgur.com/a/ggIFTfQ>>. Nick Must added: The address noted as the location for the conversation – 'EG&G Special Projects building at Grier and Paradise' – is one of a series of buildings on Grier Drive that EG&G rented. One of the others was the admin office for the Area 51 'camo dude' guards (supplied by EG&G), who patrol the perimeter of said secret base. In 2001 the 'camo dudes' briefly went on strike for higher pay. See 'Security guards for "nowhere" strike for contract, higher pay' about half way down the page <<https://cryptome.org/eyeball/janet/janet-eyeball.htm>>.

On Davis, see for example

<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/physicist-eric-davis-mufon-symposium_n_3620126>.

His CV is at <<https://lifeboat.com/ex/bios.eric.w.davis>>. See also <<https://tinyurl.com/y5fq1t8h>> or <<http://undergroundresearchinitiative.blogspot.com/2013/05/colleague-confirms-nasa-affiliated.html>>.

³⁵ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/yxubkeyd>> or <<https://operationdisclosure1.blogspot.com/2019/06/admiral-wilsons-leaked-ufo-document-and.html>>.

contacted Davis and reported that Davis said: 'I have no comment on this.' Salla added: 'If the document was a hoax, I see no reason why Dr. Davis would not have said so.'³⁶

Indeed. And it isn't difficult to imagine why Davis doesn't want to acknowledge the authenticity of the notes: they are far too detailed to have been reconstructed from memory. He must have recorded the conversation with Wilson, presumably without telling him he was doing so.

Admiral Wilson, at the time recently retired as head of the DIA, is talking of MJ-12, the putative secret US government committee set up in the 1950s to deal with aliens. But one of the few things we *know* in the UFO field is that the MJ-12 documents were a fraud. We know this because William Moore, one of the two people who introduced the MJ-12 documents into the UFO world, told the American UFO buffs in 1989 that he had been running disinformation projects for the US Air Force.³⁷ In any case they have been completely debunked since.³⁸

Which leaves us where? Is it merely that Admiral Wilson, while interested in the UFO question, was unaware that MJ-12 was a psy-op by the Air Force? The alternative is that a recently retired Admiral and former head of the DIA was himself engaged in a psy-op about UFOs. And this seems unlikely to me. If this is what transpired, why is this so important to the US military? At the end of his analysis of the MJ-12 case Brad Sparks asks this question and answers it thus:

'Why has the AF [Air Force] demonstrated such a long-running pattern of animosity towards UFOlogy? Is it because the AF is protecting a supersecret? Is it the "holy grail" of a recovered alien spaceship and alien bodies? Do UFOlogists pose a threat to the AF's coverup of this greatest secret of all time by their efforts to penetrate the veil of secrecy?

Or was the AF hostility to UFO activists because of Cold War fears that the Soviets could exploit UFO reports? The Soviets, it was feared, could claim UFO's to be Soviet secret weapons flying over American cities – perhaps carrying Soviet atom bombs they might say – which the American

³⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/y33z5un7> > or <<https://www.exopolitics.org/bombshell-document-confirms-navy-admiral-was-denied-access-to-ufo-crash-retrieval-program/>> I e-mailed Davis at his place of employment and asked if the notes are genuine. As yet I have had no reply.

³⁷ This is discussed in some detail in Mark Pilkington's *Mirage Men: a Journey in Disinformation, Paranoia and UFOs* (London: Constable, 2010). See the interview with Pilkington at <<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/mirage-men>>.

On the background to Moore's speech, see <<http://www.openminds.tv/william-moore-ufo-opportunist-agent-disinformation/29056>> and the enormously detailed analysis, Brad Sparks and Barry Greenwood, *The Secret Pratt Tapes and the Origins of MJ-12* at <<https://www.academia.edu/24214339>>.

³⁸ See, for example, <<https://www.debunker.com/historical/KlassMJ12.pdf>>.

AF was impotent to stop. TOP SECRET Air Force documents tell of AF worries that the US nuclear advantage actually could be wiped out by a clever Soviet propaganda campaign along those lines. There is a policy document trail supporting the existence of such Cold War fears in 1947-1950 and their presentation for action to highly sensitive intelligence and covert operations agencies.

If the subject of UFO's could be discredited in the public mind with the "giggle factor" secretly promoted by AF disinformation agents in laughable crashed saucer and little green men stories, then if and when such Soviet propaganda claims were ever made the American public would laugh it all off. Soviet saucer claims would be dismissed by everyone as silly season stories and shoved under the "ridicule curtain" (just as much of UFOlogy is dismissed today). But UFOlogists would then have to be squelched because they could upset the applecart, piercing through the ridicule curtain by crediting UFO's in the public mind instead of discrediting them.³⁹

That makes sense for the early 1950s but not for the 1980s when the MJ-12 nonsense was being propagated; and certainly not in 2002 when Admiral Wilson was apparently talking about his trawl through the Pentagon's filing system looking for whoever was dealing with crashed UFOs. More on this as it develops.

Integrity, the City and 'leave'

And then there's the Integrity Initiative, the British state's anti-Russian psy-ops project, which was revealed at the end of last year. I have nothing to add to the published reports and readers of this column will probably be aware of them already.

The Initiative's distant predecessor is the Information Research Department (IRD). If IRD is unfamiliar, you might as well start with its last big operation, in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.⁴⁰ IRD was closed in 1977 by then Foreign Secretary David Owen, reportedly because someone drew to his attention the list of right-wing, anti-Soviet people in the British media with whom IRD was liaising. (Nothing was then known by either public or politicians about its operations in Northern Ireland.)

³⁹ See Sparks and Greenwood in note 37.

⁴⁰ A very good account of this is Tom Griffin's 'The IRD in Northern Ireland' at <<https://tinyurl.com/y4e8qddr>> or <<http://spinwatch.org/index.php/issues/propaganda/item/245-the-godson-approach-to-political-warfare-part-3>>

IRD was the apparent inspiration for the creation of RICU, the Research, Information and Communications Unit. Founded in 2007, RICU was set-up in the Home Office, as part of the counter-radicalisation (that's mainly Islamic radicalisation) strategy known as Prevent. In the first big piece about it, former *Guardian* journalist Ian Cobain⁴¹ reported that the inspiration for the unit came in part from IRD. Someone in Whitehall saw (then Labour government number two) Gordon Brown carrying a copy of the Frances Stonor Saunders' book *Who Paid the Piper?*⁴² a book, which, though chiefly about the CIA's anti-Soviet propaganda activities in the post-WW2 era, frequently mentions IRD. Keen to stay abreast of their political masters' reading, some civil servants read the book and discovered – or rediscovered – IRD. Cobain commented:

'Instead of reading Saunders' book as a warning that propaganda could undermine intellectual and political freedom, some at RICU saw it as a manual for the organisation's future development.'⁴³

And after RICU came the Integrity Initiative, a state-funded combination of psy-ops (propaganda against Russia) and psy-war (attacks on anyone who isn't toeing anti-Russian line). We're back to the days of the (first) Cold War. It is depressing but not surprising that something so banal should be created today (let alone that its creators thought it could remain secret). The original enormous information dump about it is still on-line.⁴⁴

Such state influence operations are futile, even if they remain unpublicised. The way to avoid Islamic terrorism in this country is to stop supporting American attacks on Islamic countries, not to create a semi-secret propaganda campaign against radical Islam. The way to stop Russia actually or potentially meddling with this country's internet-based political activities is to cease supporting NATO's expansion eastwards. But the British state is unwilling to do anything without the Americans' approval, so anti-Russian and anti-Islamic propaganda is what we have instead.

Why is the British state is so determined to cling to America's coat-tails? There is the remnants of the 'special relationship', which began as the Anglo-

⁴¹ See <<https://www.theguardian.com/profile/iancobain>>.

⁴² It was reviewed in *Lobster* 38.

⁴³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yxj7ktvv>> or <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/how-book-cold-war-propaganda-inspired-british-counter-terror-campaign>>

⁴⁴ For example <<https://tinyurl.com/y5xvwry9>> or <<http://beet.the-eye.eu/public/Site-Dumps/data.ddosecrets.com/file/Integrity%20Initiative%201-6/>>. But these are compressed RAR files and you may need to download a program to unzip them. Nick Must suggests 7-Zip. Short of that a very good long article about the files is at <<https://tinyurl.com/y8n3hsa8>> or <<https://www.mintpressnews.com/the-integrity-initiative-and-the-uks-scandalous-information-war/253014/>>.

American Round Table network at the turn of the century,⁴⁵ survived into the WW2 alliance against Hitler and then out into the post-war alliance against Soviet-style socialism. But that has faded into insignificance, not least because the percentage of Americans of British descent has declined markedly.⁴⁶ In very general terms, the USA replaced the UK as the major regulator of global capitalism since WW2 and the post-war transition from initial competition with Washington to being America's sidekick has been the line of least resistance for Britain.

And there are career considerations. A former Foreign Secretary, the late Robin Cook, said that the British military clung to America because America controlled NATO and that's where all the big jobs were.

'Because of the Ministry of Defence's fanatical determination to keep close to the Pentagon. They will never do anything that puts that relationship out of line. The truth is that it is the pivot of all military careers and a great deal of decision-making. Any military officer who has ambitions, has to keep close to the Pentagon, because he needs to serve in NATO. The US and the UK have dominated serious appointments in NATO for years, for this reason. It is the driving priority of the MOD to keep it that way. They do not think in terms of national interest, but of both MOD interest and the American interest.'⁴⁷

NATO is essentially a system for selling American weapons to its members, whether the weapons work or not.⁴⁸ The British state has been persuaded to buy the US Lockheed F-35 fighter to decorate its two new vanity aircraft carriers, despite the fact that the F-35 is a spectacular failure.⁴⁹ Poland is the latest NATO member to agree to buy the F-35.⁵⁰ In the 1960s and 70s fourteen

⁴⁵ I wrote about this in *Lobster* 1, 'The Anglo-American Establishment From Rhodes To Cliveden'. But try this <<https://tinyurl.com/y5x94zod>> or <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263489252_World_War_I_and_Anglo-American_relations_The_role_of_Philip_Kerr_and_The_Round_Table> published in the Round Table's own journal.

⁴⁶ See Harry Mount, 'Donald Trump's Anglophilia makes him a dying breed among Americans', in the *Daily Telegraph* at <<https://tinyurl.com/yyhwrxsw>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/04/donald-trumps-anglophilia-makes-dying-breed-among-americans/>>.

⁴⁷ 'Why are we with Uncle Sam?' in *Lobster* 57.

⁴⁸ Nicely articulated by John Laughland in 'The Prague Racket' at <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/nov/22/nato.comment>>.

⁴⁹ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/y6k2v56b>> or <<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/stealth-f-35-joint-strike-fighter-has-some-serious-problems-report-42892>>.

⁵⁰ See <<https://tinyurl.com/yxlgo8y3>> or <<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/12/politics/donald-trump-andrzej-duda-poland-f-35-deal/index.html>>.

countries were persuaded to buy the Lockheed Starfighter, which crashed so often it was known in West Germany as 'the widowmaker'. Some of the politicians who were persuaded to buy the Starfighter were bribed by Lockheed.⁵¹ One day we may learn what kind of shenanigans went on behind the scenes to persuade the UK government to buy the F-35, 'a trillion dollar mistake'.⁵²

Outside Whitehall is the presence in the City of London of a large number of American banks, hedge funds and other financial organisations. In a recent sharp piece on the prospect of a post-Brexit Anglo-American free trade area, Umair Haque wrote:

'So the Romeo and Juliet of collapsing countries — what are they doing? Well, they've made their choice. Their choice is capitalism. They've both rejected social democracy. Britain's rejected the "democracy" part — it doesn't want to be part of the EU, and America's rejected the "social" part — it's still so backwards it thinks socialism is some kind of horrible curse, not how people get working healthcare and college and retirement in the rest of the world. So Romeo and Juliet have made a kind of suicide pact. They've decided to go all in on capitalism.'⁵³

But there are different forms of capitalism and the version that is being discussed by the author is finance capitalism, a distinction he doesn't make. Since the early 1980s the US and UK have been dominated by the interests of finance capital. In this country the City has been the focus of economic attention since the arrival of Mrs Thatcher, Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson at the helm of the Conservative government in 1979. They had all worked in the City before going into politics — Lawson as a financial journalist, Howe and Thatcher as tax lawyers — and pursued policies which benefitted the Square Mile but damaged the domestic manufacturing base.

Which brings us to the interesting story of the London-based hedge funds which bankrolled part of the Leave campaign in the referendum on EU membership. The 'hedgies' also simultaneously 'shorted' UK stocks and shares

⁵¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/y5p2puf3>> or <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/business/1977/05/27/lockheed-paid-38-million-in-bribes-abroad/800c355c-ddc2-4145-b430-0ae24afd6648/?utm_term=.3970b66c0f28>

⁵² <<https://tinyurl.com/l9qscb4>> or <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-04-04/is-the-f-35-a-trillion-dollar-mistake>> See also (among dozens) <<https://tinyurl.com/y2dsxx5p>> or <<https://www.thedailybeast.com/america-is-stuck-with-a-dollar400-billion-stealth-fighter-that-cant-fight?ref=home>>.

⁵³ 'The Soviet Union of Capitalism' at <<https://eand.co/the-soviet-union-of-capitalism-493788f73612>>

– gambling on a ‘leave’ verdict they were, in effect, helping to buy.⁵⁴ The analyses I have cited do not show – perhaps cannot show – that spending by the ‘hedgies’ was critical to the ‘leave’ verdict in the referendum. Nonetheless the fact that it occurred is both a striking illustration of the extraordinary sloppy nature of the rules governing the referendum and a perfect expression of the relationship between finance capital and the rest of the economy. For if we do leave the EU, and the economic consequences are as serious as most analyses suggest, a group of people in the City (and their investors) will have made a lot of money by damaging the wider, domestic economy.⁵⁵

Dallas again

In ‘Still thinking about Dallas’ in *Lobster 74* I speculated that the assassination conspiracy on Dealey Plaza was piggy-backed on the CIA operation that the late Chauncey Holt described: viz. a fake assassination attempt on JFK to be blamed on apparently lefty, pro-Castro Lee Harvey Oswald. I have since received an email from Dick Russell,⁵⁶ author of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*,⁵⁷ in which he wrote:

‘I found your article very interesting and am coming to similar conclusions – that what happened in Dallas was “hijacked” by another element that shocked certain people in the CIA like Desmond FitzGerald who was running Oswald in a different operation.’

Googling ‘JFK, piggy-backed’ I found this by Peter Dale Scott:

‘As I indicated earlier, my working hypothesis is not that the killing was a

⁵⁴ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/y4rag835>> or <<http://www.brexitshambles.com/300-hedge-fund-companies-were-represented-by-vote-leave-during-the-referendum-campaign-and-they-formed-the-biggest-demographic-of-their-membership/>>. <<https://tinyurl.com/y2elvnnn>> or <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-leave-eu-campaign-arron-banks-jeremy-hosking-five-uk-richest-businessmen-peter-hargreaves-a7699046.html>>; and <<https://tinyurl.com/y3tbsytc>> or <<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/03/13/the-disaster-capitalism-club-vote-leave-backers-who-made-billions-from-brexit/>>.

⁵⁵ ‘A no-deal Brexit would have far-reaching economic consequences for the UK. According to exclusive analyses carried out by Statista, the Manufactured Goods industry would be hit the hardest by a chaotic Brexit: The gross value of the industry would decrease by 12 percent over the next 15 years. The Agriculture & Foods industry would experience a loss of 11 percent, the Financial Services industry would decrease by 9 percent and the Services industry by 8 percent.’ E-mail from statista.com.

⁵⁶ See <<https://dickrussell.org/tag/JFK/>>.

⁵⁷ A revised edition is available at <<https://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0786712422/howardfastwebsit>>.

CIA operation, but that the plot was piggy-backed on an authorized CIA covert operation that was not under secure control and may in part have been outsourced.’⁵⁸

According to Chauncey Holt, the aforementioned Desmond Fitzgerald, then head of the anti-Castro operations in the CIA, was running the fake assassination attempt.

Conspiracy theories without theories?

In my review of two post-modernist accounts of conspiracy theories, I noted that one of them – absurdly – had described the initial post-JFK assassination researchers as conspiracy theorists despite the fact that they then had no theories on the assassination.⁵⁹ Something analogous to this notion is discussed by two American academics in ‘Conspiracy Without the Theory’.

‘When swirling charges of rigged elections, witch hunts, and a coup plotted by the “deep state” are referred to as “conspiracy theory,” this is not just a misnomer but a misunderstanding, one with consequences. Conspiracy and theory have been decoupled; we face the distinctively malignant phenomenon of conspiracy without the theory.’⁶⁰

5G

The roll-out of 5G in the UK is underway. Elsewhere awareness of 5G’s potential health risks is visible. Céline Fremault, the Minister of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region in Belgium, announced that 5G would not be permitted in Brussels because of the radiation emitted by the system.⁶¹ Over 200 scientists and doctors have urged the EU to halt the 5G roll-out. One of them, Martin Pall, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry at

⁵⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/y8xs2tdv>> or <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/cia-lying-performance-then-and-now-the-jfk-assassination-versus-the-cias-obstruction-of-justice-in-2015/5498298>>

⁵⁹ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster77/lob77-conspiracy-theories.pdf>>

⁶⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/yywbxu7x>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/trumps-witch-hunt-claims-arent-conspiracy-theories/586552/>>

⁶¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/y4a9hxcl>> or <<https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/brussels-all-news/55052/radiation-concerns-halt-brussels-5g-for-now/>>

Washington State University,⁶² was quoted as saying:

'We are committing mass suicide. The safety guidelines are bogus. They do not predict biological effects. There are so many health impacts — attacks on the DNA of cells, life-threatening cardiac effects and cancer. I believe we'll see a crash in brain function in five to seven years. We'll have a crash in our reproductive function sooner.'⁶³

The picture is complicated by the fact that Russian media, including RT America, has joined in the alarm about 5G.⁶⁴ And in the current political climate, almost anything proposed by Russia will be rejected as disinformation by large chunks of the Western media.

Who's duping who?

I have noted before that, prominent among those in the United States who have not endorsed the 'Trump-is-a-Russian-agentand/or-dupe' thesis, are those associated with consortiumnews.com. In those columns one Larry Johnson, a former State Department and CIA official, took this a big step further recently.

'The Mueller investigation of Trump "collusion" with Russia prior to the 2016 Presidential election focused on eight cases:

- Proposed Trump Tower Project in Moscow
- George Papadopolous
- Carter Page
- Dimitri Simes
- Veselnetskya Meeting at Trump Tower (June 16, 2016)
- Events at Republican Convention
- Post-Convention Contacts with Russian Ambassador Kislyak
- Paul Manafort

One simple fact emerges—of the eight cases or incidents of alleged Trump Campaign interaction with the Russians investigated by the Mueller team,

⁶² See <https://me-pedia.org/wiki/Martin_Pall> and <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Martin_Pall/2>.

⁶³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yytvryyf>> or <<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/scottish-news/4288258/5g-mobile-network-scotland-ee-risks/>>

⁶⁴ See 'Your 5G Phone Won't Hurt You. But Russia Wants You to Think Otherwise' at <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/science/5g-phone-safety-health-russia.html>>.

the proposals to interact with the Russian Government or with Putin originated with FBI informants, MI-6 assets or people paid by Fusion GPS, and not Trump or his people.

There is not a single instance where Donald Trump or any member of his campaign team initiated contact with the Russians for the purpose of gaining derogatory information on Hillary or obtaining support to boost the Trump campaign. Not one.

Simply put, Trump and his campaign were the target of an elaborate, wide ranging covert action designed to entrap him and members of his team as an agent of Russia.⁶⁵

Thus far I have seen no attempted rebuttal of this striking proposition.

Syria

I have pretty much given up trying to understand what has been going on in Syria. In particular I had abandoned trying to work out which side was telling the truth about various atrocities committed against civilians. But we do seem to have something close to certainty about one particular gas bombing in Douma in 2018, which provided the pretext for Western air attacks there. A leaked report from The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on that gas attack concludes:

'In summary, observations at the scene of the two locations, together with subsequent analysis, suggest that there is a higher probability that both cylinders were manually placed at those two locations rather than being delivered from aircraft.'⁶⁶

Looking at the photographs attached to the report 'higher probability' is understating it. The cylinders which carried the gas are virtually undamaged.

War planning

In his essay 'Why did Bush go to war in Iraq?',⁶⁷ Ahsan Butt argues that the cause of the war

⁶⁵ Larry C Johnson, 'How US and Foreign Intel Agencies Interfered in a US Election' at <<https://tinyurl.com/yxq4cga5>> or <<https://consortiumnews.com/2019/05/07/how-us-and-foreign-intelligence-agencies-interfered-in-a-us-election/>>

⁶⁶ <<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ayBv-nEOMTtIc-QOvejQBdCnZQXTuJ5z/view>>

⁶⁷ <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/bush-war-iraq-190318150236739.html>>

' . . . had little to do with fear of WMDs – or other purported goals, such as a desire to “spread democracy” or satisfy the oil or Israel lobbies. Rather, the Bush administration invaded Iraq for its demonstration effect.'

He quotes Bush Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld saying on the evening of 9/11, 'We need to bomb something else to prove that we're, you know, big and strong and not going to be pushed around by these kinds of attacks';⁶⁸ and the so-called Ledeen doctrine, named after Michael Ledeen: 'Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business.'⁶⁹

But actually it was worse than that. The US Defense Department were making plans to attack *seven* countries. General Wesley Clark, one time Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, told us this in 2007:

'So I came back to see him [a General] a few weeks later, and by that time we were bombing in Afghanistan. I said, “Are we still going to war with Iraq?” And he said, “Oh, it's worse than that.” He reached over on his desk. He picked up a piece of paper. And he said, “I just got this down from upstairs” — meaning the Secretary of Defense's office — “today.” And he said, “This is a memo that describes how we're going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.” I said, “Is it classified?” He said, “Yes, sir.” I said, “Well, don't show it to me.” And I saw him a year or so ago, and I said, “You remember that?” He said, “Sir, I didn't show you that memo! I didn't show it to you!”'⁷⁰

Fairy dust

A very significant study of the creation of money by banks has been done. For our purposes a quote from the abstract will suffice.

'An empirical test is conducted, whereby money is borrowed from a cooperating bank, while its internal records are being monitored, to establish whether in the process of making the loan available to the borrower, the bank transfers these funds from other accounts within or outside the bank, or whether they are newly created. This study

⁶⁸ Quoted by Richard Clarke, chief White House counterterrorism adviser, at <<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2009/02/bush-oral-history200902>>.

⁶⁹ <https://www.nationalreview.com/2002/04/baghdad-delenda-est-part-two-jonah-goldberg/>

⁷⁰ See <https://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/2/gen_wesley_clark_weighs_presidential_bid>.

establishes for the first time empirically that *banks individually create money out of nothing*. The money supply is created as “fairy dust” produced by the banks individually, “out of thin air”.’ (emphasis added)⁷¹

This being the case, why should that money creation not be done by the state for its projects? Why borrow ‘fairy dust’ from banks or the public (at interest) when you can create it yourself? This concept is at the back of some of the new thinking in economics going on around the Corbyn/McDonnell-led Labour Party.

⁷¹ Richard A. Werner, ‘Can banks individually create money out of nothing? — The theories and the empirical evidence’ at
<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1057521914001070>>.