

The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

*Thanks to Sally Walker, Garrick Alder and Nick Must
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new

The CIA and LSD

There have been occasional hints in these pages that the psychedelic explosion in the USA and Western Europe in the '60s and early '70s might have been the work of state agencies.¹ But a recent essay in *CovertAction* magazine by editor Jeremy Kuzmarov elaborates this notion in much more detail than I had known was possible.² *Inter alia* he writes of the great LSD proselytiser Timothy Leary:

Leary himself said in an interview with journalist Walter Bowart near the end of his life that he was working as an intelligence agent since 1962. "I was a witting agent of the CIA" which, he claimed, had recognized him as "an important national asset."

Asked by Bowart to elaborate on whether CIA people were involved in his LSD-proselytizing groups in the 1960s, Leary responded: "Of course they were. I would say that eighty percent of my movements, eighty percent of the decisions I made were suggested to me by CIA people."

Leary continued: "I like the CIA! The game they're playing is better than the FBI. Better than the Saigon police. Better than Franco's police. Better than the Israeli police. They're a thousand times better than the KGB. So it comes down to: who are you going to work for? The Yankees or the Dodgers?"^[1]

¹ See, for example, David Black's 'On getting it wrong and getting it right: Ronald Stark, LSD and the CIA' in *Lobster* 78 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/78/on-getting-it-wrong-and-getting-it-right-ronald-stark-lsd-and-the-cia/>>.

² 'Timothy Leary—1960s Acid Guru—May Have Been Among the CIA's Greatest Assets', <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2026/04/24/timothy-leary-1960s-acid-guru-may-have-been-among-the-cias-greatest-assets/>>

That footnote [1] links to a ten page Bowart essay³ which is undated but, from one or two references in the text, was probably written in the late 1990s. This already complex tale is analysed in great detail in Jan Irvin's 40,000 word 'Spies in Academic Clothing: The Untold History of MKULTRA and the Counterculture – And How the Intelligence Community Misleads the 99%'.⁴ This critiques in great detail Bowart and others (including David Black) who have written in this area.

An earlier essay co-written by Irvin has this :

The authors believe, however, that there is compelling evidence that indicates that the psychedelic movement was deliberately created. The purpose of this plan was to establish a neo-feudalism by the debasing of the intellectual abilities of young people to make them as easy to control as the serfs of the Dark Ages.⁵

Interesting though Irvin's analysis is, what he has *not* provided is 'compelling evidence' of 'a plan'. What he has produced is suggestive, no more.

new

Palantir

You would have to make an effort *not* to come across the US data company Palantir which is being given access to large areas of British state data.⁶ It had been on the fringes of my attention until I saw that some of Palantir's big-wigs had issued a 'manifesto'.⁷ It includes a number of striking propositions. This one, for example:

American power has made possible an extraordinarily long peace. Too many have forgotten or perhaps take for granted that nearly a century of some version of peace has prevailed in the world without a great power military conflict. At least three generations — billions of people

³ <<https://www.scribd.com/document/671628132/Bowart-W-H-Lords-of-the-Revolution-says-Timothy-Leary-was-prob-CIA-mind-controlled-from-early-on>>

⁴ <https://logosmedia.com/spiesinacademicclothing_mkultra>

⁵ <<https://logosmedia.com/2013/05/manufacturing-the-deadhead-a-product-of-social-engineering-by-joe-atwill-and-jan-irvin/>>

⁶ See, for example <<https://novaramedia.com/2026/03/24/palantir-has-been-awarded-yet-another-uk-government-contract/#>>

⁷ <<https://x.com/PalantirTech/status/204557439857345331>>

and their children and now grandchildren — have never known a world war.

This is weird. It equates 'peace' with the absence of world war or great power military conflict. Never mind the millions killed by the American state in South East Asia (Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) and many countries in South and Central America in the name of 'fighting communism'.

And there's this.

The postwar neutering of Germany and Japan must be undone. The defanging of Germany was an *overcorrection* for which Europe is now paying a heavy price. A similar and highly theatrical commitment to Japanese pacifism will, if maintained, also threaten to shift the balance of power in Asia. (Emphasis added.)

An 'overcorrection', eh? I don't think many people in Europe or what was the Soviet Union would agree with that.

A report on the 'manifesto' quoted Eliot Higgins, founder of Bellingcat:

It's also worth being clear about who's doing the arguing. Palantir sells operational software to defence, intelligence, immigration & police agencies. These 22 points aren't philosophy floating in space, they're the public ideology of a company whose revenue depends on the politics it's advocating.⁸

The 'manifesto' should be read.

new

In brief

Conspiracy theories

Kit Knightly has done some interesting and serious work in what we might loosely call parapolitics. And yet there he is, propagating the notion that Covid was non-existent in his 'Testing: How to Create a Pandemic of Fake Disease'.⁹ I just don't get the Covid conspiracy theories which are apparently believed by a quarter of the British population.¹⁰ If you know of a good exposition of said

⁸ 'Technofacism? Why Palantir's pro-West "manifesto" has critics alarmed'
<<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/21/technofacism-why-palantirs-pro-west-manifesto-has-critics-alarmed>>

⁹ <<https://off-guardian.org/2026/03/31/testing-how-to-create-a-pandemic-of-fake-disease/>>

¹⁰ <<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jun/13/quarter-in-uk-believe-covid-was-a-hoax-poll-on-conspiracy-theories-finds>>

theories, please email me the link.

Elsewhere I noticed that the freeview TV channel Blaze, the home of TV conspiracy theories, had an hour-long program on Le Cercle, aka the Pinay Circle. (Alas I didn't see it but will try and catch it if/when it is repeated.) The Pinay Circle was first mentioned in these columns in 1989 in issues 17 and 18 – almost 40 years ago.

The secret state

In all the coverage of the Peter Mandelson vetting story, none of the reports I saw in the major media mentioned the sheer oddity/idiocy of a system in which the Prime Minister is not allowed to see a vetting report but is allowed to fire the head of the Foreign Office. A better example of a 'secret state' would be hard to devise.

Broon

Below is a letter from Steve Penney which appeared in *The London Review of Books* in the 23 April edition. A big 'amen' to this.

Browned Off

Andy Beckett seems to join a recent tendency to laud Gordon Brown's achievements while glossing over his significant failures (LRB 19 March). Since Brown's return to public life, he has been given free rein to pontificate on the issues of the day, with very little examination of his own record in office. Let's not forget that New Labour did little to change the Thatcherite political settlement, continuing the drive to privatisation and maintaining the radical taxation regime the Tories had introduced. Top rates of tax for the most wealthy remained significantly below the level they had been at in 1979, and Brown even introduced a 10 per cent tax rate, which is estimated to have left around 3.5 million of the lowest-income households worse off. The Private Finance Initiative to fund new hospitals, which he championed, still dogs the NHS today. His support for the Iraq War and the rehabilitation of Peter Mandelson were huge errors. His biographer's contention that Brown pursued 'power with purpose' is hard to fathom. Indeed it might be argued that the failure of supposedly left-wing politicians to seriously address the distribution of wealth and the failures of public services is a major factor in the current disenchantment with traditional political parties, which has

led to the rise of Reform UK. Politicians are supposed to make people's lives better. It is difficult to point to a prime minister since the 1970s who has recognised this.

More on Mandy

Anne Pettifor is primarily an economist.¹¹ But she sees economics as essentially about power, profit and politics rather than theory. She has a very good piece on Peter Mandelson in the light of the Epstein revelations¹² from which I have lifted three paragraphs.

It is not just the story of a \$75,000 cash bribe It is a story of a \$4 million plus payoff by the powerful Wall Street bank, JPMorgan, as reward for Peter Mandelson's attempts to use British governmental power (both in his role as UK Business Minister and Alastair Darling's role as Chancellor) to challenge and reverse President Obama's attempts to regulate Wall Street lending practises after the Great Financial Crisis.

A \$4million plus payoff as reward for passing potentially lucrative state secrets - the €500bn EU bailout of the Eurozone; a forthcoming sale of UK government assets and advance notice of Gordon Brown's resignation as Prime Minister. This intelligence was shared with a powerful Wall Street bank, JPMorgan - with the clear intention the bank should use the information to make speculative capital gains.

A \$4million plus payoff for encouraging JP Morgan to "mildly threaten" the British Chancellor, Alastair Darling over his planned tax on bankers' bonuses. ¹³

Along similar lines is a report in the *Daily Mail* on Mandelson taking money for lobbying from Russian sources.¹⁴ I suspect these lobbying activities will not feature much in the official report on Mandelson now being done in Whitehall.

¹¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ann_Pettifor>

¹² <<https://annpettifor.substack.com/p/the-mandelson-scandal-is-about-wall>>

¹³ Do also check out an interview with Pettifor in *Jacobin.com* headlined 'How Global Finance Drove Deindustrialization', a very clear exposition of the disastrous road taken by our economy since the late 1970s. <<https://jacobin.com/2026/03/global-financial-system-deindustrialization-climate>>

¹⁴ <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-15746947/DAN-HODGES-Peter-Mandelson.html>>

The CIA's history

Gottlieb

Sidney Gottlieb was the scientist who worked for the CIA in the 1950s and 60s and pioneered much of what is now loosely filed under 'mind control'. Gottlieb is boogeyman no. 1 for some observers. Gottlieb's hitherto secret testimony to the 1975 Church Committee was declassified in 2025.¹⁵ After the publication of the testimony, the always interesting Dick Russell tracked down Gottlieb and found the man who was responsible for MKULTRA and other programs living a Buddhist life on an organic farm, and strikingly open about his previous life.¹⁶ Gottlieb said:

If the CIA never existed, or if you abolished them today, I'm not so sure that wouldn't be a good thing for this country. Of course there should be an analytical side, but I'm talking about the clandestine services. I look upon that as being no different than the Atom bomb scientists. Hell, they let something loose.

Russell's piece is seriously worth a look, as is the declassified material.

Angleton

I have just come across the proceedings of a 2012 seminar on the CIA's James Angleton.¹⁷ Among those talking about the man were Christopher Andrew, CIA's David Martin, journalist David Wise, the late Edward Epstein, Soviet KGB officer Oleg Kalugin and other former CIA officers. This links to the question discussed below: Do spies matter? Angleton certainly did to this country, though perhaps not in his official CIA role. He fuelled the Labour-is-run-by-the-Soviets theme which led to the Wilson plots, the creation of Civil Contingencies Cadre in the late 1970s and, ultimately, to Mrs Thatcher and the disastrous adoption of the free market nonsense in the country. This perspective on Angleton is missing from the discussion.

The only Brit present is Christopher Andrew who, as the official historian of MI5, is entirely unable to deal rationally with these events. Nonetheless there is some fascinating material in the discussions of Angleton and his times.

¹⁵ For this declassified testimony see <<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/dnsa-intelligence/2025-10-30/top-secret-testimony-cias-mkultra-chief-50-years-later>>.

¹⁶ <<https://dickrussell.substack.com/p/a-personal-encounter-with-the-cias>>

¹⁷ <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/event/moles_defectors_and_deceptions_james_angleton_conference_report.pdf>

Mae Brussell

What is going on at *CovertAction*? I was happy to see editor Kuzmarov taking on board the Kennedy assassination (with much help from Robert Morrow)¹⁸ but Mae Brussell? Currently on the site is an essay lauding Brussell by Kuzmarov and Alexis Baden-Mayer.¹⁹ Brussell was a California-based conspiracy theorist in the 1970s and 80s who had a weekly radio programme. I came across her in the late 1970s as I was getting interested in the world of American conspiracy theories. I wrote about her in a footnote to an essay in *Lobster* 19:

Mae Brussell was a brave, resourceful woman, whose initial writing, in *The Realist*,²⁰ was astonishing for the time. But she became a victim of information overload, getting so much material, and keeping a broad focus on things, that she lost the ability to sort out the crap. When Dave Guthrie and I first got a copy of her taped radio programme on the Gemstone file, we were really interested. Dave rang her up and, in the course of the conversation, referred to 'the big picture' — meaning, the overall picture, rather than the details. Lo and behold, some weeks later, Mae tells her listeners out there in Carmel, California, that they are making a 'big picture' in England and she's going to be in it.²¹

But for the time Brussell was startling. She invented the basic methodology of early parapolitical research: read everything and keep cuttings. The *CovertAction* profile has her reading 10 newspapers a day. As a result, in August 1972, less than three months after the arrest of the burglars at the Democratic National Committee office, and while Woodward and Bernstein were still sharpening their pencils, *The Realist* published Brussell's 'Why Was Martha Mitchell Kidnapped?'. It was a huge collection of biographical data about the Watergate personnel. But she also wrote this in it:

The significance of the Watergate Affair is that every element essential

¹⁸ See, for example, <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/11/22/60-years-after-jfks-death-it-is-more-and-more-apparent-that-kennedy-was-a-victim-of-a-palace-coup-spearheaded-by-vice-president-lyndon-b-johnson/>>.

¹⁹ "'Deep State' Researcher Mae Brussell Was a Visionary Who Foresaw the Rise of Fascism in America' <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2026/03/24/deep-state-researcher-mae-brussell-was-a-visionary-who-foresaw-the-rise-of-fascism-in-america/>>

²⁰ See for example issue 98, consisting entirely of Brussell's 'Conspiracy Newsletter' at <<https://www.ep.tc/realist/98/index.html>>. 39 pages of assertion about the creation and meaning of the Symbionese Liberation Army. For the time, astonishing indeed. Reliability?

²¹ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/19/conspiracy-conspiracy-theories-and-conspiracy-research/>>

for a political *coup d'etat* in the United States was assembled at the time of their arrest. The team of men represented at the hotel went all the way from the White House with its Emergency Contingency Unit, walkie-talkies and private radio frequency, to the paid street provocateurs and troops who would create the emergencies.²²

Which was complete tosh. And that was the problem. With Brussell you had to constantly try to separate the shit from the Shinola. I came across her around the same time I discovered Peter Dale Scott and it was Scott's minutely documented writing which became my exemplar.

In the *CovertAction* piece Kuzmarov and Alexis Baden-Mayer write:

She was also way ahead of her time in recognizing the hidden CIA involvement in Watergate, the Jonestown massacre, Charles Manson killings, Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), and murder of John Lennon among other "deep-state" crimes.^[3]

Ah, a footnote! Evidence for all the striking assertions in that paragraph? Alas, it merely links to another profile of Brussell by Paul Krasner.²³ There are indeed hints – but only hints – of CIA involvement in Jonestown, Manson and the SLA.²⁴ But to assert that Brussell *recognised* the 'hidden CIA involvement' in these affairs is a wild overstatement. At best you could say she thought she saw the CIA's hidden involvement.

Our authors write:

In the 1968 presidential race, Nixon received pivotal funding through a person Brussell identified as a CIA conduit, Tom Pappas, in exchange for his nomination of Spiro Agnew—a reactionary supportive of a CIA-backed fascist coup in Greece—as Vice-President.²⁵

But in the original Brussell piece which mentions Pappas there is nothing more

²² <[https://maebrussell.com/Mae Brussell Articles/Why Was Martha Mitchell Kidnapped - 1.html](https://maebrussell.com/Mae%20Brussell%20Articles/Why%20Was%20Martha%20Mitchell%20Kidnapped%20-1.html)>

²³ <[https://www.maebrussell.com/Mae Brussell Articles/Mind of Mae Brussell.html](https://www.maebrussell.com/Mae%20Brussell%20Articles/Mind%20of%20Mae%20Brussell.html)>

²⁴ What there is on Manson is in *Chaos* by Tom O'Neill. See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/80/chaos-charles-manson-the-cia-and-the-secret-history-of-the-sixties-by-tom-oneill/>>. On Jonestown the only research of significance I know of has been done by Jim Hougan in his 'Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple' <<http://www.jimhougan.com/index2.html>>. On the SLA there were suggestions in the mid 1970s. See Dick Russell's 'Who Ran the SLA?' at <<https://libcom.org/article/who-ran-sla-dick-russell>>.

²⁵ <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2026/03/24/deep-state-researcher-mae-brussell-was-a-visionary-who-foresaw-the-rise-of-fascism-in-america/>>

than the bald assertion that he was 'CIA conduit'.²⁶

Our authors write:

The CIA's illegal interference in U.S. elections was apparent to Brussell when she discovered that Eugene McCarthy's top fundraiser, Thomas McCoy, had worked for the CIA.

Of course there are other explanations for McCoy's involvement: notably that, like others in the CIA, he was against the war in Vietnam and McCarthy seemed the most plausible anti-war Democratic presidential candidate.²⁷ The CIA has turned out to be a more complex beast than the left thought 50 years ago.

This below I suspect is the reason *CovertAction* has exhumed Brussell. Our authors write:

Brussell would see the current Trump administration as a continuation of the same Nazi-linked, corporate-controlled, CIA-managed, fascist dictatorship she identified as the hidden hand behind the assassinations of the 1960s.

But was the US in the 1960s a 'Nazi-linked, corporate-controlled, CIA-managed, fascist dictatorship'? No, it wasn't.

Google AI

Looking for my review of Brian Crozier's memoir in *Lobster*, I asked Google (generally better and faster than *Lobster's* search engine) for 'Lobster magazine + Brian Crozier + Free Agent' and got this from Google AI.

Lobster magazine, a British publication focused on intelligence and parapolitics, has frequently covered the career of journalist, author, and intelligence operative Brian Crozier (1918–2012). *Lobster* has analyzed his role in anti-communist networks, his relationship with British intelligence (MI5/IRD) and the CIA, and his private intelligence activities.

²⁶ See note 22 above.

²⁷ See, for example, <<https://www.cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Article-Why-CIA-Analysts-Were-Doubtful-About-Vietnam.pdf>>. McCoy had been CIA station chief in Laos. Seymour Hersh met him while running Eugene McCarthy's press operation in his 1968 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. McCoy and McCarthy were both devout Catholics and McCarthy was uninterested when Hersh told him that McCoy had been CIA. Seymour Hersh, *Reporter* (London: Allen Lane, 2018) p. 79.

Key Connections and Coverage:

- *Free Agent* (1993): *Lobster* reviewed and referenced Brian Crozier's memoir, *Free Agent: The Unseen War, 1941–1991*. The book detailed his involvement in clandestine operations and his efforts to influence politics against the Soviet threat.
- "Rogue Agents" and Private Intelligence: *Lobster* articles (notably by Robin Ramsay) and related research on Powerbase detailed how, in the 1970s, Crozier established a private intelligence network known as "the 6I" or "Sixth International". This network operated as a private sector version of the Information Research Department (IRD), a Foreign Office unit focused on anti-communist propaganda.
- The Pinay Circle: *Lobster* #17 (1988) discussed Crozier's involvement with the "Pinay Circle" (or Cercle), a private intelligence gathering group connected to James Goldsmith and other figures involved in covert political actions.
- Critique of Crozier: While acknowledging his influence, *Lobster* contributors have noted limitations in Crozier's accounts, such as discrepancies in the timeline of his operations (e.g., the Institute for the Study of Conflict) and criticized some of his works as poorly sourced, while using his memoirs to fill in gaps regarding his Cold War activities.
- *Lobster* continues to be a primary source for critical research into the networks and organizations Crozier worked with, including British Briefing and the Institute for the Study of Conflict.

That is strikingly good.

'World's secret government'?

'Global elite gather in Washington for "world's secret government": Leaders and billionaires discuss AI, war and crypto at shadowy Bilderberg meeting'.

Thus the *Daily Mail* website on 15 April.²⁸ The story was right at the bottom of the site, just beneath 'Fur-ever young! Scientists develop a drug that can extend dogs' lifespans by at least a YEAR'.

²⁸ <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15734869>>

Briefly

The lobby

Joseph Kent, erstwhile Director of the United States' National Counterterrorism Center, said in a statement that 'Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby'. That quote is from his resignation letter, the full text of which was published by the *Daily Mail*.²⁹ Against which, CNN published a story on 15 March suggesting that within the Democratic Party the fear of the Israel lobby's front organisation, AIPAC, is declining.³⁰

Havana syndrome

So-called Havana Syndrome, the assault on hundreds of US overseas personnel by some kind of microwave device, has resurfaced.³¹ Former CIA Officer Marc Polymeropoulos, one of the syndrome's victims, is alleging a cover-up by the CIA.³² This is also the opinion of House Intelligence Committee Chair Rick Crawford who was quoted as saying:

Put simply, it's my clear opinion that individuals in the intelligence community were involved in a cover-up.³³

The report about Mr Polymeropoulos also states:

60 Minutes has learned new details from three independent sources from different government agencies about a classified mission involving Homeland Security agents who, in 2024, purchased a previously unknown miniaturized microwave weapon from a complex Russian criminal network. Over \$15 million in funding for the mission came from the Pentagon. While the specific device they purchased was not linked to any one AHI attack, it contains the pulsed microwave technology that could potentially cause Havana Syndrome symptoms, sources say.

Stonehouse

In *Lobster 82* I reviewed two books about the late John Stonehouse, the

²⁹ <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15654215/Trumps-counterintelligence-official-resigns-protest-Iran-war.htm>>

³⁰ 'As the politics around Israel shift, many Democrats are seeking distance from AIPAC'. <<https://edition.cnn.com/2026/03/15/politics/democrats-primaries-aipac-israel>>

³¹ See below under subhead '**Havana syndrome returns**'.

³² <<https://h5.newsbreakapp.com/mp/19SOSXSt?cv=23.26.0.38&platform=0>>

³³ <<https://www.spytalk.co/p/spy-agency-bosses-pledge-new-look>>.

Labour MP and Minister, who famously faked his death and went to Australia.³⁴ One of the books was by his daughter Julia, who showed to my satisfaction that the extant version of the affair, in which Stonehouse was working for Czech intelligence, was simply wrong. She went to the Czech intelligence archive to check the documents. The Czech spooks were enjoying themselves in London and, to retain their postings, had to show how effective they were. They simply faked sources, one of whom was John Stonehouse.

Ms Stonehouse has continued the up-hill struggle to correct the historical record. On her website is the text of a 2022 complaint she made to Lord Grade, then chair of OFCOM, about a TV documentary about her late father. She writes:

I am making this complaint under Section 7 of your Guidelines, Fairness, because I believe the director and producers of this documentary have misrepresented the Czech documents shown and have omitted information known to them which conflicts with their overall presentation of the so-called facts. I also suspect that they have edited commentary so that "The Spy" narrative can be maintained throughout.

Ms Stonehouse does indeed show that this is the case. However, as she reports on her site: 'Ofcom said they couldn't uphold my complaint because I'm not the person concerned, John Stonehouse, and the viewer was not hurt.'³⁵

So not only can you not libel that dead, you can't complain to Ofcom about the way the media treat them.

Last resorts

I get occasional communications from people with issues. Sometimes, having been rejected by everyone else, *Lobster* is their last port of call. This is what happened back in the days before the Net with the late Harlan Girard and his tales of CIA mind control. He was passed down the media tree til someone finally said 'try *Lobster*'. He rang me, told me some of his tale and I set him the test of his seriousness: 'Sure, come to Hull and we can talk about it.' He came by train, lugging a suitcase full of photocopied documents supporting (some of) his claims. Thus began my tentative writing on the subject.

These days I get such missives by email. One recently received is a long

³⁴ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/82/john-stonehouse-book-reviews/>>

³⁵ <<https://www.juliastonehouse.com/>> 'So where's the evidence?'

document (60 pages or so)³⁶ from an Australian, Robert D. Johnston. In that he tells a striking tale of the abuse of schoolboys (including himself), his attempts to get something done about it and the elaborate cover-up which he thus provoked. As he tells it, the cover-up included trying to criminalise him to discredit him.³⁷ En route he uncovered an Australian paedophile network with international links, including to the UK, via the Paedophile Information Exchange of the late 1970s. This is big stuff.

Johnson's account is personal and careful, with some documentation. Compare and contrast that with the late Dr Joan Coleman's RAINS (Ritual Abuse Information and Support) list, hundreds of names of British people – including some bigwigs – alleged to have been involved in ritual sexual abuse of children.³⁸ Some people took Coleman seriously.³⁹ To me her list is precisely what is wrong with much of the Net: just allegations without evidence.

The moron premium

Now there's a striking expression, apparently dating back to the brief tenure of Liz Truss as PM.⁴⁰ Google defines it thus:

The 'moron premium' (or 'moron risk premium') is a financial term for the extra interest or yield investors demand on government bonds when they deem a government's economic or fiscal policies to be erratic, irresponsible, or incompetent. It represents a 'penalty' on borrowing costs due to increased risk.

Of course the state doesn't need to borrow money from the market: it could create its own, as it did during the Covid crisis. But even if the politicians could be persuaded to grasp this, they wouldn't have the courage to try.

³⁶ <<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SB3Fvkhv3B1SfIVLShO7pfKbDwrAvG04/view?usp=drivesdk>>

Supporting documents are at
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S-s09EexvAw57z2vE4kha7PRb_-hktUK/view?usp=drivesdk>

³⁷ As happened to Colin Wallace, and to Peter Sanderson re the British Gladio. See *Lobster* 81.

³⁸ <<https://www.scribd.com/document/382811891/Joan-Coleman-s-RAINS-LIST-Ritual-Abuse-Information-Network-Support>>

³⁹ <https://medium.com/@alex_72144/psychiatrist-dr-joan-coleman-who-battled-for-years-to-expose-satanic-ritual-abuse-and-help-the-2b47b93b1dd>

⁴⁰ I saw it at <<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-15542003/Bank-chief-calls-stability-political-turmoil-hits-pound-gilts.html>>.

One inch to the east

Steve Rosenberg's 'Our Man in Moscow', about his life there as the BBC correspondent, included one interesting snippet in Putin's response to a question from him. Asked if there would be any further 'special military operations', Putin replied not 'If you don't cheat us as you did with NATO's eastward expansion. You said NATO wouldn't move one inch to the East.'⁴¹

The 'inch to the east' refers to the occasion when then U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told President Gorbachev on 9 February 1990, in the Kremlin, that NATO would not expand 'one inch to the east'. What was meant by this, and the subsequent complex events around NATO expansion, is discussed at the National Security Archive.⁴² While the words 'not one inch to the east' were said by Baker, there was no formal, signed agreement to that effect. Nonetheless this 'one inch to the east' has become a standard feature of the Russian argument ever since.

In June 2025, using declassified British documents, Mark Curtis discussed the British government's dealings with Russia and NATO expansion eastward.⁴³ The documents show that prime minister John Major told Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov in February 1997 that 'if he were Russian he too would be concerned by the possibility that NATO might move up to Russia's borders'.

Eyes wide shut

The Dallas-based Kennedy researcher Robert Morrow is mentioned frequently in this column. He has recently reposted a blog item of his from 2014 in which he provided a vast amount of information about Jeffrey Epstein, his circle and their activities.⁴⁴ He had much of it then, with lots of evidence (and some material I haven't seen in the recent disclosures) but no-one in the political system or the major media noticed and/or took any notice.

⁴¹ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXaQQ3sIN9I>> Start at 3.35. Confusingly, this clip of Putin is headed 'Russia challenged NATO jet – big mistake'.

⁴² <<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>>

⁴³ <<https://consortiumnews.com/2025/06/05/blair-major-reassured-russia-about-nato/>>

⁴⁴ <<http://archive.is/kH18Z>>

The morning after the resignation of PM Starmer's right-hand Morgan McSweeney, I read the coverage in the *Mail*, *the Guardian* and *Times*. In all the rehashing of McSweeney's rise to No. 10 there was no mention of the role of Israeli lobby money in the story.⁴⁵

While on the subject of notice not being taken, Chris Moore's *Kincora: Britain's Shame*,⁴⁶ reviewed in *Lobster* 91, has been almost entirely ignored by the major media outside Ireland.⁴⁷

Saint Tony

I didn't watch the 3 hour TV profile of Tony Blair in mid February. Would it tell me anything new about the man? Probably not. Mr Blair summarised? He and Gordon Brown continued Mrs Thatcher's destruction of the manufacturing sector of the economy; gave the bankers their heads and helped create the economic crisis of the mid 2000s, in whose consequences we are still stuck; and joined America in its assaults on Afghanistan and Iraq.

Dallas again

Barry Jones runs the oddly named Standards Plus History Academy site on YouTube on which there are dozens of films about the parapolitical history of the USA. Three of them are hour-long plus films about Chancey Holt. The first of the three is titled 'Episode 131 Chauncey Holt: the three tramps part 1'.⁴⁸ I skimmed through all three. It is a competent retelling of Holt's account with illustrations but Jones adds nothing new.

⁴⁵ In *Lobster* 88, in this column under subhead **Blair and Israel**, I wrote 'In short, the Starmer-led faction of the Labour Party has received significant funding from the Israel lobby in Britain, as did the Blair faction thirty years ago'. See also <<https://electronicintifada.net/content/morgan-mcsweeney-man-running-britain-and-his-ties-israel/51215>>.

⁴⁶ Full subtitle is *Mountbatten, MI5, the Belfast Boys' Home Sex Abuse Scandal and the British Cover-Up*.

⁴⁷ One story in the *Daily Mail* at <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14849557/Fresh-claims-emerge-late-Queens-cousin-Lord-Mountbatten-abused-children-Northern-Ireland-boys-home-one-says-trafficked-royals-castle.html>>.

There is very good account of these events by Kit Klarenberg at <<https://thegrayzone.com/2026/02/06/kincora-british-intelligence-run-sex-abuse-brothel/>>.

⁴⁸ My attempts to post the urls of the files produced one of the 'three tramps' photographs, so you will have to search for it by title.

I discovered Jones' films when I asked the Tube about Holt. You never know with the Net: something interesting might just appear. In this case, nothing did. I also asked Google AI about Holt and got this.

While Holt's claims are often cited in JFK conspiracy literature, they were largely undermined in 1992 when the Dallas Police Department released records identifying the "three tramps" as Harold Doyle, John Gedney, and Gus Abrams—three men with no known connection to the assassination or intelligence agencies.

In fact, Holt's claims are rarely cited in the JFK literature; there is no-one I can think of among the major JFK researchers who has taken Holt's story seriously. This is almost entirely due to the 'three tramps' photographs and their apparent falsification of Holt's claims to have been in Dallas on the day. That was the work of Ray and Mary La Fontaine. A section of their 1996 *Oswald Talked* (Gretna [US]: Pelican) described their discovery that the Dallas police files about the original 3 tramps, Doyle, Gedney and Adams, had been released. They tried to find the men, got as far as friends of Harold Doyle, and on the basis that some of them said 'Yes, that's him' to the 'tramp' photographs, concluded they had solved the puzzle; and thus Chauncey Holt, who claimed to be the old 'tramp' in the hat, was lying.

I have been here before in these columns but it deserves rehashing. Two sets of 'tramps' were arrested. Doyle, Abrams and Gedney really were tramps – hobos, if you like – and were arrested shortly after the shooting, kept by the police for a couple of days and released. They were not photographed at the time. The second set of 'tramps' were photographed on the street at around 2.30, two hours after the shooting of JFK and Connolly.⁴⁹ One of the tramps was clearly Charles Harrelson, as Holt said. The identity of the third is less certain.

Chauncey Holt was photographed in New Orleans with Lee Harvey Oswald⁵⁰ and was photographed in Dallas two hours after the shooting. He is the only CIA-linked figure identified in Dallas that afternoon. His story should be top of the list for those interested in JFK's shooting.

Afro-spooks

⁴⁹ The time has been established. See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/71/jfk-chauncey-holt-and-the-three-tramps-redux/>>.

⁵⁰ See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/83/dallas-again/>>.

Well here's an interesting little thicket. An anonymous correspondent send me two (paper) pages from *The Spectator* of 13-27 December 2025 with 'A secret life' by James MacManus. This is a detailed account of the life of a senior MI6 officer, the late Roger Horrell.⁵¹ There was also an obituary of Horrell in *The Times* but it is behind their paywall. However, the *Telegraph* obituary has been placed on-line.⁵²

The MacManus story contains a very interesting account of Horrell's career up to the point where he was a candidate for the job as head of MI6. He was not chosen, according to MacManus, because he had been a closet gay and remained so even when MI6 announced that it was OK to be gay. Alas, he propositioned another gay MI6 officer, who reported him. (This is not in the *Telegraph* obit.)

The MacManus piece contains a number of tales about events in Africa, where Horrell (and MacManus) were based for many years. It attracted comments from *Africa Unauthorised*⁵³ and taken together, the two accounts offer an interesting set of claims about the role of intelligence in the politics of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.⁵⁴

FIMI

YouTube is now littered with AI political propaganda. The material I have seen, mostly talking heads, is anti-Trump. And much of it is good, too. Indeed, the AI talking heads are more interesting – more coherent, better scripted – than their human counterparts. These films are examples of FIMI: Foreign Information, Manipulation and Interference. In the case of the anti-Trump videos, who is producing them? (Google AI mode couldn't help.) Not to worry: the EU is on the case. It has been funding the Athena project to:

help protect Europe by studying foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). It will analyse over 30 cases of FIMI, identify attackers' tactics, and develop countermeasures. ATHENA will create tools like a disinformation analysis dashboard and offer training to

⁵¹ While this story does not appear when searched for on *The Spectator* site, it is on the Australian *Spectator* site, albeit behind a pay wall. Happily, it has been archived and is available there at <<https://archive.md/5u6Rv>>.

⁵² <<http://www.cpom.ucl.ac.uk/downloads/RogerHorrell.pdf>>.

⁵³ <<https://africaunauthorised.com/spooks-of-the-struggle-years/>>

⁵⁴ See, for example, this account of Ken Flowers, head of Rhodesian intelligence in the 1970s. <<https://africaunauthorised.com/rhodesian-intelligence-myth-vs-reality/>>.

schools and universities. The project also aims to improve legal frameworks and help people recognise disinformation.⁵⁵

Athena began in 2023 and one of the results of its labours is a collection of essays, *Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference: Case Studies from the Athena Project (Terrorism)* edited by David Wright. You might think the EU would want the information widely available, posted on a website somewhere, with free access. *Au contraire*. This was published in late 2025 by Springer and costs \$219.99.

These AI videos raise an interesting issue. Before the Net we would say 'Seeing is believing'. (Sceptics would say 'Believe half of what you see and none of what you hear'.) With AI around we have reached the point where what we see in on-line videos, especially talking heads, can't be believed until reliable other sources have confirmed it as real.

Broon

Despite being the unapologetic co-author of the financial disaster of 2007-9, Gordon Brown still has access to the *Guardian's* columns for his banalities. In a recent piece,⁵⁶ he wrote:

the US has abandoned its longstanding championing of the rule of law, human rights, democracy and the territorial integrity of nation states.

Is he really this naive? Or does a lifetime of toeing the American line make it too difficult to face reality? Either way, he might usefully glance at the Wiki entry on US involvement in regime change;⁵⁷ or, for more details, read one of the books written by the late William Blum which have documented the dozens of coups the US has organised or supported since WW2.⁵⁸

Food and drink

⁵⁵ <<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101132686>>

⁵⁶ 'As Trump menaces Greenland, this much is clear: the free world needs a new plan – and inspired leadership' <<https://shorturl.at/HpYtf>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/jan/20/donald-trump-greenland-world-plan-leadership>>.

⁵⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_involvement_in_regime_change>

⁵⁸ See, for example, <<https://www.amazon.com/s?k=William+Blum>>. Several of which were reviewed in these columns.

In a three inch story at the bottom of page 17 of *The Times* on 23 January was a reference to a report 'put together with the help of the joint intelligence committee . . . Due to be published last autumn it was blocked by No 10 as too negative'. The BBC discussed it on the 27th,⁵⁹ so evidently Whitehall had decided to release it. Since when *Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security: A national security assessment*,⁶⁰ has put been on the Net. It includes these paragraphs.

Ecosystem degradation or collapse will challenge the UK's food security. The UK relies on global markets for its food and for fertiliser. The UK imports 40% of its food from overseas, with over 25% coming from Europe. The UK is heavily reliant on imports for fresh fruit, vegetables and sugar. Animal farming at current levels is unsustainable without imports - soy from South America makes up 18% of produced animal feed. Nearly 50% of packaged products contain imported palm oil. The UK is not self-sufficient in fertiliser – for both nitrogen and phosphorus it is partially reliant on imports. Global phosphorus production is dominated by China and Morocco.

The UK is unable to be food self-sufficient at present, based on current diets and prices. Full self sufficiency would require very substantial price increases for consumers, as well as improvements in efficiency, waste reduction and resilience across the food system, including agricultural production, food processing, distribution and consumption. The UK does not have enough land to feed its population and rear livestock: a wholesale change in consumer diets would be required. It would also require greater investment in the agri-food sector so that it is capable of innovating in sustainable food production.

Without significant increases in UK food system and supply chain resilience, it is unlikely the UK would be able to maintain food security if ecosystem collapse drives geopolitical competition for food. The UK relies on imports for a proportion of both food and fertiliser and cannot currently produce enough food to feed its population based on current diets. Countries best placed to adapt are those that invest in ecosystem protection and restoration, and resilient and efficient food systems.

⁵⁹ <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce9y1e09j72o#>>

⁶⁰ <<https://shorturl.at/Joarh>> or <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/696e0eae719d837d69afc7de/National_security_assessment_-_global_biodiversity_loss__ecosystem_collapse_and_national_security.pdf>

No wonder the government did not want this published! How is the British political system, unwilling or unable to control something as relatively piffling as the privatised child care industry, going to do any of the things required to increase domestic food and fertiliser production? To take the obvious example: will this – or any foreseeable – government stop the building of housing estates on prime farmland?

Not a million miles from this, and more immediately pressing, is the issue of water supplies in general and the demand for water by AI companies in particular. The UK already has substantial areas which are suffering what is euphemistically called 'stress' where water is concerned. For instance, a government report, *Water use in AI and Data Centres*, notes that in water poor regions such as Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, and Norfolk:

housing and business growth [is] constrained by water supply availability and inadequate or ageing water infrastructure'.⁶¹

It also comments that:

the UK's ambition to be a global leader in AI and a top destination for technology businesses currently creates a direct tension with its Net Zero commitments and existing water scarcity challenges.

Another semi-official report concludes:

AI has potential to address challenges in healthcare, inequality and climate monitoring. However, these benefits must be weighed against the full environmental impact of building and running AI systems. This requires development of a comprehensive and transparent series of metrics that include carbon emissions, energy consumption, water usage, biodiversity and social impact. Only by looking at AI through these combined lenses can we ensure it delivers net benefit rather than widening inequality or disproportionately impacting communities and regions.⁶²

How likely do you think it is that those considerations will be taken seriously by this – or any foreseeable – UK government seeking economic growth and new jobs? The evidence suggests that the game is already up and the AI companies will get what they want, where they want it.⁶³ And populations in areas under water 'stress' can look forward to standpipes.

⁶¹ <<https://shorturl.at/OBNgb>> or <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/688cb407dc6688ed50878367/Water_use_in_data_centre_and_AI_report.pdf>

⁶² <<https://sustainableict.blog.gov.uk/2025/09/17/ais-thirst-for-water/>>

⁶³ <<https://www.thecanary.co/uk/analysis/2026/01/06/ai-data-centres-water-stressed-areas/>>

Wikilaundering

Wikipedia is a wonderful thing and I give it a tenner every year. But the closer you get to politics and areas of historical controversy the less reliable it is. Because it is omnipresent, there is a minor industry devoted to editing Wiki entries to remove negative material. A striking example of this was posted recently.⁶⁴ Under the headline 'London PR firm rewrites Wikipedia for governments and billionaires', it reported that one of the London-based PR companies involved in this, Portland Communications, was founded by Tim Allen, who until recently was director of communications for prime minister Starmer. In which role, it would have to be said, he did not do very well.

Happy trails

Below, under subheading **Ukraine and NATO**, I referred to Russian claims that the US had created a number of biological warfare plants in Ukraine. A reader of this column pointed me towards two essays. The first is by Finian Cunningham, 'Despite U.S. Bluff and Bluster, Pentagon's Bioweapon Threat to Russia and China Is Serious'.⁶⁵ Cunningham writes:

When Russia launched its intervention in Ukraine on February 24, the Kiev regime promptly ordered a network of 30 laboratories funded and managed by the Pentagon to destroy samples of pathogens. That these laboratories were engaged in biological weapons development was later *admitted* on March 8 by U.S. State Department official Victoria Nuland during hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. (Emphasis added.)

Nuland said that *in public*? This didn't seem likely; and no, in fact she didn't. She said Ukraine has 'biological research facilities'.⁶⁶ Why spice it up?⁶⁷

⁶⁴ <<https://shorturl.at/9TsS4>> or <<https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2026-01-14/london-pr-firm-rewrites-wikipedia-for-governments-and-billionaires>>

⁶⁵ <<https://shorturl.at/8IjXg>> or <<https://strategic-culture.su/news/2022/04/16/despite-us-bluff-and-bluster-pentagon-bioweapon-threat-to-russia-and-china-is-serious/>>

⁶⁶ <<https://shorturl.at/I5r4d>> or <<https://www.c-span.org/clip/senate-committee/user-clip-nuland-confirms-existence-of-bio-research-labs-in-ukraine/5005368>>

⁶⁷ The journalists' directory, Muckrack, tells me that Cunningham has written for *Russia Today* and *Sputnik*. So pro-Russian? But also for *The Unz Review* and *Veterans Today*, both far right conspiracy theory sites, and *Lew Rockwell*, whose content is difficult to easily categorise.

The content of the second recommended essay, by Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, is suggested by the title: 'Documents expose US biological experiments on allied soldiers in Ukraine and Georgia',⁶⁸ But she wrote this by researching publicly available material. Surely Pentagon biological *weapons* development would be a closely-held secret?

The putative existence of such biological weapons developments by the US has been a recurring theme in Russian propaganda. Thus far they have apparently offered no actual evidence.⁶⁹

'Havana syndrome' returns

Two recent snippets have appeared on the 'Havana syndrome' theme which has been touched on in this column.⁷⁰ Said 'syndrome' was the name given to a series of stories about US diplomatic personnel being assaulted by some kind of Russian beam weapon – presumably, but not definitively, microwave based. (The first such reports came from the US embassy in Havana.)

The first item was a story which came out of the US attack on Venezuela. A member of the Venezuelan armed forces is reported as saying that he and hundreds of his colleagues were assaulted and immobilised by some kind of beam.⁷¹ The second was a report from CBS that in 2024 the US bought – 'using Pentagon funding that exceeded eight figures' – one of the Russian beam weapons.⁷²

Neighbourhood radiation?

⁶⁸ <<https://shorturl.at/Hq0Bx>> or <<https://dilyana.bg/documents-expose-us-biological-experiments-on-allied-soldiers-in-ukraine-and-georgia/>>

⁶⁹ See, for example, <<https://shorturl.at/efiS1>> or <<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/russia-suspects-the-us-of-developing-biological-weapons-in-secret-laboratories-around-the-world>>.

⁷⁰ See, for example, under subhead **Havana Syndrome** in this column in *Lobster* 88. <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/88/the-view-from-the-bridge-51/>>.

⁷¹ <<https://shorturl.at/sORCH>> or <<https://www.newsbreak.com/share/4434974323408-us-used-powerful-mystery-weapon-that-brought-venezuelan-soldiers-to-their-knees-during-maduro-raid-witness-account>>

⁷² <www.cbsnews.com/news/device-havana-syndrome-obtained-by-u-s-government/> See also <<https://sashaingber.substack.com/p/exclusive-us-has-been-testing-a-captured>>.

Dick Russell, whom I quote fairly regularly in this column, returned to a subject I have written about here: the possible radiation from cell phone towers. He wrote:

There is a real crisis looming that's getting almost zero attention. The Federal Communications Commission, the very agency that's supposed to protect the public from such dangers, is actively looking to undo what minimal rules are currently in place around the expansion of cell towers. The FCC's new proposed rules would strip away virtually all remaining power to regulate cell towers and antennas from local governments, and would fast-track 5G deployment into every neighborhood across the country.

The UK government's position is laid out in *Mobile phone base stations: radio waves and health*⁷³ and follows the line taken by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.⁷⁴ This body states that there is no research evidence that there are any health consequences from non-ionizing radiation. Other, non-governmental bodies, are not so sure. The Environmental Health Trust lists schools and public bodies in the US which are trying to keep cell towers away from people.⁷⁵ Given the economic significance of the internet and mobile (cell) phones, how much faith should we put in official research? Not much, in my view. The economic consequences of an official statement that mobile phone/internet tech is a health hazard would be so serious, it is close to inconceivable that the authorities in either the US or the UK would state this. On the other hand, house prices near cell towers are lower than elsewhere.⁷⁶ The word – accurate or not – is slowly getting out.

Gerry Gable

Gerry Gable has died. An anti-fascist campaigner and organiser, Gable was editor of *Searchlight* for many years. There was an obituary by Andrew Bell in

⁷³ <<https://shorturl.at/hG72i>> or <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>>

⁷⁴ <<https://www.icnirp.org/en/frequencies/radiofrequency/index.html>>

⁷⁵ See, for example, <<https://ehtrust.org/health-effects-of-cell-towers-near-homes-and-schools/>> and <<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s62217/>> and <<https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/10.1139/A10-018>>.

⁷⁶ <<https://ehtrust.org/new-research-cell-towers-near-homes-drop-property-values/>>

the *Guardian* on 13 January.⁷⁷ Back in the early 1990s there was quite a bit about Gerry Gable in these columns, much of it centred round the so-called 'Gable memorandum', a letter he apparently wrote to MI5. Bell comments on this:

For many years, Gerry was the target of allegations that he secretly worked for the security services. This arose from a memo he wrote in 1977 while working as a researcher on the investigative ITV show *The London Programme*. He was a novice at mainstream journalism and felt he had to impress. In the memo, which three years later was leaked by someone on the programme, he laid claim to high level secret service contacts in various agencies. In fact, he was, as he later explained ruefully to me, "just flamming it up for an editor . . . I wasn't the first to do it, but I paid a heavier price than most".

The fact he had no such contacts was clear to me in 1981, when *Searchlight* obtained evidence of a planned neo-Nazi bomb attack on the Notting Hill carnival in London, and Gerry and I had to use a convoluted route through a friendly journalist to get the information to the security services.

This really won't do. Even a cursory look at the 'Gable memo' shows that Gable had a relationship with MI5. I wonder how long it has been since Bell read it? See for yourself. The memo was reproduced and discussed in 'Our *Searchlight* problem' in *Lobster* 24.⁷⁸

Ukraine and NATO

The best writing on the background to the Ukraine conflict I have seen recently is two essays by the late Lord Robert Skidelsky in which he tries to unpack Russian actions and counter 'the Russians are coming' line now dominant in Western Europe defence circles. In the first of them⁷⁹ he notes comments by former Defence Secretary Lord George Robertson:

⁷⁷ <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/13/gerry-gable-obituary>>

⁷⁸ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/24/our-searchlight-problem/>>

⁷⁹ <<https://robertskidelsky.substack.com/p/ukraine-the-delusion-of-the-warmongers>>

The second piece is a response to critics of the first:

<<https://robertskidelsky.substack.com/p/follow-up-to-ukraine-the-delusions>>.

Skidelski is still best known for his biography of J. M. Keynes. He died in early 2026.

[Robertson's] presentation of the Russian threat is weird. He presents Russia as economically failing, militarily inept ('advancing one millimetre at a time' in Ukraine), and demographically imploding ('the younger generation being eliminated'), while simultaneously arguing that Russia is an existential threat not just to its neighbours but to Europe as a whole (the UK is 'directly in the crosshairs').

These two claims cannot both be true. A state suffering acute demographic decline, a stalled military, and a failing economy cannot simultaneously constitute a multi-theatre threat to Europe.

Skidelsky also comments on the (unstated) rationale for massive European-wide rearmament that

. . . is being justified through the language of security, yet in practice functions as an attempt to revive Europe's weak productivity and failing industrial base—an industrial strategy masquerading as a defence imperative, in effect a post-pandemic and post-stagnation strategy of military Keynesianism. From this perspective, the insistence on an existential Russian threat functions not simply as a strategic assessment but as political cover for a massive industrial mobilisation that EU leaders hope will restore European economic competitiveness.

His critique of the West's involvement in Ukraine does not mention the American activities leading up to the arrival of the pro-NATO president Victor Yushenko in 2005. (Perhaps he takes for granted that his readers understand this.) I was reminded of these events when I came across in my files a yellowing hard copy of a two page spread in the *Mail on Sunday* in 2005 by Mark Almond: 'If the Cold War is over why did the CIA buy the Ukraine election?'⁸⁰ Almond stated: 'The Americans alone gave pro-Yushenko groups at least £50 million'. Nor does Skidelsky mention the evidence showing that the massacre on the Maidan Square, which was the immediate cause of the downfall of the pro-Russian government, was the work of the Ukrainian far-right.⁸¹

Looking at Skidelsky's Wikipedia entry,⁸² the man has had a complex political journey. A founder member of the SDP, he moved to the Conservative

⁸⁰ *Mail on Sunday* 2 January 2005. Alas not on-line, as far as I can see.

⁸¹ Ivan Katchanovski, 'The "snipers" massacre" on the Maidan in Ukraine'. <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4628852>

⁸² Some people – notably Nick Must, who writes for *Lobster* – don't trust and will not cite Wikipedia. Here everything I quote from the Wiki entry on Skidelsky is third party sourced.

Party. At one point he was appointed a Conservative spokesman in the House of Lords but was dismissed by then Conservative leader William Hague for publicly opposing NATO's bombing of Serbia. In September 2015 Skidelsky endorsed Jeremy Corbyn's campaign in the Labour Party leadership election, writing in *The Guardian*:

Corbyn should be praised, not castigated, for bringing to public attention these serious issues concerning the role of the state and the best ways to finance its activities. The fact that he is dismissed for doing so illustrates the dangerous complacency of today's political elites. Millions in Europe rightly feel that the current economic order fails to serve their interests. What will they do if their protests are simply ignored?

And finally we are told he was 'a non-executive director on the board of Russian oil company Russneft'. Mmmmmm. . . .

*

I saw this from John Ward:

He [Putin] negotiated openly with NATO in 2014 to end the bloodshed between Russian speakers and others in The Ukraine. NATO and Washington agreed 'Not to move a millimetre towards the RF border with Ukraine' then placed a series of biowarfare centres directly along that border – while bankrolling the Pentagon creature Volodomore Zelensky to break the 2014 ceasefire at every opportunity.⁸³

How much of this is true? I looked at the biowarfare centres allegation. Such Russian claims have been universally poo-pooed as disinformation in the West. (Well, they would be, you may be thinking.) The Russian charges were presented to the UN in 2022 in a letter.⁸⁴ The evidence supporting the claims is apparently contained in two files at the end of the on-line version of the letter. Alas, neither link worked when I tried them.

While searching for evidence of said biowarfare centres I came across JATEC, The NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre, officially inaugurated in February 2025. On JATEC's site⁸⁵ there is this:

JATEC's Role

⁸³ <<https://therealslog.ghost.io/crying-wolf/>>

⁸⁴ Letter text at <<https://docs.un.org/en/A/76/785>>.

⁸⁵ <<https://www.act.nato.int/jatec/>>

JATEC, as one of the important pillars of the NATO-Ukraine evolving jointness, is to provide for the NATO-Ukraine interoperability, to contribute to the development of NATO's and Ukraine's transformation in deterrence and defence, crisis prevention, crisis management and cooperative security. JATEC identifies and supports to apply lessons from Russia's war against Ukraine. . . . JATEC will support Ukraine in their objective to be able to conduct joint activities with NATO on all levels.

So we have 'interoperability', 'evolving jointness' and 'joint activities'; but we don't have Ukraine actually joining NATO. This may be how the US and Ukraine will meet one of Russia's central demands in the coming peace deal: that Ukraine does not become a member of NATO. JATEC offers membership in everything but name.

Footnotes or hypertexts?

With all its footnotes, *Lobster* now looks very old-fashioned. This is simply a choice I have made. Yes, I could follow other journals and put notes as hypertexts. But I don't like reading texts covered in underlinings or with words in different colours. So footnotes will remain.

Not the Soviet terror network

An anonymous correspondent asked me if I had seen Daniela Richterova's *Watching the Jackals: Prague's Covert Liaisons with Cold War Terrorists and Revolutionaries* (Georgetown Studies in Intelligence History).⁸⁶ I hadn't; but from the Amazon summary it sounds rather interesting:

Richterova unveils the story of Prague's engagement with various factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as some of the era's most infamous terrorists including Carlos the Jackal, Munich Olympics massacre commander Abu Daoud, and the Abu Nidal Organization. Richterova explains why terrorists and revolutionaries had long gravitated towards Prague, why Prague benefitted from the attraction, and why Czechoslovakia's powerful security and intelligence

⁸⁶ <<https://shorturl.at/QGoZG>> or <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Watching-Jackals-Liaisons-Terrorists-Revolutionaries/dp/1647125146/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0>

apparatus – the StB (Státní bezpečnost) – felt ambivalent about these unpredictable groups.

There is one essay by Richterova, a book review, on-line and free.⁸⁷ Its subject matter is clearly related to her new book. In it she discusses the work of academics working in the state-intelligence relations field who show in detail, country by country, that reality differed greatly from the view that Soviet intelligence directed all the Warsaw Pact agencies.

As for the 'terror network' theory invented by those around Ronald Reagan, she writes:

. . . the 1980s saw a number of prominent American journalists, practitioners, and politicians advance ideologically driven interpretations of state-terrorism. Most famously and controversially, some argued that Moscow and its satellites were supporting a worldwide terror network aimed at destabilising Western democratic societies. The so-called 'terror network theory' found ardent supporters within the Reagan Administration, not least Secretary of State Alexander Haig and CIA Director Bill Casey who spent considerable energy and taxpayer money trying to substantiate this narrative.

There were a fair few on the liberal/left around at the time who knew the whole thing was a scam;⁸⁸ and I don't suppose very many professional intelligence analysts believed it, either. But hey, the US military-industrial-complex needed a new 'threat' to generate arms spending and one was duly manufactured.

Related to which, the US's desire to constantly expand NATO is largely driven by the same thing: weapons spending. New NATO countries buy US weapons and/or communications systems when they join.

. . . or get off the pot

⁸⁷ 'Reconnecting the dots: state-terrorist relations during the Cold War' at <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02684527.2021.2001956>>. Richterova is at King's College, London, which is partially funded by the Ministry of Defence. It is the only university I have visited which had an armed guard on the door.

⁸⁸ Including this journal, of course. See the 1990 'Truth Twisting: notes on disinformation' in *Lobster* 19 at <<https://shorturl.at/aUzYj>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/19/truth-twisting-notes-on-disinformation/>>. Re-reading this I was struck by the sheer crudity of the disinformation being pumped out by the anti-left forces in the UK.

I have distrusted Andrew Neil since he was editing the *Sunday Times* in the late 1980s and early 1990s and ran MI5 disinformation in its columns. These days, as well as a weekly programme on Times Radio, he writes a column for the *Daily Mail*. On 27 November its headline was:

This is a watershed moment in our economic history that will consign Britain to a Lost Decade.

Six weeks later, 1 January, the column was headed:

The evidence suggests this will be a year of economic revival that could lift Britain out of its gloom

Well, come on Mr Neil, which is it: a lost decade or economic revival?

Brexit

I look at the *Morning Star* website from time to time and saw this in an editorial on 30 December 2025:

Labour must not reverse Brexit. At least one of the reasons for working-class support for Brexit was creating the space for state-led economic intervention to bring jobs, in manufacturing above all, back to former industrial districts. People well understood that the EU's neoliberal rules rendered such a return to social democracy impossible.⁸⁹

I didn't pay much attention to the Brexit referendum: I assumed 'Remain' would win comfortably. Influenced by Larry Elliot at the *Guardian*, I voted 'Leave' for the reason expressed in the last sentence above: the EU's neoliberal rules would make rebuilding the British domestic economy difficult. But looking at the issue now, what manufacturing could be brought 'back to former industrial districts'? From where? Funded by what, to make what? Most of the British economy is now owned by overseas companies.⁹⁰

Are spies important?

⁸⁹ <<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/labour-must-not-reverse-brexit>>

⁹⁰ Angus Hanton in his *Vassal State*, writes that 56% of British shares are now owned overseas. See the review by John Booth at <<https://shorturl.at/TrHHT>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/89/vassal-state-how-america-runs-britain-by-angus-hanton/>>.

This question arose again with the death of CIA officer Aldrich Ames in prison in early January. His obituary in *The Times* carried his comment, made during his sentencing for espionage in 1994, that spying was 'a self-serving sham carried out by careerist bureaucrats who managed to deceive policy-makers and the public about the necessity and value of their work'.

This proposition was considered in my review of Philip Knightley's *A Hack's Progress in Lobster* 34.⁹¹ Knightly quoted Ames and added that he had attended an historical conference on intelligence in Germany in 1994.

I challenged a panel that included Sergei Kondrashov; his colleague the former head of the KGB Leonid Sherbarshin; former head of East German intelligence, Markus Wolff; and former head of West German intelligence, Heribert Hellenbroich, to name a single important historical event in peacetime in which intelligence had played a decisive role. No one could so so.

I thought then that Knightley was being harsh. I wrote:

By asking for a 'decisive role' played by intelligence Knightley is asking for too much. Even during the Cold War there have been occasions when the intelligence services, the CIA and SIS for example, actually did provide intelligence of substance. The first that springs to mind was the Cuban missile crisis, when the information from the Soviet intelligence officer Penkofsky about the actual accuracy of Soviet missiles did appear to play a major role in the outcome of the crisis.

The second was the role of Oleg Gordievsky in explaining Soviet policy and thinking just at the point when the Soviet Union was cracking up, thus smoothing the way for the Gorbachev relationship first with Thatcher and then with the Americans. 'Decisive' – maybe not; but not insignificant.

Dallas again

1) a correction

In the previous issue, in this column under subhead **Israel and Dallas**, I stated 'All we know for sure is that Angleton's department of the CIA was reading Oswald's mail in America after his return from the USSR'. This is wrong. You might think that after 40+ years of doing this that I would have learned not to trust my memory – especially in a field as complex as the

⁹¹ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/34/are-spies-useless/>>

Kennedy assassination. Alas I hadn't, and in this case my memory was wrong. That *isn't* all we know for sure. In fact there were three sections of the CIA monitoring Oswald after his return from the Soviet Union.⁹² This makes no difference to my conclusions in that essay but still . . .

2) Rob Reiner

The murder of film director Rob Reiner and his wife got much mainstream media attention, in none which did I see any reference to his work in the Kennedy assassination field. This is described by Dick Russell⁹³ and James DiEugenio who both worked with Reiner on the assassination.⁹⁴

⁹² See chapter 2 of Bill Simpich's *State Secret* at <https://www.maryferrell.org/pages/State_Secret_Chapter2.html>.

⁹³ <<https://dickrussell.substack.com/p/rob-and-michele-reiner>>

⁹⁴ <<https://shorturl.at/k2AU0>> or <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/eulogy-for-rob-and-michele-reiner>>