

The View from the Bridge

(a kind of blog)

Robin Ramsay

Jackie doesn't flinch (and other JFK bits and pieces)

There are lots of bits of film on YouTube about the Kennedy assassination and I've looked at many. Recently I clicked on one made by one George Jettison, which opens with him – a large bearded figure – talking to his camera.¹ I don't know why I stayed with it when the picture froze leaving just his voice, but I did; and just as well. Jettison eventually shows the Zapruder film on his computer, freezes it at the frame which shows the head shot and says that the big wound on JFK's right temple which appears after that frame must have been added after the event because *Jackie doesn't flinch*. She doesn't flinch even though her face is a couple of inches away from what, had the shot actually happened, would have been a spray of blood, brains and bone. I have watched the Zapruder film of Kennedy's assassination dozens of times and I never noticed this. (But who looks at Jackie?) And it's so obvious. Thank you, Mr Jettison.² There are now many analyses of the fakery in the Z film on YouTube. John Costella's introduction to all this is probably the place to begin.³

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Mark Groubert notes that in the USA:

'...there have been 44 documentaries, docudramas and news specials that have aired during this 50th anniversary of the JFK murder. All 44 have somehow "concluded" that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone nut assassin of President Kennedy.'⁴

As he points out, this is all the more striking (a) because only a small

¹ <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ng8DGKIuaa4>>

² If you do watch Jackie you see that she stares at the back of JFK's head (where the exit wound is) then climbs onto the boot of the car to retrieve a piece of his skull.

³ <<http://assassinationscience.com/johncostella/jfk/intro/index.html>>

⁴ <<http://crooksandliars.com/mark-groubert/killing-oswald-what-really-happened#sthash.Jfrf8iQZ.dpuf>>

minority of the US population believe the official version and (b) only three books have ever been published defending the Warren Commission report (all of which have been comprehensively trashed) while there have been dozens of academically respectable books critiquing it.

*

Kennedy's assassination is conspicuous by its absence in the 200 plus pages of transcribed interview conducted in 2009 with the then 80-year old Bobby Baker, LBJ's right-hand man in the Senate. However, there are some sections about bribery and sexual hanky-panky among senators and congressmen (making money, getting drunk and getting laid seem to have been the priorities for many senators).⁵ According to Baker, Gerald Ford became J. Edgar Hoover's informant on the Warren Commission because Hoover had a tape of him getting a blowjob from the hot hooker in Washington political circles at the time, Ellen Rometsch. Among her clients was JFK; and when the Republicans got wind of this, JFK's brother (and Attorney General) expelled her (illegally) from the US. Because Rometsch had originally come from East Germany, the FBI suspected she might be a Soviet bloc agent. No evidence of this has every appeared. Rometsch has not been seen or heard of since. My guess would be that the Kennedys paid her to disappear.⁶

Well ye ken noo

Slight stirrings in Parliament about the Snowden revelations of the NSA/GCHQ's global surveillance ambitions. The Home Affairs Committee asked to question the head of MI5; the Home Secretary, Teresa May, duly refused on the grounds that his appearance would 'duplicate' the existing oversight provided by the Intelligence and Security Committee. Thus the beauty of the ISC from the state's perspective: it provides the appearance of accountability and scrutiny while actually providing neither. Its members are appointed by the prime minister (advised by the state, of course). The Home Affairs Committee members are appointed by other MPs.

⁵ <<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/11/sex-in-the-senate-bobby-baker-99530.html>>

⁶ The complete transcript, over 200 pages of it, a fascinating read, is at <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/11/sex-in-the-senate-bobby-baker-99530_Page3.html> On Rometsch see <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/JFKrometsch.htm>>.

The prime minister rejected the committee's request to cross-examine his national security adviser, Kim Darroch,

'on the basis that his role focused on providing private advice to him and the national security council and his appearance would "set a difficult precedent."'

In response to these refusals, Vaz said that Home Secretary May will be questioned about these issues when she appears. But he knows she will say nothing substantive. These are the formal moves between executive and parliament.

Tim Farron, Liberal-Democrat MP, at least has grasped half of one of the central issues:

'When the programs systemically collecting your personal information are so secret that even the cabinet are not aware of their existence, our democratic oversight has rescinded to the point of extinction.'

Except 'rescinded' implies it existed in the first place.⁷

Another aspect of this was succinctly put in a comment on the *Guardian's* 'comment is free' by 'Councillor':

'Who, exactly, authorised the handing over of the secrets of our country to another power, without first establishing who would have access to the material?

Were any assurances demanded or given about the security of the information?

Was there ANYONE in the UK who was aware that something like 200,000 Americans could read this stuff, and pass it on to any third party?'

Recently I came across an interview I did by e-mail a couple of years ago with *The Occupied Times* which I had forgotten about.⁸ In it I noticed this comment:

'And GCHQ and the NSA are recording and analysing every form of electronic emission from baby monitors upwards.'

Which is to say: thank you Mr Snowden for shoving the details into the politicians' faces but that this was going on wasn't exactly a secret.

⁷ I have taken all this from
<<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/dec/11/theresa-may-mi5-committee-oversight>>.

⁸ <<http://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=3444>>

There's an old Scottish gag, which I first heard from the poet Alan Jackson, which goes like this. As the unrepentant sinners arrive in Hell to discover that Hell really exists, they cry out: 'Lord, Lord, we didnae ken'. And the Lord in his infinite wisdom and mercy replies: 'Well ye ken noo'.

Farewell to the fiftieth

Well, the 50th anniversary of that day in Dallas came and went and little of consequence made it onto the mainstream media in this country. For anyone not *au fait* with the story, here is a starting point.

The first illustration is one of the autopsy pictures showing the wound on JFK's back. But notice that the back of the head is apparently intact.



Illustration two is a montage of medical personnel who worked on JFK's body, demonstrating where the head wound was – on the right rear.



The conflict between these two illustrations means:

- (a) all the medical personnel misremembered it;
- (b) the first picture is not JFK's head; or
- (c) it is JFK's head but it has been altered, perhaps with the scalp and hair pulled down over the wound (if this could be done; if the scalp could be intact) and all the blood and brains visible in other autopsy pictures (example below, illustration 3) removed.



The medical lies began with the autopsy.

The rest of the lies began with the rifle discovered in the Book Depository. Four Dallas policemen, who found the rifle, identified it as a Mauser. The rifle was then replaced by the notorious Mannlicher-Carcano. The original affidavit of one of the four, Seymour Weitzman, like the autopsy pictures, is available on-line.⁹

Although the JFK assassination literature is now extremely complex, to understand the initial lies is easy. Yet somehow this is beyond the capacity of the British and American mainstream media.¹⁰

⁹ <<http://jfk.ci.dallas.tx.us/04/0433-001.gif>> The autopsy pictures are available by Googling 'JFK + autopsy pictures'.

¹⁰ The media coverage around the 50th anniversary, predominantly American, is described in great detail at <www.patspeer.com/the-onslaught>.

Secret?

And lo, on November 21, BBC's Panorama revealed 'Britain's Secret Terror Force' – the Army's Military Reaction Force, MRF. Secret? This appeared in *Lobster* 52:

'Fast forward to 2006 and researchers in the national archives have discovered a 1974 army briefing paper titled 'Army Plain Clothes Patrols in Northern Ireland'. The briefing states:

"Plainclothes teams, initially joint RUC/army patrols, have operated in Northern Ireland since the IRA bombing campaign in Easter 1971. Later in 1971 the teams were reformed and expanded as Military Reaction Forces (MRFs) without RUC participation. In 1972 the operations of the MRF were brought under more centralised control and a higher standard of training achieved by establishing a Special Reconnaissance Unit (SRU) of 130 with all ranks under direct command of HQNI. The term 'Special Reconnaissance Unit' and the details of its organisation and mode of operations have been kept secret. The SRU operates in Northern Ireland at present under the cover name *Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Teams (Northern Ireland)* – NITAT(NI) – ostensibly the equivalent of genuine NITAT teams in UKLF [United Kingdom Land Forces] and BAOR [British Army of the Rhine]."

Almost a quarter of a century before that, the MRF was written about in some detail by Roger Faligot in his *Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland: the Kitson Experiment* (London: Zed Press, 1983) and subsequently in *Lobsters* 1, 10, 18 and 19.

Important reports

Two important reports have appeared recently. *The Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre: Giving peace a chance?* by Tom Mills, David Miller, Tom Griffin and Hilary Aked is a study of BICOM, its creation and influence in British politics. Among its chapters are 'The second intifada and the establishment of BICOM', 'BICOM and British Zionism', 'BICOM strategy, elite networks and the media' and 'The Fox-Werritty scandal and the decline of democracy'. If you are only going to read one chapter, make it chapter five, 'BICOM strategy, elite networks and the media', which describes in great detail BICOM's (largely

successful) campaigns to get the British media to follow a pro-Israel line. This 96 page report can be downloaded as a PDF file.¹¹

Nicholas Shaxson wrote *Treasure Islands: tax havens and the men who stole the world* (London: 2011). He is the co-author, with John Christensen, of *The Finance Curse: how oversized financial centres attack democracy and corrupt economies*. This is a wonderful piece of work which, *inter alia*, critiques in great detail the various claims made about the significance of the financial services sector to the British economy and examines the negative effects for the rest of us of having what is essentially an unregulated global casino in our midst. That this country is now set on a course of absolute decline is largely down to the City's dominance of the economic conversation in this country since the 1970s (and the gullibility of the politicians who believed what they were told). This is downloadable as a PDF file and should be read.¹²

Conspiracy theorist bashing

The appointment of Liberal Democrat MP, Norman Baker, to a position as a junior minister at the Home Office produced outbursts of conspiracy theorist-bashing from two columnists at the *Daily Telegraph*. Here's Damien Thompson, erstwhile editor of that bastion of rationality, the *Catholic Herald*:

'Here's a piece of news to set the eyes of every conspiracy theorist swivelling under their tin-foil trilbies. The British government has been infiltrated..... by conspiracy theorists! It happened on Monday afternoon, in the full glare of the cameras. Norman Baker, a Liberal Democrat MP who believes that MI5 covered up the murder of Dr David Kelly by Iraqi agents, has been promoted to Home Office minister in the reshuffle.'¹³

Another *Telegraph* columnist Dan Hodges, also had a go at Baker, concluding with this asinine statement:

'I've never read Baker's book, and can't comment on the veracity

¹¹ At <www.dropbox.com/s/rgb5yn4vjt2q74r/Giving%20Peace%20a%20Chance%3F-Spinwatch-2013.pdf>.

¹² At <www.taxjustice.net/cms/upload/pdf/Finance_Curse_Final.pdf>.

¹³ <<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/damianthompson/100240509/did-the-freemasons-stage-the-moon-landings-if-so-new-home-office-minister-norman-baker-will-find-out/>>

of his claims. Except to say they're clearly bonkers.'¹⁴

GCHQ: looking for a line

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, chair of the House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee:

'In recent months concern has been expressed at the suggested extent of the capabilities available to the intelligence agencies and the impact upon people's privacy as the agencies seek to find *the needles in the haystacks* that might be crucial to safeguarding national security.'¹⁵

Former MI6 officer, Alan Petty, who writes as Alan Judd:

'Realistically, however, we've no alternative but to go on as before. We have enemies, as Andrew Parker reminds us, who although relatively few would not hesitate to obliterate us if they could. If we want to protect ourselves – and who seriously would argue that we shouldn't? – we have to spy on them. In electronic terms that means *looking for needles in haystacks* and you can't do that without having access to the whole hayfield.'¹⁶

GCHQ head Sir Ian Lobban, facing the Intelligence and Security Committee, 7 November:

'The internet is "*an enormous hayfield*" and GCHQ was trying to access "those parts of the field that we can get access to and which might be lucrative in terms of containing the *needles or the fragments of the needles* we might be interested in, that might help our mission.'"

The obvious response of state agencies to the news of GCHQ/NSA's global trawling operations would be to give up using the Internet. There have been two reports of this thus far. In July the *Guardian* reported that

¹⁴ <<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/danhodges/100240167/conspiracy-theorist-norman-baker-is-new-home-office-minister-this-is-bonkers/>>

A review I did for the *Fortean Times* of one of Thompson's books appears in *Lobster* 64 at <<http://lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster64/lob64-misc-reviews.pdf>>.

¹⁵ <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24560026>>

¹⁶ <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10366941/Edward-Snowden-MI5-The-Guardian-who-are-the-bad-guys.html>

the Russian Federal Guard service had ordered 20 typewriters¹⁷ and the *Telegraph* reported on 27 September that the Indian High Commission had gone back to using typewriters.¹⁸

Crisis? What crisis?

On 24 October Mark Carney, the recently installed governor of the Bank of England, gave a speech setting out his view of the future.¹⁹ Its underlying message can be seen in the headline on the City website Cityam.com: 'Why the Carney doctrine is great news for London's economy'. The accompanying article by Alister Heath began:

'BANKER bashing is over – that was the dramatic message from Mark Carney last night, as he finally ditched his predecessor Lord King's hostility to the City, replacing it instead by a much more sensible approach.'²⁰

Yes, indeed: all is well in the City and all those anxieties about banks being too big, and all that gambling being too dangerous, are exaggerated. On with the show! (And now we know why the Conservatives wanted Carney as governor.)

Former *Guardian* and *Daily Mail* financial journalist, Dan Atkinson, commented:

'Actually, you have to hand it to the City. Not only is it expert at getting out of tight corners, but seems to be getting better at doing so. After all, post-Depression and the war, it had to wait a good three decades, up to the Seventies, before starting to shake off official restraints. This time round it has taken just over six years, since the credit crunch.

Gives yourselves a pat on the back, fellas.'²¹

Carney's speech included this paragraph:

¹⁷ <www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/11/russia-reverts-paper-nsa-leaks>

¹⁸ <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/10339111/Indian-High-Commission-returns-to-typewriters.html>

¹⁹ <www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/speeches/2013/speech690.pdf>

²⁰ <www.cityam.com/article/1382663996/why-carney-doctrine-great-news-london-s-economy?>>

²¹ <<http://blogs.thisismoney.co.uk/author-dan-atkinson/>>, 25 October 2013.

'Today financial services account for a tenth of UK GDP and are the source of over 1 million jobs. Two thirds of those are outside London, including jobs in asset management in Edinburgh, transaction processing in Bournemouth and insurance in Norwich. Being at the heart of the global financial system also broadens the investment opportunities for the institutions that look after British savings, and reinforces the ability of UK manufacturing and creative industries to compete globally. Not to mention that financial services represent one of the UK's largest exports.'

Carney probably didn't write this and we may take it as a statement of the Bank of England's collective view. The 10% GDP and 1 million job figures are shown to be false by Shaxson and Christensen in their *The Finance Curse*, discussed above.

At a much less sophisticated level we can simply say:

* 10% of UK GDP – but half of that is domestic, the high street banks, insurance companies and building societies. Therefore the international sector is about 5%.

* 1 million jobs sounds like a lot but total UK employment is 30 million.

* 'two thirds of those [jobs] are outside London' – and we get nice name checks for bits of provincial England. But Bournemouth and Norwich are within commuting distance of London.

* And being a global financial hub is good for the domestic economy, apparently. (Tell that to the British businesses who can't get loans.)

War games

It was striking that the *Observer* managed to make a fairly big piece out of some declassified documents about the 1983 NATO exercise Able Archer which the Soviets interpreted as preparations for a real assault on their territory.²² Such documentation has been available for a while.²³ Missing from both those cited accounts is the background, the previous decade's worth of US strategic theorists trying to make the nuclear deterrent credible. The problem, as they saw it, was that the US deterrent, threatening all-out retaliation – mutual assured destruction (MAD) – had ceased to be credible: why would the Soviets believe the

²² <www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/02/nato-war-game-nuclear-disaster>

²³ See, for example, the National Security Archive at <www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB426/>.

threat to commit suicide? Thus a group of bright young men – my memory says they were all men – wrote papers trying to elaborate a doctrine in which the threat of nuclear war-fighting short of massive retaliation could be used to make the deterrent ‘credible’. One of the most important of those was an Englishman called Colin S. Gray, now a professor at Reading University.²⁴ Not surprisingly, some of those in the Soviet military interpreted all this talk of nuclear war-fighting as literally preparation for war, something no-one in the US ‘strategic community’ seems to have considered.

The close call the world apparently had in 1983 at the time of Operation Able Archer must rank as one of greatest intelligence failures of the Cold War and emphasises the importance of being able to know your opponents’ intentions, as well as their capabilities. Trying to assess intentions explains why the NSA-GCHQ network is listening to the personal communications of the world’s political leaders.

GCHQ, the NSA and our politicians

On 17 October the chairman of the House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC), Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP, announced in a press release the Committee’s

‘..... intention to do further work on the legislation which governs the security and intelligence agencies’ access to the content of private communications, including to determine whether the relevant Acts of Parliament are still “fit for purpose” given the developments in information technology since they were enacted

In recent months concern has been expressed at the suggested extent of the capabilities available to the intelligence agencies and the impact upon people’s privacy as the agencies seek to find the needles in the haystacks that might be crucial to safeguarding national security. There is a balance to be found between our individual right to privacy and our collective right to

²⁴ You can get a sense of the tone of this debate from the preview of one of Gray’s papers at the time (and its title), ‘Nuclear strategy: the case for a theory of victory’ at www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2626784?uid=3738032&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21102914855671 Alas the paper costs \$19 to acquire in full. None of Gray’s writing from the 1970s and early 1980s appears to be on-line without a charge.

security. An informed and responsible debate is needed.'

This review will take place within the 'review of the legislative framework governing the intelligence agencies' access to private information'.

On past performance, the Committee will eventually produce a big report concluding that, on the whole, things are not so bad, which no-one will read. But until then the prime minister can reply to all questions about GCHQ and the NSA: 'An inquiry is being conducted by the ISC'. Giving the prime minister this kind of cover is one of the committee's secondary functions. Its primary function is to offer the appearance of accountability without its reality.

Michael Meacher MP had it about right on his blog when he wrote four days before the Rifkind statement: 'The Intelligence & Security Committee is a laughing stock and needs to be replaced by proper scrutiny.'²⁵

Meacher pointed out that uniquely among parliamentary select committees, the ISC's members are chosen not by MPs but by the prime minister (thus by the state itself, advising the PM), to whom ISC's reports are submitted.

Two days after Meacher's comments this motion appeared on the House of Commons' order paper:

Intelligence and Security Committee

'That this House considers that the revelations exposed in The Guardian that British security services have examined the internet activities of British citizens without the consent of Parliament demonstrate that the Intelligence and Security Committee is not fit for purpose; believes that the Committee should be chaired by an hon. Member who has not served in a Department with responsibility for intelligence and security services for the purpose of avoiding any potential allegations of conflict of interest; and calls for an independent review reporting to Parliament on the appropriate structure and arrangements to ensure effective Parliamentary democratic scrutiny of the intelligence and security services.'

It was signed by just 9 of the House of Commons current 650 members, eight Labour MPs and one Liberal-Democrat.²⁶

²⁵ <<http://www.michaelmeacher.info/weblog/2013/10/the-intelligence-security-committee-is-a-laughing-stock-and-needs-drastic-reform/#more-5846>>

²⁶ <<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2013-14/576>>

This is not a simple issue to resolve, even if there was any political will to do so. The motion above calls for 'effective Parliamentary democratic scrutiny'. But what does this mean? MPs literally overseeing the activities of the agencies? Michael Meacher suggests that an ISC, chosen by MPs,

'.....should be able to undertake its own investigations as the members may decide. Where the security services are unwilling to disclose documents on grounds of national security, the committee would then have a right to ask the Information Commissioner to review the relevant documents and decide whether or not their disclosure would genuinely put national security at risk, as opposed to its being simply inconvenient to the spooks, and his decision would be final.'

Which is one solution; but not one which this prime minister or any foreseeable prime minister would accept, if only because a part of the prime minister's power resides in his or her unique access to the secret state; and, politics being about power, it is unlikely that a prime minister would relinquish this access.²⁷ Nor would the intelligence and security agencies – let alone their American 'allies' – accept the ultimate decision on what is secret being taken by an outside party.

Any way this particular cake is cut it will come down to political power and MPs' willingness to face down the prime minister, the secret state and the Americans; and even if they believed it to be necessary – and they don't – the present generation of politicians simply do not have that in them.

Curious omissions

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones²⁸ was one of the first academic historians to write about the role of the intelligence agencies in our history. A quick skim through his latest, *In Spies We Trust: The Story of Western Intelligence* (Oxford University Press, 2013) – 90% of which is about UK and US intelligence and their relationship – shows three striking gaps in his account.

1. He writes a good deal early on about the Anglophile elite in American

²⁷ The former MI5 officer Annie Machon writes intelligently about these issues in 'The Empire Strikes Back', dated 11 October, at <<http://anniemachon.ch/>>.

²⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodri_Jeffreys-Jones>

foreign affairs and intelligence in the early years of the last century, but never refers to the Round Table network, which was at the centre of that elite. (For example, he notes, *en passant*, that Philip Kerr was prime minister Lloyd George's private secretary during WW1, but not that Kerr was one of the Round Table's leaders.)

2. The enormous British (mostly MI6) operation against the American isolationists in the early years of WW2 described by Thomas Mahl in his PhD and subsequent book, *Desperate Deception* (Virginia: Brassey's, 1989) is missing.

3. As are the destabilisation operations against the Labour and Liberal parties and the 'wet' Conservatives in the mid 1970s. He refers once to Peter Wright, only to dismiss his claims.

The Atlantic semantic²⁹

I am on the e-mail list of the Atlantic Council³⁰ and received notification of a meeting of theirs, the first in a 'Captains of Industry' series of events. ('Captains of Industry'? Jeez, I thought that expression had died a death in the 1970s.) The meeting, titled 'The Business of Defense in an Age of Austerity: Perspectives from the Mid-Tier', was touted thus:

'The business of defense is at an inflection point formed by the confluence of several factors now in flux. Allied militaries are receding from more than a decade of counterinsurgency wars. Fiscal crises are sharply constraining investment in national defense. Commercial technologies are transforming the locus and leverage of antagonists. In turn, the growth story that had inspired capital markets' support of the post-cold-war defense industry is in its last chapter, and the sequel yet lacks a thesis.'

'Inflection', 'confluence', 'locus and leverage' – and God knows what the last clause means; but here is the voice of the military industrial complex facing harder times.

On the other side of this debate is a report from Scientists for

²⁹ A phrase from William Clark. See his excellent Pink Industry at <<http://pinkindustry.wordpress.com/>>, full of terrific research.

³⁰ From its Website <www.atlanticcouncil.org/>: 'The Atlantic Council promotes constructive leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the central role of the Atlantic Community in meeting global challenges.' I.e. it now promotes the globalisation of NATO. It was founded in 1961.

Global Responsibility on British military R&D which shows:

‘...military R&D spending is heavily focused on offensive weapons systems. Of the spending programmes on which data was available, 76% of the funds were for technology programmes whose main role was “offensive”, i.e. aimed to be used to “project force” far from British shores.

During the three-year period 2008-11, the six largest areas of military R&D funded by the UK government were: combat planes; combat helicopters; long-range submarines; nuclear weapons; nuclear propulsion (for submarines); and unmanned aerial vehicles (drones).³¹

The UK might be in terminal decline but the ‘great power’ delusion lives on in Whitehall.

More JFK assassination anniversary nonsense

Stephen Hunter is an American thriller writer best known for a series about a father and son, Earl and Bob Lee Swagger, both former soldiers and ace snipers. These vary enormously – *Havana* and *Hot Springs*, for example, are pretty poor – but Hunter is a fine writer (as well as a gunnut) and in the others his technique carried this reader through the outbreaks of weapons fetishism and preposterous plots.

This year, in *The Third Bullet*, he has Bob Lee Swagger solve the Kennedy assassination. This isn’t much good as a novel in the Swagger series and as a view of the assassination it is hilarious. Hunter has JFK killed by a sniper in the Dal-Tex building on Dealey Plaza, working for a senior CIA officer who believed that Kennedy was going to embroil America deeper and deeper in the quagmire of Vietnam! In an afterword Hunter tells us that he got his information about the assassination from the Warren Commission Report and two of the handful of books which defended it: Gerald Posner’s *Case Closed* and Vincent Bugliosi’s *Reclaiming History*. I have not read those but suspect that, like the Warren Commission Report, neither discusses JFK’s plans to *withdraw* US forces from Vietnam.³²

³¹ <www.sgr.org.uk/sites/sgr.org.uk/files/SGR_Offensive_Insecurity_%20exec_sum.pdf>

³² On which see, for example, James Galbraith (son of JK) at <www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2007/dec/06/jfks-plans-to-withdraw/?pagination=false>

All our yesterdays

The minutes of the Bonn Economic Summit meeting in July 1978 (and the preparatory work from the US perspective) are now on-line. There's an enormous amount of material there but on the first quick skim of the minutes two things struck me. The first is US president Jimmy Carter saying:

'I disagree with the notion that our unemployment results from the fact that we have, as President Giscard said, thrown our borders open. Factories are not closing because of greater world trade..... I do not believe that our factories are closing because of trade.'

The experience with Chinese imports in the past 20 years has tested that theory to destruction.

And the second was the comment by Japanese prime minister Takeo Fukuda that 'Today the Eastern Bloc is about as powerful as the Free World.'³³ This reflects the absurdly exaggerated estimates made at the time by Western intelligence – and the CIA in particular – of the military and economic strength of the Soviet bloc.

The end of the world as we know it

John Lanchester was given access to the *Guardian's* collection of the Snowden NSA/GCHQ documents in New York and has produced a really excellent account of them and the dangers they imply.³⁴ Lanchester made one very striking omission. He wrote this:

'We do have enemies, though, enemies who are in deadly earnest; enemies who wish you reading this dead, whoever you are, for no other reason than that you belong to a society like this one.....we have enemies who want to kill as many of us, the more innocent the better, as possible, by any means possible, as a deliberate strategy....'

Lanchester means Islamists; and a week or so later MI5 director Sir

³³ <<http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1977-80v03/pdf/frus1977-80v03.pdf>> Dan Atkinson's selection from these minutes is at <<http://aspect2.wordpress.com/>>.

³⁴ <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/edward-snowden-files-john-lanchester>> I could barely be bothered to read this because, as I have commented before on this subject, there is zero chance of our politicians doing anything about this issue; and this being so, to bone up on it is merely to measure the dimensions of their cowardice and our impotence.

Andrew Parker made the same omission, stating that there were 'several thousand Islamist extremists [in the UK] who see the British people as a legitimate target.'³⁵

Their omissions, of course, are the *reason* why they want to kill us: namely, UK support for American foreign policy. From Parker the omission is par for the course for serving intelligence personnel; but Lanchester is usually better than that.

JFK assassination anniversary news

I grew up in a subculture in which self-promotion – 'ego-tripping' – was considered vulgar and I find it hard to shake that attitude. However, at the very least I owe it to my publisher to report that a new edition of my *Who Shot JFK?* has been published. It is mostly the previous edition, running the LBJ's-network-dunnit thesis but with some tweaking here and there and two significant additions:

* The section on Billy Sol Estes has been expanded with recent new information, making the case stronger;³⁶

* and I finally took the plunge and tried to make sense of the medical/forensic evidence which, hitherto, I had considered impenetrable. How good a job I have done.....

Beyond hypocrisy

There's a 1992 book by Edward Herman, *Beyond Hypocrisy*.³⁷ I haven't read this and, though it's subtitled 'Decoding the news in an age of propaganda', the title is an apt shorthand description of American foreign policy. Thus the state which is apparently agitated about the use of 'chemical weapons' in Syria used depleted uranium and phosphorous in their assault on Iraq, drenched much of Vietnam and bits of Laos and Cambodia in Agent Orange, and – lest we forget – recruited the Japanese

³⁵ <www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/08/gchq-surveillance-new-mi5-chief>

³⁶ I discussed this in the previous *Lobster* at <www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster65/lob65-estes.pdf>. Estes' account of the assassination is in his memoir at <<https://www.box.com/s/8b408e6999f8799dfd0a/1/251450825/1960277221/1>>.

³⁷ <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=COGp2FNanIEC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false>

chemical weapons team, Unit 731, at the end of WW2 and declined to hand them over for prosecution for war crimes.³⁸

Here we go again

On the fifth anniversary of the closure of Lehman Brothers bank, marking the official beginning of the great financial fuck-up, Labour chancellor of the exchequer at the time, Alistair Darling, gave us some of his (unexceptional) thoughts on the event in the *Guardian*.³⁹ The only really interesting bit in Darling's memoir showed the reader how he and prime minister Brown had perceived things at the time:

'When I went across to see Gordon in the flat that evening, I told him that nationalization [of RBS] was looking increasingly likely.....like me [he] could see the political watershed we faced. It would hark back to the wilderness years, when Labour appeared unelectable.'⁴⁰

Faced with the biggest economic crisis since the 1930s, not to mention the collapse of everything he and Brown apparently believed – 'light touch' regulation and all that; worshipping at the feet of the City – they were not considering the economic possibilities presented by the Labour government acquiring a major bank, but alarmed that the voters would be reminded of the early 1980s.

If you were unclear what the phrase 'the political perspective' means, this should do it for you.

If Darling is aware that the conditions for another great crash are in place he does not betray this in the interview. The best short account I have seen of how since-nothing-significant-has-changed-things-will-fall-apart-again is James Kwak's 'Five Years Later, We've Learned Nothing From the Financial Crisis: Why haven't we destroyed the idea that destroyed the world?'⁴¹ He concludes thus:

³⁸ I was reminded of this at <<http://dissenter.firedoglake.com/2013/09/08/us-covered-up-for-decades-the-largest-use-of-biological-chemical-weapons-in-history/>>.

³⁹ <www.theguardian.com/business/2013/sep/13/alistair-darling-lessons-lehman-brothers>

⁴⁰ *Back from the brink*, p. 65, reviewed by me at <www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster62/lob62-back-from-brink.pdf>.

⁴¹ <www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/09/5-years-later-weve-learned-nothing-from-the-financial-crisis/279506/> Kwak is one of the main writers at <<http://baselinescenario.com/>>.

'Fast forward to 2013.....and little has changed. Republicans live in a fantasy world where regulation is always bad and deregulation is always good. Democrats scramble to make nice with hedge fund managers and investment bankers. Everyone wants the housing market to recover. The long-term money is still in industry and lobbying. And everyone — especially Democrats — wants growth and jobs more than ever.

Financial stability has no lobby. It has its advocates and academics, like Elizabeth Warren and Anat Admati, but it has no super PAC or 501(c)(4) organization. For a brief moment in 2009 and early 2010, everyone wanted to tame the financial sector, but the Obama administration — led by Summers and by Tim Geithner — chose not to press for the structural reforms that could have made a difference. Today, the media and the public have moved on. Either President Obama truly believes in the deregulatory rhetoric of the 1990s, or he is picking up nickels in front of the bulldozer, betting that the next financial crisis will not occur on his watch....Wall Street's greatest and most important accomplishment was convincing everyone (who mattered) that unregulated finance was good for the world. Five years later, their victory endures.'

James Kwak is an academic, one the American economists who didn't buy the 'best financial regulation is no regulation' line. Another is Paul Krugman. In a recent essay rubbishing those who believe that austerity is the solution to the current crisis,⁴² Krugman shows how since 2008 economists have written papers apparently demonstrating empirically (a) that the way to generate economic growth is to cut state spending and (b) that after the ratio between state debt and gross domestic product reaches a certain figure economic growth becomes impossible. Neither proposition withstood more than a moment's scrutiny but both were seized upon by politicians of the right, bankers and EU *apparatchiks* as support for their inclination to cut the income of the average citizen and the poor to bail out the banks. For Krugman this is

'.....deeply worrying for those who like to believe that knowledge can make a positive difference in the world. To the extent that policymakers and elite opinion in general have made use of economic analysis at all, they have, as the saying goes, done so

⁴² 'How the Case for Austerity Has Crumbled', *The New York Review of Books*, 6 June 2013 <www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/jun/06/how-case-austerity-has-crumbled/?pagination=false>

the way a drunkard uses a lamppost: for support, not illumination. Papers and economists who told the elite what it wanted to hear were celebrated, despite plenty of evidence that they were wrong; critics were ignored, no matter how often they got it right.....For now, the broader message of the past few years remains just how little good comes from understanding.'

Krugman's apparent surprise and disappointment at these developments seems odd to me. Career-minded economists have always been available to show that protecting the interests of the wealthy is how it should and must be.

In a short companion piece to his *Atlantic* essay Kwak concluded:

'Looking back....for the most part little has changed — not just in the financial sector itself, but more importantly in the political and ideological landscape that shapes regulatory policy. Of course, this isn't simply the product of collective amnesia. It's the result of the fact that ideas are shaped by money and political power. And that's where little has changed.'⁴³

By a different route Krugman and Kwak have arrived at the question Lenin famously asked over a hundred years ago: what is to be done? (*Shto delit?*)

Dag's death

With zero publicity in this country that I noticed, a group of 'international jurists', chaired by Sir Stephen Sedley,⁴⁴ has been re-examining the death of UN general secretary Dag Hammarskjöld, 'to report whether in their view the evidence now available would justify the United Nations in reopening its inquiry pursuant to the 1962 resolution of the General Assembly.'

Their report is on-line;⁴⁵ and though I haven't read the main text, the conclusions suggest to me that they have got little that Susan Williams didn't have in her book *Who killed Dag Hammarskjöld? The UN, the Cold War and white supremacy in Africa* (London: Hurst and Company, 2011).⁴⁶ They conclude that the best line of further inquiry is

⁴³ 'Non lessons of the financial crisis' at <<http://baselinescenario.com/>>.

⁴⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Sedley>

⁴⁵ <www.hammarskjoldcommission.org/report/>

⁴⁶ Reviewed at <www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster64/lob64-misc-reviews.pdf>.

to apply through FOIA requests for information on (presumed) NSA monitoring of the Hammarskjöld flight's demise. Such applications have been made but thus far nothing has been forthcoming; nor, in my view, is anything likely to be forthcoming. And thus:

'Commission accordingly neither recommends nor anticipates the resumption of the UN inquiry at large. It would respectfully propose a focused and staged resumption, potentially concluding at the first stage but, if it continues, restricting itself to what will by then be identifiable as the key issues. What these may be are indicated in our report; but we recognise that events can confound predictions.'

The SAS did Di?

First there was one 'SAS-killed-Diana' story. But as that story, to quote the *Mirror*,

'...came in a letter to the elite unit's commanding officer by the parents-in-law of a special forces sniper, known only as Soldier N.....[who] boasted the SAS "was behind Princess Diana's death.."'
47

there was little to be excited about: a secondhand allegation.

Then there was a second 'SAS-killed-Diana' story. In this one – in the *Daily Express*, which has run many Di conspiracy stories – Alan Power, author of *The Princess Diana Conspiracy*,⁴⁸ writes that a former member of the SAS unit called 'the Increment' claims that Diana was killed by MI6 (SIS) with the help of the 'the Increment'.⁴⁹ But according to the *Express* story, Power 'does not produce overwhelming evidence to support his theory or name the assassins'.

Asked to comment on Mr Power's claims, Scotland Yard said: 'The Metropolitan Police is scoping recent information regarding the deaths of Princess Diana and Dodi Al Fayed. This scoping exercise is not complete.'

Is this the first time 'scope' has been used in this way by an official body?

⁴⁷ 1 <<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/princess-diana-death-cops-probe-2179191>>

⁴⁸ <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Princess-Diana-Conspiracy-Alan-Power/dp/0957573804>>

⁴⁹ <<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/425999/MI6-and-SAS-united-in-Princess-Diana-death-plot>>

Scott and Marshall

I am writing this before President Obama has got the approval of Congress for the bombing of Syria. The British major media has made little of the fact that in effect the US (and whomever else it finds to support it) will be joining a civil war on the side of (among others) various Jihadist groups. If you find this inexplicable, Peter Dale Scott, in his usual minutely detailed fashion has assembled all the extant knowledge of previous examples of the US military and intelligence services working with and/or supporting similar Jihadists.⁵⁰

Scott co-authored a series of pioneering parapolitical books with Jonathan Marshall; and Marshall has a new essay available on-line, 'Cooking the Books: The Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the China Lobby and Cold War Propaganda, 1950-1962'.⁵¹ This examines in great detail (it's 17,000 words, including notes) the activities of the notorious Harry Anslinger, U.S. Commissioner of Narcotics and head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN). Using declassified American and British Foreign Office files and a vast array of other sources, Marshall shows that Anslinger was a pioneer in the business of inventing 'intelligence' – in this case claims that 'Red' China was behind the world heroin and opium trade. (In reality it was American allies in the far East.) Marshall concludes:

'By serving up a steady supply of lurid claims to feed the propaganda mills of professional Cold Warriors and China Lobbyists, Anslinger bought protection against budget cuts, premature retirement, loss of authority to rival agencies, and any weakening of the nation's drug laws.'

BAP sighting

Thanks to Corinne Souza who pointed this story out to me.

In the *Independent on Sunday* of 1 September 2013 Yasmin Alibhai Brown wrote the following in a piece called 'The special relationship is over. At long last!'

'When Thatcher and Reagan were locked in their long embrace, I

⁵⁰ <<http://www.thesleuthjournal.com/us-government-protection-of-al-qaeda-terrorists-and-the-us-saudi-black-hole/>>

⁵¹ *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 37, No. 1, September 14, 2013, available at <www.chinacommodities.com/chinacommodities/2013/09/17/cooking-the-books-the-federal-bureau-of-narcotics-the-china-lobby-and-cold/>.

was selected to join a network, the British-American Project, partly funded by the CIA. Politicians, armed force representatives, CEOs, journalists, artists and policy wonks from both countries gathered there and here. I learnt more about this relationship and made some good friends. But the premise was unnerving as I listened to generals talking about the expansion of Israel as if we would all agree that that was necessary. Or Republicans discussing how to keep Japan in its place. So my reservations go back a long way. This marriage of convenience may have the UK and US's security at its heart but, after 60 years, it needs to break up. Only then will both sides be free to interact creatively and independently with each other and the world.' ⁵²

Brown is dissembling just a little. In the long account of the BAP by Andy Beckett in 2004 – which, of course, managed not to mention that Tom Easton had been writing about it in *Lobster* since 1997 – Beckett states that Brown had then been attending the BAP's gatherings for 15 years.⁵³ Evidently her gorge rose slowly. As for the BAP being 'partially funded by the CIA', there is no evidence of this of which I am aware. It might be true; but these days it is more likely that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funds it. ⁵⁴

A lending strike

If you use the Internet a lot you end up on some strange address lists. I received an e-mail shot from Will Davies, co-founder of aspect.co.uk, 'London's leading property maintenance and refurbishment company'. In this Davies complains that:

'David Cameron is more suited to public relations than being prime minister. He's constantly spinning the facts and not dealing with the basic problems. Take the total inability of the Coalition to make government owned high-street banks lend to small and medium sized businesses at sensible rates. We have has [sic] a constant stream of government initiatives to cover up the problem like the

⁵² <<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-special-relationship-is-over-at-long-last-8793227.html>>

⁵³ <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/nov/06/usa.politics1>>

⁵⁴ There is a Wiki entry on NED but Ron Paul's take on it is more interesting. See <<http://www.antiwar.com/paul/paul79.html>>.

Supply Chain Finance scheme, the Regional Growth Fund and the Business bank.'

Mr Davies has a point.

In July, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Vince Cable, addressed the wider problem of banks not lending and said:

'It is clear that the main banks are failing to support good British companies in key areas like exporting and innovation.'

But he added:

'One of the anxieties in the business community is that the so called "capital Taliban" in the Bank of England are imposing restrictions which at this delicate stage of recovery actually make it more difficult for companies to operate and expand.'⁵⁵

This is nonsense and Cable must know it. Another *Financial Times* columnist explained why:

'The invalid reason is the claim that the higher the required equity ratio, [chief among Cable's 'restrictions'] the more of a bank's capital is 'tied up' and cannot be lent out to borrowers in need of funds. As Anat Admati of Stanford's business school has persistently pointed out, bank capital is not a reserve that is salted away for a rainy day. Equity is one source of funding for banks; it does not 'compete' with lending, which forms part of their investments. Equity-funded money can be lent out just like debt-funded money can.'⁵⁶

So why are the banks not lending enough to British businesses? They are responding to the increased regulation imposed on them. They didn't want it and 'lobbied' hard to prevent it, spending £93 million pounds in 2011/12.⁵⁷ Even the Governor of the Bank of England was moved to complain publicly about this 'lobbying'.⁵⁸ (Lobbying is clearly a misnomer here; £93 million pounds isn't spent on PR and lunches; bribing would be

⁵⁵ <www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a6367d06-f377-11e2-942f-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2dvPMtXnU>

⁵⁶ <www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d750d3d4-109e-11e3-b5e4-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2dc5hIKty>

⁵⁷ 'The British financial services industry spent more than £92m last year [i.e. 2011/12] lobbying politicians and regulators in an "economic war of attrition" that has secured a string of policy victories.'
<www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2012/07/09/revealed-the-93m-city-lobby-machine/>

⁵⁸ See <www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/10141142/Mervyn-King-Banks-lobbying-at-highest-level-against-regulators-demands.html>.

more apt.) But some of it they have had to accept. And dragging their feet vis-à-vis the British domestic economy is their revenge. And, as far as I can see, not a single economic commentator has named it.

Dallas '63

We are going to get a torrent of bullshit about the Kennedy assassination in the next couple of months. BBC Radio 4 contributed a piece called 'The Reunion' in which a group of people who were in Dallas in 1963 when it happened recalled the events. One of those was Hugh Aynesworth, then with the *Dallas Morning News*. I didn't listen to the programme but I think we may assume that its host, Sue Macgregor, did not ask Aynesworth why he became an informant for the FBI on the subject.⁵⁹

My only contribution to the great JFK-anniversary-media-bunfight thus far has been to persuade a TV production company that staging a debate about the assassination would not work. It was going to be me and, *inter alia*, David Aaronovitch. I pointed out to the TV person who rang me that the Warren Commission's report had been totally demolished by 1967; that those who continued to defend it were the intellectual equivalent of flat earthers; and that, as far as I could tell from his writing, Aaronovitch knew fuck all about the assassination. There was a silence, followed by 'We'll get back to you.' Some days later an e-mail arrived telling me they had abandoned the idea.

That special relationship

I am an admirer of former ambassador Craig Murray. His blog⁶⁰ is always interesting. On 11 June he wrote this about the NSA/GCHQ revelations:

'I am astonished that still none of our pusillanimous media has published the simple fact that NSA and GCHQ share ALL intelligence reports with each other. Every member of the House of Commons who has ever been in the most junior ministerial position knows this – that amounts to hundreds. So do at least fifty thousand current or retired civil service and military personnel. So

⁵⁹ On which see <www.ctka.net/aynesworth.html>.

⁶⁰ <www.craigmurray.org.uk/>

do the majority of senior journalists. Yet [British foreign secretary William] Hague was allowed to talk round the subject without being challenged about the truth, and the fiction of official secrecy persists.'

There are several things to be said about this. First, it does rather depend on what he means by 'reports'. Second, if you are agency B, there is no way of knowing if agency A is sharing all its 'reports' with you (let alone its intelligence), whatever the formal arrangements. And third, all anecdotal evidence over the last 50 years tells us that America, to quote Henry Kissinger (quoting someone else), has no friends, only interests. I will need a lot of persuading that the NSA-GCHQ relationship is an exception to this.

On the day in August when the Glen Greenwald/David Miranda-held-at-Heathrow story broke in the British media, the papers also carried a picture of a British frigate, HMS Westminster, arriving at Gibraltar in the midst of the latest fracas between Gibraltar and Spain. All the absurdities of British foreign policy and Britain's relationship with the US are captured there.

I would like to believe that the Miranda drama at Heathrow was an elaborate ruse while the documents arrived by other means. (I'd agree several third party addresses and simply send the stuff by air mail.....) The alternative is that Greenwald and the *Guardian* are terminally naive, believing that Miranda would be allowed to pass unhindered through Heathrow carrying British and America secrets. Can they be that dumb?

Amidst all the coverage in the British media no-one that I read mentioned the simple fact that all this is being done for the Americans. GCHQ works for the Americans. They must do because the British state no longer has the power to use the information GCHQ gathers. The British state can send a gunboat down to Spain and might, if push came to shove, be able to defeat the Spanish armed forces. But beyond that level it is powerless. Being America's outsourced surveillance assistant is part of the price the British state pays for being allowed to sit at the same table as the Americans in international affairs (UN etc).

The other part of the price is supporting US foreign policy no matter how stupid, nauseating or self-defeating it is. The really odd thing about British post-war politics is the absence of a 'Gaullist' faction, concerned with British independence. Have our foreign policy wallahs no self-respect? Apparently not. They are still happy to be the school bully's best friend, cheerleading in public while badmouthing him in private.

MI5 versus the banksters (not)

Some years ago I met someone who told me that he had met someone who had been at a meeting at which a former head of MI5 was present. Said retired MI5 director stated that one of MI5's roles was to counter threats to 'the Anglo-American form of capitalism'. By which he can only have meant Wall St. and the City. This meeting took place post 2008 and said retired director was thus not unaware of the damage that 'Anglo-American form of capitalism' had caused (although I suppose it is possible he believed an explanation of the events which didn't blame the banksters). Vaguely remembering that among MI5's official tasks was something to do with economic policy, I looked at its website and found there that among MI5's statutory duties, as laid down by the 1989 Security Services Act, is

'to safeguard the economic well-being of the UK against threats posed by the actions or intentions of persons outside the British Isles'.

What does MI5 mean by 'economic well-being'? Presumably the health of Anglo-American finance capital. But who knows? So I sent them an e-mail asking that question. To date I have had no response; nor do I expect one.

Why has British government spending rocketed?

Robert Henderson is one of the more interesting and unclassifiable political commentators in this country who has taken on the thankless task of pointing out to right and left that some of what they believe is manifest nonsense.⁶¹ Recently he e-mailed this economic comment which deserves wider distribution.

It is reasonable to put forward as the primary culprit the mania for privatising everything. The following things have not been understood by the privatisers:

1. The public service ethos did exist and was most valuable in maintaining standards, continuity and honesty within public provision.
2. Multiplying the opportunities for fraud inevitably results in more fraud.

⁶¹ The Wiki entry on him is incomplete but conveys something of this. He contributed '*Laissez faire as religion*' to *Lobster* 58.

3. That public services cannot be run on commercial lines because public provision is normally universal provision. Unlike a private company losing business, a public service provider such as the NHS cannot turn round and say we will not treat these patients because we need to cut costs.
4. For public services to run properly they need need to be focused not on the bottom line but on the provision of the service.
5. Once a public service has been contracted out to a private provider, the private provider has the government over a barrel because there is no alternative to a private provider once the public service option has been done away with.
6. That public employment gave those so employed secure lives and indirectly increased the sense of security in those employed by outside of public service because having a substantial proportion in secure jobs in itself made society more stable and certain.
7. That public money is a recycling of money and however it is recycled it has a value because its spending supports local economies.
8. That public expenditure has increased steadily during the privatising of public service activities.

Arms-to-Iraq

On the JANCOM site (jancom.org) the most striking document is the one listed on the left hand side of the second screen as 'Transcript'. This is said to be a CIA summary of the 'Supergun' affair. I remain sceptical of its genesis, though the fact that HMG felt it necessary to exclude it from the trial of Asil Nadir by use of a PII (public interest immunity) certificate, speaks for its authenticity. Some its central claims are strikingly similar to those in 'Belgium: Thatcher, Astra, Iraq & murder of Gerald Bull' which appeared originally in *Intelligence*, Number 81, 8 June 1998, p. 1.

Citing an article by Walter De Bock in the Flemish daily, *De Morgen*, on 15 April 1998, *Intelligence* reported that the Belgian judge who was investigating the murder of Gerald Bull had received

'40 pages of raw intelligence data from MI5 and MI6 directly implicating the inner circle of British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, in the murder of Gerald Bull.... Judge De Valkeneer is

now focusing his investigation on a mysterious visit to Brussels of a four-member SAS team lead by [Stephan Adolph] Kock..... On 2 March 1990, a fax message, with the heading "Visit of UK MoD Special Forces Staff to PRB", announced the arrival in Brussels of the above four-member team for a supposed 19-21 March visit to PRB [Poudreries Reunies de Belgique] facilities.'

This is the group named in the purported CIA report, discussed in the essay by Andrew Rosthorn in this issue, as the assassins of Bull and others.⁶² If they were, it must be the first time that assassins' arrival in town was announced by a press release!

On-line there is the transcript of some of the hearings held by the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee in 1992 on 'Exports to Iraq'.⁶³ In one session before the committee some of the personnel involved in the finance of the arms-to-Iraq operations appeared and some of the MPs did their under-informed best to make sense of this area. They were quite close to the heart of it but didn't know enough to challenge the emollient bullshit being spread by the bankers before them.

There is even some quite lengthy questioning on the subject of the late Stefan Kock. At para 2725 this exchange takes place between Labour MP Stan Crowther and Mr T. Robson of the Midland Bank:

Did you ever have any reason to believe that he might have been connected in any way with the Intelligence Service?

(Mr Robson) None at all. Stephan Kock made no secret of his background, the fact that he had been involved with the SAS and his work in Rhodesia, but with regard to the security services nothing at all, he never talked to me about that, I am not aware of it.

Robson neatly doesn't quite answer the question and Crowther doesn't recognise that 'the security services' and 'the Intelligence Service' are

⁶² The document *may* be available on-line at <www.blythe.org/Intelligence/readme/81sum> but when I tried I got a malware warning and could not get the file to open. However I recognise that URL as having been the location of *Intelligence* in the past. Its current URL is <<http://intelligence-adi.pagesperso-orange.fr/>>

⁶³ At <www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc9192/hc00/0086/0086_xi.pdf> This appears to be the only section of the evidence taken by that committee on this subject which is on-line.

not coterminous.⁶⁴

There is a wide consensus now that the journalist Jonathan Moyle was murdered in Chile in 1990, possibly because he was researching the arms-to-Iraq trade.⁶⁵ Even the inquest eventually found he had been unlawfully killed.⁶⁶ The *Guardian's* David Leigh disagrees. In the *British Journalism Review* he wrote:

Nobody murdered Jonathan Moyle at all. As it happens, World in Action spent a lot of time and money researching this particular conspiracy theory during the 90s, at a time when I was there as a producer (before that distinguished investigative series was closed down by ITV in pursuit of something more lucrative to put on their screens).

WIA obtained Chilean police photographs of Moyle's corpse and traced the Home Office pathologist who had examined the evidence for the British inquest. It rapidly transpired that Moyle had in fact been practising "auto-erotic asphyxiation"— a sexual game with a high fatality rate. Murderers do not pad their nooses to make their victims more comfortable while they kill them. But Moyle had done so. Simple as that.⁶⁷

And if you were going to murder someone and make it look like an auto-erotic accident, might you not try to make it look as plausible as possible?

Aunty's in a bind

Despite the enormous salaries being paid to far too many of its employees, I sometimes feel sorry for the BBC. It is hard being a semi-detached state broadcaster. Everyone attacks it. The right keep up a constant flow of complaints of left-wing bias. This is partly genuine and partly intimidation. (New Labour did the same thing.) The biases are

⁶⁴ In their 2003 'How £1bn was lost when Thatcher propped up Saddam', David Leigh and Rob Evans discussed the export credit guarantees given to various arms manufacturers. Conclusion? Yes, the taxpayer ultimately paid for much of the weaponry 'sold' to Iraq. <www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/28/iraq.politics1>

⁶⁵ There is no evidence on this that I am aware of and if Moyle was, as some have suggested, working for SIS under cover as a journalist, would he be poking around in an area SIS was trying to keep secret?

⁶⁶ See the BBC News report on this at <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/60769.stm>>.

⁶⁷ <http://www.bjr.org.uk/data/2000/no1_leigh>

more unthinking centrist than left-wing: pro-EU, pro-PC, pro-multiculturalism, pro-free market, pro-globalisation. How many socialist or anarchist voices, do you hear on the BBC? Apart from the occasional five second sound bite to illustrate a news story, none, as far as I am aware. Come to that, how often do you hear economic nationalist, anti-multiculturalism, anti-globalisation voices on the BBC?

And there are other biases. One is allowing the City and its spokespersons to dominate economic commentary. A study of the coverage of the economic issues by the Radio 4 Today programme during 2008 shows that economic commentary was dominated by City spokespersons and only their views were treated seriously. Unfortunately the study, 'The Today programme and the banking crisis' costs \$25 to purchase but a detailed summary of its main findings is given by Nick Shaxson in 'Is the BBC afraid of the City of London?' on his blog.⁶⁸ Have things changed since 2008? Not that I can detect.

Along similar lines is a study of the BBC's treatment of the government's privatisation of the NHS which concludes:

In the two years building up to the government's NHS reform bill, the BBC appears to have categorically failed to uphold its remit of impartiality, parroting government spin as uncontested fact, whilst reporting only a narrow, shallow view of opposition to the bill. In addition, key news appears to have been censored.⁶⁹

Why Barrack is staying off that motel balcony

Why has Obama been such a disappointment? Yes, he was bought and paid for before his first election. Yes, he's a compromiser by nature. And yes, the Republicans control the Congress and will block anything he tries. But there may be another reason. Ray McGovern, retired senior intelligence analyst at the CIA, wrote this recently:

Which leads to the question, why would he do all these things? Why would he be afraid for example, to take the drones away from the CIA? Well, I've come to the conclusion that he's afraid. Number one, he's afraid of what happened to Martin Luther King Jr. And I know from a good friend who was there when it happened, that at

⁶⁸ <<http://treasureislands.org/is-the-bbc-afraid-of-the-city-of-london/>>

⁶⁹ <www.opendemocracy.net/ourbeeb/oliver-huitson/how-bbc-betrayed-nhs-exclusive-report-on-two-years-of-censorship-and-distorti>

a small dinner with progressive supporters, after these progressive supporters were banging on Obama before the election, "Why don't you do the things we thought you stood for?" Obama turned sharply and said, "Don't you remember what happened to Martin Luther King Jr.?"⁷⁰

Weather wars

If you were sceptical about the pieces by Tim Coles in issues 62 (on weather weapons) and 64 (on chemtrails) you should read Rady Anand's 'Atmospheric Geoengineering: Weather Manipulation, Contrails and Chemtrails: A Review of the "Case Orange" report' for more of the same (but with some different sources).⁷¹ This isn't a paranoid fantasy on anyone's part.

⁷⁰ <<http://mondoweiss.net/2013/06/renege-progressive-promises.html>>

⁷¹ <www.globalresearch.ca/atmospheric-geoengineering-weather-manipulation-contrails-and-chemtrails/20369>