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MAIN STREET BREXITLAND

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First Brexit . . . Now Trump! WHATEVER NEXT?

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MINDING RONNIE

When the TV newsreader warned that three 'armed and dangerous' terrorists were on the loose in South Africa, one of the fugitives was watching the news with a journalist and his wife. David Middleie tells of his secret involvement with the elusive 'Red Pimpernel'

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The most expensive weapon ever built

Daniel Soar tells how the US is sells the Lockheed Martin F-35 stealth-jet fighter planes: the countries that buy 'em help make 'em . . .

Four thousand people were invited to see Israel's first two F-35s arrive at Nevatim air base in the Negev on December 12, after a complex journey from their base in Texas – six days, two layovers, at least ten mid-air refuellings

On the night of January 12, there was a series of explosions at Mezzeh military airport on the outskirts of Damascus. A few warehouses were destroyed but no one died. The Syrian government blamed rocket attacks launched from inside Israel. The targets were missile systems, sources close to the Israeli government said, that could have been delivered to Hizbullah in Lebanon. According to some reports, however, the attacks were carried out not by rockets but by fighter jets – specifically, the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, the Joint Strike Fighter, a US-built 'fifth generation' stealth jet with super-advanced avionics that has been under development for the last 20 years at a cost of many billions of dollars. In early March, a reporter for Figaro, Georges Malbrunot, said that according to French intelligence sources the strikes had unquestionably been carried out by a pair of F-35s: not only that, but one of them had gone on to buzz Assad's palace in a fuck-you show of force.

The F-35 is the most expensive weapon ever built. Israel took delivery of its first two exemplars a month before the Mezzeh raid, and it's worth bearing in mind that no one with any knowledge of how air forces operate thinks it's remotely likely that the IAF would have risked its new baby so soon,

and on such a trivial mission. Still, it never hurts to give people a hint of what you might be capable of. Israel is very proud of its machines. Four thousand people were invited to see the two F-35s arrive at Nevatim air base in the Negev on December 12, after a complex journey from their base in Texas – six days, two layovers, at least ten mid-air refuellings. Unembarrassed by a slight extra delay (spectators were kept waiting for six hours thanks to fog over northern Italy), Netanyahu gave a rousing speech celebrating the "long arm" of Israel's defence equipment. "This long arm was just made longer and mightier today," he told the assembled VIPs, among whose number were the CEO of Lockheed, Marillynn Hewson, and Obama's outgoing defence secretary, Ash Carter, who had helped seal the deal. Israel is the only country that has been allowed to make significant modifications to the F-35: its variant, nicknamed the Adir ("the mighty one"), includes a few extra computer systems of Israel's own devising. There's a picture of Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's defence

minister, sitting in the cockpit of an F-35 during a visit last summer to Lockheed's Fort Worth facility: he's grinning like a little boy. Israel

is now down to purchase 50 F-35s,





OUT OF CONTROL? Avigdor Liberman, Israel's Minister of Defence, views the cockpit of the first Israeli Air Force F-35A Lightning II, known as the "Adir," at the Lockheed Martin F-35 production facility in Fort Worth, Texas. Photo: Beth Steel, Lockheed Martin

at a total cost of \$7-billion. Last September, Obama and Netanyahu signed a new Memorandum of Understanding, according to which Israel is promised \$38-billion of military aid over the next decade. Twenty percent of that money is going to F-35 procurement: a nice subvention of American taxpayer dollars to an American company, with the bonus of providing the IAF with two squadrons of the baddest fighter jet on the planet.

'Out of control'

But a few hours before the Adirs landed in all their glory – just check out the promotional shots of them flying into the sunset – Donald Trump, then still president-elect, tweeted: "The F-35 program and cost is out of control. Billions of dollars can and will be saved on military (and other) purchases after January 20th." Lockheed Martin's shares immediately dropped four percent. Trump had a point, though. Over the lifetime of the project, the US is expected to have spent

\$1.5-trillion designing, building and maintaining 2,500 planes for its own use: enough to forgive the entire nation's student debts, or pay for the healthcare of every low-income American family for the next three years, or build a border wall that encircles the Earth four times. The Joint Strike Fighter programme was launched in the mid-1990s under the Clinton administration, with the aim of developing an aircraft that could for the first time be adapted for use by three separate branches of the US military – the air force, the navy and the marines. It would have to be stealthy – hard to detect by radar – and it would have to be able to dance rings in the skies around any nimble jet the Russians or Chinese might come up with. It would also have to be able to bomb targets on the ground 500 miles away from base – an impressive range, for a fighter – and operate from the deck of a heaving warship at night and, if push really came to shove, hover and land like a helicopter. The last mass-produced fighter jet that did that,

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Cover Story

McCain is a leading representative of a dissident American military tradition that prefers light and agile to massive and lumbering, but it may not be insignificant that his home state, Arizona, is one of the few where Lockheed has recently shed jobs rather than piled them on

the British-designed Harrier, which unfortunately couldn't quite break the sound barrier, entered service in 1969, did tours in the Falklands War, and had possibly the worst accident rate of any military plane in history: by 2002, a third of the fleet had been lost in non-combatant crashes, killing (among others) 45 marines.

Given that the contract to build the Joint Strike Fighter could mean a job for life for anyone working on it – federal funding for the programme exceeded the GDP of a small European country – it mattered quite a bit to the various companies bidding for the tender that they come up with a winning design. When, in 1996, a consortium led by McDonnell Douglas proposed a plane that effectively had no tail – they left out the vertical fins that provide stability in flight – they were dropped from the competition: punishment for trying to be too clever. The loss of future revenue was so devastating that McDonnell Douglas – despite being responsible for the F-15 Eagle and F/A-18 Hornet, both of which performed handily in the first Gulf War – was forced to cease independent operations and was soon bought out by Boeing. In 2001, after the finalists had demonstrated their prototypes, Lockheed Martin was finally announced as the winner of the JSF competition, with three variants on the basic design: the F-35A, a plane that takes off and lands conventionally, for use by the air force; the F-35B, which has a great downward-pointing fan behind the pilot that allows it to hover, a bonus for the marines; and the big-winged, long-range F-35C, engineered to operate from navy aircraft carriers. For the next 15 years, as costs escalated and delays increased, naysayers complained that the American weapons industry's proudest achievement was a turkey: the plane was too heavy, too complicated, too busy trying to be all things to all men – and too darned expensive.

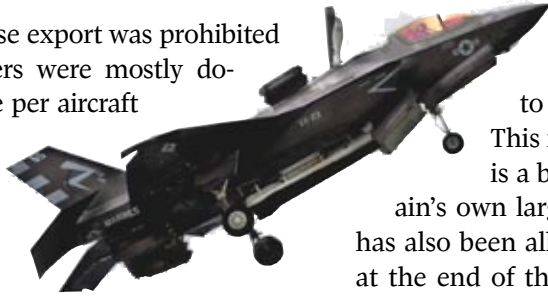
But the expense was largely the point. An enormous project brings an enormous number of jobs, and Lockheed sensibly en-

sured that everyone and his neighbour was invested in keeping it from going belly-up. The joke term for this is “political engineering:” for all its rivets, bearings, shafts, ducts and pipes – as well as its fibre optics and sensor systems and radar and onboard computers – the F-35 programme now involves more than 1,200 suppliers in 45 US states, accounting for 40,000 jobs in Texas alone. It's a brave congressman who will stand up and complain about appropriations when hordes of sizeable businesses are going to have at him for it. So Congress barely peeped as costs soared – though there were a few notable holdouts, like Senator John McCain, who called it “a scandal and a tragedy” “McCain is a leading representative of a dissident American military tradition that prefers light and agile to massive and lumbering, but it may not be insignificant that his home state, Arizona, is one of the few where Lockheed has recently shed jobs rather than piled them on. (What Arizona has instead of multiple Lockheed facilities is the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, aka the Boneyard, a place where decommissioned military aircraft go to die. The dry desert air has proved invaluable for preserving metal. At current count, there are – among its thousands of abandoned hulks – 50 dead BAE Harriers, 167 dead F-15s and 467 dead F-16s. In satellite imagery, the matchbox planes – neatly arranged by size and type – look like the playthings of some obsessive giant-child.)

Global development

Spreading the load and marshalling a coalition of the willing is of course standard operating procedure for the US defence industry. You need to get all those makers of grommets and clamps on board. But in the case of the F-35, where Lockheed and the Pentagon have really innovated is in taking the campaign global. The last stealth fighter the US deployed, the F-22 Raptor, was for internal consumption only: just 187 were

built, and because export was prohibited and the suppliers were mostly domestic, the price per aircraft remained high and it never really took off (metaphorically speaking – it's seen plenty



of action over Syria). The F-35 was conceived on a totally different model: from the beginning, a large number of allied nations would be involved in its development and production. In 2001, Blair's minister for defence procurement, Lord Bach, was on the podium in Virginia for the announcement of Lockheed's winning bid: the UK, as a "major partner" in the programme, nominally had a say in the decision, having contributed a couple of billion towards development costs and committed to buying 138 of the finished product. The following year, the Australian prime minister, John Howard, was spotted at the Willard Hotel in Washington DC meeting with Lockheed executives: he came out after putting in an order for 72 planes, despite continuing to pretend that Australia's door was open to salesmen from other countries (a representative from France's Dassault Aviation, Daniel Frémont, who had just relocated to Sydney to negotiate a multi-year contract to supply the RAAF with a few squadrons of the Rafale fighter jet, was somewhat put out when he found that the door had secretly been shut in his face). F-35 customers now include Turkey, Italy, Canada, Norway, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands and Denmark.

It helps considerably that many of these customers have more than just a few tonnes of precision-engineered titanium to gain from any deal: the beauty of the JSF project is that everyone can bring something to the party. In a Lancashire workshop, for instance, BAE Systems is building a section of the aft fuselage, including the tail, for every F-35; along with other contributions from

all over the world, these pieces are then shipped to Texas for final assembly. This means that every F-35 sale is a boost to the coffers of Britain's own largest arms company. (BAE has also been allowed to do the foldy bits at the end of the wings.) And the opportunities are everywhere. There are aluminium sheets from Milton Keynes, electronic modules from Billingsstad, circuit boards from Ankara, hydraulics from Melbourne, wiring systems from Rotterdam, manifolds from Adelaide, wing parts from Turin and actuators from New York. So when Trump threatened to slash the cost of the F-35 programme, or divert some of the custom to cheaper competitors, it wasn't only American defence contractors who were in the firing line. Everyone had something to lose. On January 30, ten days after taking office, Trump announced that he had negotiated \$600-million off the price tag of the next batch of F-35s. Lockheed's CEO chose not to shatter his illusion, but it turned out that the next 90 planes were always going to be cheaper anyway – by between six and seven percent, or \$550- and \$650-million. The more you build the cheaper they get, thanks to economies of scale. Happily for everyone involved, this also means that more get sold. The military-industrial complex turns out to be very simple: the juggernaut has its own momentum. Once it's rolling it can't be stopped, even if you're Donald Trump, something he finally came to acknowledge on March 16, when his budget plan for the next fiscal year allowed for the ramping-up of F-35 production as part of a proposed 10 percent increase in overall military spending.

Meanwhile, at RAF Marham in Norfolk, the air base is scrambling to ready itself for the first batch of British-owned F-35s, due for delivery in summer 2018. Facilities are being built and contractors are contracting subcontractors and £300-million is being

In a Lancashire workshop, BAE Systems is building a section of the aft fuselage, including the tail, for every F-35; along with other contributions from all over the world, these pieces are then shipped to Texas for final assembly

Cover Story

One of the gizmos that comes as standard with every F-35 is a \$400,000 carbon-fibre helmet with a display projected onto the visor. Each has to be custom-fitted to an individual pilot's head using a bit of 3D modelling

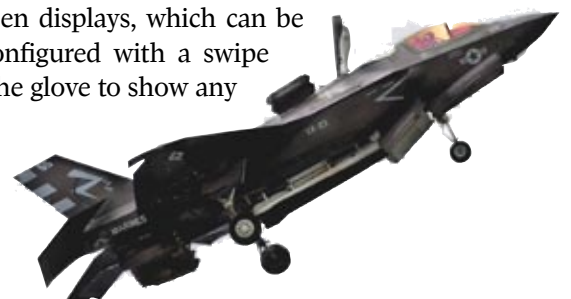
spent on kitting the place out for Logistics Operations and Integrated Training and Maintenance and Finish. All this activity, required by Lockheed, is a miniature version of what's going on at the big brother base down the road, RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, home to the 48th Fighter Wing, or Liberty Wing, the US Air Force's frontline fighter unit for European operations. There's a lot of getting ready to be done. Future F-35 pilots from all allied customer nations have been training in the US, in simulators and in the air, including at Edwards Air Force Base in southern California, where, in 1947, Chuck Yeager became the first person to break the sound barrier, in the experimental rocket-powered X-1. (As indelibly recorded by Tom Wolfe in *The Right Stuff*, Yeager was a pilot of the old school, who trusted his instincts: he scoffed at the engineers who were concerned that at speeds greater than Mach 1 the plane might stop working aerodynamically altogether and fall out of the sky; knowing better, he just climbed in – painfully, since he had broken a rib or two in a riding stunt a couple of days earlier and had to use a broom handle to close the cockpit roof – and flew the thing at 820 mph.)

Test pilots who have been tasked with what's known as “extending the flight envelope” – it's weird how much of 1980s business jargon derives from air force terminology – have found that the F-35 performs very creditably. Thanks to its stealth requirements, with its weapons all stored internally to stop them alerting enemy radar, it's an ugly, fat-bellied thing – though not as ugly as Boeing's rejected prototype for the JSF competition, the X-32, which looked like a yawning whale. But it flies well. At this year's Red Flag – an annual simulated war-games exercise conducted over the mountain ranges and salt flats of Nevada – it achieved a kill ratio of 20:1, meaning that for every 20 enemy aircraft downed, only one F-35 was lost. Sure, with a top speed of only Mach 1.6, it's slower

than a Russian Sukhoi Su-35, which on the turn can possibly outrun some of the air-to-air missiles the F-35 will carry. Nor does it have the high thrust-to-weight ratio of a Eurofighter Typhoon, which puts it at a disadvantage when it comes to manoeuvrability during close-range encounters. Even so, Major Morten Hanche, the first pilot from the Royal Norwegian Air Force to fly the F-35, was impressed, as he told readers of a Norwegian Ministry of Defence blog: thanks to its excellent braking performance and its agility at high angles of attack, “the F-35 sticks on like glue, and it is very difficult for the defender to escape.”

\$400,000 gizmo

But this isn't why pilots are excited. One of the gizmos that comes as standard with every F-35 is a carbon-fibre helmet with a display projected onto the visor, its wizardry the work in part of Israel's Elbit Systems. Each has to be custom-fitted to an individual pilot's head using a bit of 3D modelling. They cost \$400,000 apiece: another figure to snort at, perhaps, but then each AMRAAM missile costs \$400,000, too, and the military thinks nothing of letting loose a few of those – so it's not really a lot of money in the scheme of things. As well as the usual flight stats that a pilot would see in a traditional heads-up display – air-speed, heading, altitude – the F-35 helmet beams in the pictures gathered by six infrared cameras mounted on the outside of the airframe. This means that just by turning his head the wearer can see what's above him, behind him and even below the aircraft's floor. From his point of view, he's effectively flying an invisible plane. In front of him is a series of further touch-screen displays, which can be reconfigured with a swipe of the glove to show any



amount of radar and targeting information he might need (it's called the "symbology" – Dan Brown should be pleased). Picture of enemy airfield not clear? Click. The active radar array will scan a high-resolution image of the area of interest. Then all the pilot needs to do is touch a point on the map and the selected weapon will take it out in seconds. Click. Another hangar gone. Simultaneously, systems outside the plane – other aircraft, satellites, ground control – are constantly sending in streams of data for the F-35's computers to analyse and display. Friendly aircraft are indicated in green on the radar screen, potential threats are yellow and enemies red. Unless you're colour-blind, it all makes operating a deadly aircraft so very simple: what's not to like?

It seems to be difficult even for some pilots to get out of the mindset that what these planes should still be about is high-altitude fencing: dodging opponents, doing Top Gun-style tricks, looping round for the kill. But thanks to stealth technology and beyond-visual-range missiles – with hypersonic scramjet-based missiles appearing on the horizon soon – no one is in a position to get into dogfights with the US any more. (Especially now that it accounts for a third of all global military spending, or as much – by some counts – as the next ten most profligate nations combined.) The last American fighter jet to be recorded lost to an enemy aircraft was an F/A-18, shot down by an Iraqi MiG in 1991. Aerial warfare has moved to another realm, and it's a realm of new buzzwords too: "fully

fused sensor information", "network-enabled operations," "electronic attack." The man in the pilot's seat has become just another node in the network, through whom information is filtered: he's already an anachronism. Even before we have drone swarms of lightweight autonomous vehicles performing air interdiction with the help of artificial intelligence, it isn't clear how much future there is in piloted warplanes. The combined marketing muscle of all the Lockheeds, Boeings and Raytheons in the world has failed to come up with any definition of what a "sixth generation" fighter would be. This, it appears, is the end of the line. And yet, like all the Eagles and Hornets and Harriers before it, the F-35 is likely to be around for a very long time – for the next 40 years at least. It seems odd, in the age of smart watches and rapid technological obsolescence, that big lumps of metal can be so very enduring, but that's the way heavy engineering works. It's hard not to be alarmingly aware of this every time you get onto a London Tube 100 feet underground and see, as you step over the steel scuff-plate by the door, that this thing has been pounding the tracks since 1973. Machines, once built, are here to stay, and fighter planes are no different. The business of the arms industry is to build and spend, build and spend. It's all part of the weaponry system. **CT**

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Daniel Soar is an editor at the London Review of Books, where this essay was first published – www.lrb.co.uk

Thanks to stealth technology and beyond-visual-range missiles – with hypersonic scramjet-based missiles appearing on the horizon soon – no one is in a position to get into dogfights with the US any more

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In The Picture

A private zoo, Spanish galleon, golf course, 10-pin bowling rink, tennis court, gym, fallout shelter, secret tunnels, and much, much more ...

Nate Robert visits the Kyiv home built by Viktor Yanukovich, the deposed and exiled former president of the Ukraine

Petro had a red silk cape draped over his well-worn black leather vest. Slowly, he removed a golden toothbrush holder from the top of the marble sink, took it to the bidet, filled it with water, and fed the lush potted plants. We were inside one of several luxurious marble-clad bathrooms inside the \$2-billion “Mezhyhiria” mansion, an architectural testament to money over style that was, not so long ago, occupied by now-exiled former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich.

As I walked back into the lounge area, not



Luxurious living area of ex-President Yanukovich's mansion outside Kyiv.



Billiard room, fit for a president.



Above: One of several dining rooms at “Mezhyhiria.” Below: Bullet-holed portrait of former president Viktor Yanukovich (left).



far from the stuffed lion, an aide was playing an Ozzie Osborne song on the former-president’s priceless grand piano. His fingers were reflected in the glistening white backboard, which featured a small sketch signed by John Lennon. A caged tropical bird chirped in harmony. Above us, a truck-sized crystal chandelier dispersed the wintry light, and Petro disappeared into the luxurious billiard room off to the side.

Viktor Yanukovich, who was Ukraine’s president between 2010 and 2014, is the son of a

nurse and a mechanic. For most of his working life, Yanukovich toiled away as a simple public servant, eventually finding himself one of two residents at “Mezhyhiria,” a multi-billion-dollar taxpayer-funded, private estate on the outskirts of Kyiv. The other resident was Yanukovich’s girlfriend.

When locals stormed the compound in the winter of 2014 during the height of the revolution, they found a lavish compound far beyond their wildest imagination. The private residence spans 350 acres, including a 18-hole golf course. Quizzed about the on-

Quizzed about the on-site zoo, Yanukovich later told a BBC interviewer that the ostriches “just happened to be there”

In The Picture



Petro and the ex-president's stuffed at the Mezhyhria mansion, near Kyiv, Ukraine.

All the usual dictatorial trappings were present – armed guards, electric fences, secret tunnels, cameras, nuclear fallout shelters, private militia, and medical clinic

site zoo, Yanukovich told a BBC interviewer the ostriches “just happened to be there.”

His garage held a fleet of cars from around the globe, the artificial lake exhibited a full-size replica Spanish galleon. Inside the mansion, there's ten-pin bowling alley, tennis court, boxing gym, and gymnasium; and outside, the beautifully manicured gardens were tended by a staff of hundreds. All the usual dictatorial trappings were present – armed guards, electric fences, secret tunnels, cameras, nuclear fallout shelters, private militia, medical clinic, extensive orchards, indoor hydroponic farm filled with fruits, vegetables, and medical marijuana. However, the enormous scale of excess is perhaps best illustrated by a document showing a purchase order worth \$42-million – for light-fittings.

After the revolution, Yanukovich fled to Russia, locals stormed the “Pushcha-Vodytsia Recreational Complex at Mezhyhiria Tract,” and an affable man named Petro became the sole keeper of the keys to the mansion. Few people know how Petro got into his position, but he's originally from the Western Ukrainian city of Lviv and takes the preservation of Mezhyhiria very seriously. So far, Petro has lived inside the Mezhyhiria mansion for more than three years.

Currently, the Tourism Board of Ukraine fields questions about trips inside the Mezhyhiria mansion with, “Sorry, we don't have Petro's phone number.” It seems Petro decides who, gets to see the former president's home. Fortunately, I know a guy, who knows a girl, who knows Petro . . .

CT



Petro demonstrates the use of the "Trembita", one of the former president's musical instruments, inside one of two master bedrooms. It's believed the wood used to make this giant horn came from a tree struck by lightning.



John Lennon artwork featured on a priceless piano, in the main room of the mansion.

.....
Nate Robert
specialises in travel
photography. Since
July 2012, he has
been travelling the
world full time,
through 54 countries.
His website is
www.yomadic.com

Freeing the rich, to exploit the poor

A bonfire of public protections is being lit in Britain and in the United States – and the beneficiaries of it will be the very rich, writes **George Monbiot**

Billionaires and the organisations they run demand freedom from something they call “red tape.” What they mean by red tape is public protection

Propaganda works by sanctifying a single value, such as faith, or patriotism. Anyone who questions it puts themselves outside the circle of respectable opinion. The sacred value is used to obscure the intentions of those who champion it. Today, the value is freedom. Freedom is a word that powerful people use to shut down thought.

When think tanks and the billionaire press call for freedom, they are careful not to specify whose freedoms they mean. Freedom for some, they suggest, means freedom for all. In certain cases, this is true. You can exercise freedom of thought, for instance, without harming others. In other cases, one person’s freedom is another’s captivity.

When corporations free themselves from trade unions, they curtail the freedoms of their workers. When the very rich free themselves from tax, other people suffer through failing public services. When financiers are free to design exotic financial instruments, the rest of us pay for the crises they cause.

Above all, billionaires and the organisations they run demand freedom from something they call “red tape.” What they mean by red tape is public protection. An article in the Telegraph on March 28 was headlined “Cut the EU red tape choking Britain after Brexit to set the country free from the shackles of Brussels.” Yes, we are choking, but not on red tape. We are choking because

the government flouts European rules on air quality. The resulting air pollution frees thousands of souls from their bodies.

Ripping down such public protections means freedom for billionaires and corporations from the constraints of democracy. This is what Brexit – and Donald Trump – are all about. The freedom we were promised is the freedom of the very rich to exploit us.

To be fair to the Telegraph, which is running a campaign to deregulate the entire economy once Britain has left the EU, it is, unusually, almost explicit about who the beneficiaries are. It explains that “the ultimate goal of this whole process should be to . . . set the wealth creators free.” (Wealth creators: code for the very rich.) Among the potential prizes it lists are changes to the banana grading system, allowing strongly curved bananas to be categorised as Class 1, a return to incandescent light bulbs and the freedom to kill great crested newts.

I suspect that the Barclay brothers, the billionaires who own the Telegraph, couldn’t give a monkey’s about bananas. But as their business empire incorporates hotels, shipping, car sales, home shopping and deliveries, they might be intensely interested in the European working time directive and other aspects of employment law, tax directives, environmental impact assessments, the consumer rights directive, maritime safety laws and a host of similar

public protections.

If the government agrees to a “bonfire of red tape,, we would win bent bananas and newt-squashing prerogatives. On the other hand, we could lose our rights to fair employment, an enduring living world, clean air, clean water, public safety, consumer protection, functioning public services, and the other distinguishing features of civilisation. Tough choice, isn't it?

Legs amputated

As if to hammer the point home, the Sunday Telegraph interviewed Nick Varney, chief executive of Merlin Entertainments, in an article claiming that the “red tape burden” was too heavy for listed companies. He described some of the public protections that companies have to observe as “bloody baggage.” The article failed to connect these remarks to his company's own bloody baggage, caused by its unilateral decision to cut red tape. As a result of overriding the safety mechanism on one of its rides at Alton Towers – which was operating, against the guidelines, during high winds – 16 people were injured, including two young women who had their legs amputated. That's why we need public protections of the kind the Telegraph wants to destroy.

The same ethos, with the same justification, pervades the Trump administration. The new head of the environmental protection agency, Scott Pruitt, is seeking to annul the rules protecting rivers from pollution, workers from exposure to pesticides, and everyone from climate breakdown. It's not as if the agency was overzealous before: one of the reasons for the mass poisoning in Flint, Michigan, was its catastrophic failure to protect people from the contamination of drinking water by lead – a failure that now afflicts 18 million Americans.

As well as trying to dismantle the government's climate change programme, Trump is waging war on even the most obscure forms of protection. For instance, he intends to remove funds from the tiny US chemi-

cal safety board, which investigates lethal industrial incidents. Discovering what happened and why would impede freedom.

On neither side of the Atlantic are these efforts unopposed. Trump's assault on public protections has already provoked dozens of lawsuits. The European council has told the UK government that if it wants to trade with the EU on favourable terms after Brexit, companies here cannot cut their costs by dumping them on the rest of society.

This drives the leading Brexiters berserk. As a result of the pollution paradox (the dirtiest corporations have to spend the most money on politics, so the political system comes to be owned by them), politicians like Boris Johnson and Michael Gove have an incentive to champion the freedom of irresponsible companies. But it also puts them in a bind. Their primary argument for deregulation is that it makes businesses more competitive. If it means those businesses can't trade with the EU, the case falls apart.

They will try to light the bonfire anyway, as this is a question of power and culture as well as money. You don't need to listen for long to the very rich to realise that many see themselves as the “independents” Friedrich Hayek celebrated in *The Constitution of Liberty*, or as John Galt, who led a millionaires' strike against the government in Ayn Rand's novel, *Atlas Shrugged*. Like Hayek, they regard freedom from democracy as an absolute right, regardless of the costs this may inflict on others, or even themselves.

When we confront a system of propaganda, our first task is to decode it. This begins by interrogating its sacred value. Whenever we hear the word freedom, we should ask ourselves, “Freedom for whom, at whose expense?”

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George Monbiot's latest book, *How Did We Get Into This Mess?*, is published by Verso. This article was first published in the *Guardian* newspaper. Monbiot's web site is www.monbiot.com

One of the reasons for the mass poisoning in Flint, Michigan, was its catastrophic failure to protect people from the contamination of drinking water by lead – a failure that now afflicts 18-million Americans

Truth, lies and a 28-year search for justice

There's nothing new about 'fake news,' writes **Granville Williams**, who recalls the infamous lies that led to a long-lasting boycott of Britain's biggest-selling paper

The sheer scale of the tragedy attracted massive media coverage with reporters, photographers and camera crews converging on both Sheffield and Liverpool

Twenty-eight years after the Hillsborough football disaster at the English FA Cup semi final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Sheffield on Saturday, April 15 1989, there's a chance that justice may finally be in sight for the determined families of the 96 dead and the survivors from that day. The key question is, Why has it taken so long?

We hear a lot these days about "fake news" and "post-truth politics," but media coverage of the disaster plumbed new depths. The focus for people's anger was, and remains, the infamous Sun newspaper's front-page (opposite), published four days after the tragedy, headlined THE TRUTH. But the Sun was not alone in its misconduct; the media overall played a dire role in disseminating gross untruths. The disaster, unlike

many others, was comprehensively recorded live in front of a TV audience and by sports photographers present for the match.

The sheer scale of the tragedy attracted massive media coverage with reporters, photographers and camera crews converging on both Sheffield and Liverpool. The result was that the Sunday and Monday papers published close-up photos of Liverpool supporters either trapped, injured or dead behind the wire, graphically showing their terror and torture.



Hillsborough Tragedy



Left: The Sun's infamous front page, which resulted in a 28-year boycott of the newspaper in Liverpool.
Above: The Mirror's appalling coverage showed grisly pictures of dying and injured fans

The official death list had not been published so the papers had no way of knowing whether the individuals pictured were alive or dead. Robert Maxwell's Mirror had recently moved to full-colour and carried 16 pages on the story, filling the front page with a grisly picture of fans who appeared dead or dying, jumbled together on top of each other, and showing blue asphyxiated faces.

I intended to buy all the newspapers that Monday to monitor coverage, but I was so appalled by the Mirror that I could not buy it.

What was startling about the coverage in most national and regional newspapers was the certainty about who caused the disaster: the guilt was firmly placed on Liverpool fans. This coverage shaped public perceptions of the disaster for years. We know now that the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) match com-

What was startling about the coverage in most national and regional newspapers was the certainty about who caused the disaster

Hillsborough Tragedy



Above: Even the supposedly up-market newspapers published the lies about how drunken Liverpool supporters were responsible for the events leading up to the deaths of 96 supporters.

mander, Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield, had lied to senior officials when he said Liverpool fans had forced their way into the stadium and rushed into the central pens, thereby causing the fatal crush. It was 26 years later when he appeared at the Warrington inquest into Hillsborough in March 2015, when he finally admitted that he had ordered Gate C to be opened.

SYP disseminated a distorted, emotive and sensational version of events that shaped media reporting, and excluded any alternative explanations for the disaster. The key to this was White's News Agency, the Sheffield company which circulated the SYP allegations. Their reports were based on meetings over three days between agency staff and SYP officers, and interviews with Irvine Patnick MP, and the South Yorkshire Police Federation Secretary, Paul Middup. On the day the controversial Sun front page was published, Middup told Police Federation members that "putting our side of the story over to the press and media" had been his priority.

The seamless narrative fitted every prejudice about drunken Liverpool supporters, violent and ticketless, causing mayhem and death. It took the Hillsborough Independent Panel report of September 2012 to totally demolish that web of lies.

The pictures and reports in newspapers

triggered revulsion; the Press Council was flooded with complaints and set up an inquiry. Newspapers, too, were deluged with angry callers and letters. For Liverpool's bereaved families, however, the pain and anguish of such exposure was indescribable. The next wave of horror for Liverpool was the invasion by journalists tasked with the grisly job of getting pictures of the dead and tear-jerking stories from their parents, relatives and friends. Then, to add to it all, the massive media intrusion into private grief continued at funerals as the bereaved families buried their dead.

It was outrage at this state of affairs that prompted the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF) to organise a public meeting in the iconic Bluecoats building in Liverpool, where the speakers were Eamon McCabe, picture editor of the Guardian, Steve Kelly, a former Granada producer and author of the official history of Liverpool FC, and Rogan Taylor of the Football Supporters' Association.

Steve Kelly told how, "A week after Hillsborough I was telephoned by the producer of a leading BBC current affairs programme. 'Would I like two days' work?' They wanted someone to go and knock on the doors of

the bereaved and ask if they could film the funerals and do some interviews. They had a list of a dozen names and addresses but weren't sure who had been buried. In other words, I might knock on a door of a bereaved family who had already buried its dead. They did not wish to tap my knowledge of football but wanted instead to use my credibility. They knew that the reputations of journalists were at an all-time low, but with my association with Liverpool FC, I might have been able to get access where they would be refused."

Eamonn McCabe slated the cruel and insensitive use of close-up pictures in many of the tabloids, while Rogan Taylor attacked the way the coverage of the disaster demonised football fans, particularly those who supported Liverpool. From the audience, Brian Brierley argued for a boycott of the Sun in Liverpool, one which has been in place ever since.

But the key issue highlighted was how powerless people felt in challenging the lies being printed about Liverpool supporters and preventing the gross intrusion into people's grief. The tabloids seemed to be able to act with impunity in the absence of effective press regulation. On that front not much has changed, but on January 12, 2017, the Inde-



pendent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and Operation Resolve jointly referred files of evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Fifteens file relate to Operation Resolve's investigation, and the potential offences include gross negligence, manslaughter, perverting the course of justice, misconduct in public office and offences under the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975 and Health and Safety at Work legislation.

Eight relate to the IPCC's independent investigation into both South Yorkshire Police and West Midlands Police and the alleged cover-up of the disaster. Potential offences include perverting the course of justice, conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and misconduct in public office.

The day after its infamous front page, the Sun carried another front page opinion piece, "The Truth Hurts." But not as much as the lies the paper relentlessly peddled under its foul-mouthed, bullying editor, Kelvin MacKenzie.

Now, perhaps, there is the prospect of justice for the incredibly brave and determined Hillsborough families after their 28-year battle against media lies. **CT**

But the key issue highlighted was how powerless people felt in challenging the lies being printed about Liverpool supporters and preventing the gross intrusion into people's grief

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Granville Williams is a member of the National Council of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. His most recent book is *The Flame Still Burns: The Creative Power of Coal*. You can find information on how to join the CPBF at www.cpbf.org.uk

The blood-stained rise of global populism

Alfred McCoy on a political movement's violent pursuit of 'enemies'

Donald Trump moved beyond his repeated promises to fight Islamic terror with torture and brutal bombing, by also advocating the murder of women and children

In 2016, something extraordinary happened in the politics of diverse countries around the world. With surprising speed and simultaneity, a new generation of populist leaders emerged from the margins of nominally democratic nations to win power. In doing so, they gave voice, often in virulent fashion, to public concerns about the social costs of globalisation.

Even in societies as disparate as the affluent United States and the impoverished Philippines, similarly violent strains of populist rhetoric carried two unlikely candidates from the political margins to the presidency. On opposite sides of the Pacific, these outsider campaigns were framed by lurid calls for violence and even murder.

As his insurgent crusade gained momentum, Donald Trump moved beyond his repeated promises to fight Islamic terror with torture and brutal bombing, by also advocating the murder of women and children. "The other thing with the terrorists is you have to take out their families, when you get these terrorists, you have to take out their families," he told Fox News. "They care about their lives, don't kid yourself. When they say they don't care about their lives, you have to take out their families."

At the same time, campaigning in the Philippines on a law-and-order program of his own, Rodrigo Duterte, then mayor of a remote provincial city, swore that he would

kill drug dealers, sparing nothing in the way of violent imagery. "If by chance that God will place me [in the presidency]," he promised in launching his campaign, "watch out because the 1,000 [people executed while he was a mayor] will become 100,000. You will see the fish in Manila Bay getting fat. That is where I will dump you."

The rise of these political soulmates and populist strongmen not only resonated deeply in their political cultures, but also reflected global trends that made their bloodstained rhetoric paradigmatic of our present moment. After a post-Cold War quarter-century of globalisation, displaced workers around the world began mobilising angrily to oppose an economic order that had made life so good for transnational corporations and social elites. Between 1999 and 2011, for instance, Chinese imports had eliminated 2.4-million American jobs, closing furniture manufacturers in North Carolina, factories that produced glass in Ohio, and auto parts and steel companies across the Midwest. As a range of nations worldwide reacted to such realities by imposing a combined 2,100 restrictions on imports to staunch similar job losses, world trade actually started to slow down without a major recession for the first time since 1945.

The Bloodstained History of Populism

Across Europe, hyper-nationalist right-wing



DEADLY DUO: President Rodrigo Duterte meets Philippine national police chief Ronald Dela Rosa

Photo: King Rodriguez/PPD

parties such as the French National Front, the Alternative for Germany, and the UK Independence Party won voters by cultivating nativist, especially anti-Islamic, responses to globalisation. Simultaneously, a generation of populist demagogues either held, gained, or threatened to take power in democracies around the world: Marine Le Pen in France, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Viktor Orban in Hungary, Vladimir Putin in Russia, Recep Erdogan in Turkey, Donald Trump in the US, Narendra Modi in India, Prabowo Subianto in Indonesia, and Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, among others.

Indian essayist Pankaj Mishra recently summed up their successes this way: “Demagogues are still emerging, in the West and outside it, as the promise of prosperity collides with massive disparities of wealth, power, education, and status.” The Philippine economy offered typically grim news on this score. It grew by an impressive six percent annually in the six years before Duterte launched his presidential campaign,

even as a staggering 26-million poor Filipinos struggled to survive on a dollar a day. In those years, just 40 elite Filipino families grabbed an estimated 76 percent of all the wealth this growth produced.

Scholar Michael Lee suggests that a populist leader succeeds by rhetorically defining his or her national community by both its supposedly “shared characteristics” and its inevitable common “enemy,” whether Mexican “rapists” or Muslim refugees, much as the Nazis created a powerful sense of national selfhood by excluding certain groups by “blood.” In addition, he argues, such movements share the desire for an “apocalyptic confrontation” through a final “mythic battle” as “the vehicle to revolutionary change.”

Although scholars like Lee emphasise the ways in which populist demagogues rely on violent rhetoric for their success, they tend to focus less on another crucial aspect of such populists globally: actual violence. These movements might still be in their (relative-

A generation of populist demagogues either held, gained, or threatened to take power in democracies around the world

BRUTAL RESPONSE

During his first months in power, newly elected Philippine President Duterte waged his highly publicised war on the drug trade in city slums by loosing the police and vigilantes nationwide

ly) benign phase in the United States and Europe, but in less developed democracies around the world populist leaders haven't hesitated to inscribe their newfound power on the battered bodies of their victims.

For more than a decade, for instance, Russian President Vladimir Putin, a reasonable candidate for sparking this wave of populism, has demonstrated his famously bare-chested version of power politics by ensuring that opponents and critics meet grim ends under "mysterious" circumstances. These include the lethal spritz of polonium 210 that killed Russian secret police defector Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006; the shooting of journalist and Putin critic Anna Politkovskaya outside her Moscow apartment that same year; a dose of rare Himalayan plant poison for banker and Putin nemesis Alexander Perepilichny in London in 2012; a fusillade that felled opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in downtown Moscow in 2015; and four fatal bullets this March for refugee whistleblower Denis Voronkov on a Kiev sidewalk, which Ukraine has denounced as "an act of state terrorism."

As an Islamist populist, Turkish president Recep Erdogan has projected his power through a bloody repression of, and a new war with, the country's Kurdish minority. He portrays the Kurds as a cancer within the country's body politic whose identity must be extinguished, much as his forebears rid themselves of the Armenians. In addition, since mid-2016, he's overseen a wholesale purge of 50,000 officials, journalists, teachers, and military officers in the aftermath of a failed coup, and in a brutal round of torture and rape filled Turkish prisons to the brim.

In 2014, retired general Prabowo Subianto nearly won Indonesia's presidency with a populist campaign of "strength and order." In fact, Prabowo's military career had long been steeped in such violence. In 1998, when the authoritarian regime of his father-in-law Suharto was at the brink of collapse, Prabowo, then commander of the Kopassus Rangers, staged the kidnapping-disappear-

ance of a dozen student activists, the savage rape of 168 Chinese women (acts meant to incite racial violence), and the burning of 43 shopping malls and 5,109 buildings in Jakarta, the country's capital, that left more than 1,000 dead.

During his first months in power, newly elected Philippine President Duterte waged his highly publicised war on the drug trade in city slums by loosing the police and vigilantes nationwide in a campaign already marked, in its first six months, by at least 7,000 extra-judicial killings. The bodies of his victims were regularly dumped on Manila's streets as warnings to others and as down payments on Duterte's promises of a new, orderly country.

And he wasn't the first populist in Asia to take such a path either. In 2003, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra launched his "red shirt" movement as a war on his country's rampant methamphetamine abuse. In just three months under Thaksin's rule, the police carried out 2,275 extra-judicial killings of suspected drug dealers and users, often leaving the bodies where they fell as a twisted tribute to his power.

Such examples of populist political carnage and the likelihood of more to come – including what Donald Trump's presidency might have in store – raise certain questions: Just what dynamics lie behind the urge toward violence that seems to propel such movements? Why does the virulent campaign rhetoric of populist political movements so often morph into actual violence once a populist wins power? And why is that violence invariably aimed at enemies believed to threaten the imagined integrity of the national community?

In their compulsion to "protect" the nation from what are seen as pernicious alien influences, such populist movements are defined by their need for enemies. That need, in turn, infuses them with an almost uncontrollable compulsion for conflict that transcends actual threats or rational political programmes.

To give this troubling trend its political due, it's necessary to understand how, at a particular moment in history, global forces have produced a generation of populist leaders with such potential compulsions. And at the moment, there may be no better example to look to than the Philippines.

During its last half-century of blood-stained elections, two populists, Ferdinand Marcos and Rodrigo Duterte, won exceptional power by combining the high politics of diplomacy with the low politics of performative violence, scattering corpses scarred by their signature brutality as if they were so many political pamphlets. A quick look at this history offers us an unsettling glimpse of America's possible political future.

Populism in the Philippines: the Marcos Era

Although now remembered mainly as a "kleptocrat" who plundered his country and enriched himself with shameless abandon (epitomised by the discovery that his wife possessed 3,000 pairs of shoes), Ferdinand Marcos was, in fact, a brilliant populist, thoroughly skilled in the symbolic uses of violence. As his legal term as president came to an end in 1972, Marcos – who, like many populists, saw himself as chosen by destiny to save his people from perdition – used the military to declare martial law. He then jailed 50,000 opponents, including the senators who had blocked his favoured legislation and the gossip columnists who had mocked his wife's pretensions.

The first months of his dictatorship actually lacked any official violence. Then, just before dawn on January 15, 1973, Constabulary officers read a presidential execution order and strapped Lim Seng, an overseas Chinese heroin manufacturer, to a post at a Manila military camp. As a battery of press photographers stood by, an eight-man firing squad raised their rifles. Replayed endlessly on television and in movie theatres, the dramatic footage of bullets ripping open the victim's chest was clearly meant to be a

vivid display of the new dictator's power, as well as an appeal to his country's ingrained anti-Chinese racism. Lim Seng would be the only victim legally executed in the 14 years of the Marcos dictatorship. Extra-judicial killings were another matter, however.

Marcos made clever use of the massive US military bases near Manila to win continuing support for his authoritarian (and increasingly bloody) rule from three successive American administrations, even effectively neutralising President Jimmy Carter's human rights policy. After a decade of dictatorship, however, the economy began to collapse from a too-heavy dose of "crony capitalism" and the political opposition started to challenge Marcos's self-image as destiny's chosen one.

To either sate or subdue an increasingly restive population, he soon resorted to escalating raw violence. His security squads conducted what were referred to as "salvagings," more than 2,500 of them (or 77 percent of the 3,257 extra-judicial killings during his 14-year dictatorship). Bodies scarred by torture were regularly abandoned in public plazas or at busy intersections so passers-by could read the transcript of terror in their stigmata. In the capital, Manila, with only 4,000 police for six-million residents, the Marcos regime also deputised hundreds of "secret marshals" responsible for more than 30 shoot-on-sight fatalities during May 1985, the programme's first month, alone.

Yet the impact of Marcos's version of populist violence proved mutable – effective at the start of martial law when people yearned for order and counterproductive at its close when Filipinos again longed for freedom. That shift in sentiment soon led to his downfall in the first of the dramatic "people power" revolutions that would challenge autocratic regimes from Beijing to Berlin.

Populism in the Philippines: Duterte's violence

Rodrigo Duterte, the son of a provincial governor, initially pursued a career as the

Replayed endlessly on television and in movie theatres, the dramatic footage of bullets ripping open the victim's chest was clearly meant to be a vivid display of the new dictator's power, as well as an appeal to his country's ingrained anti-Chinese racism

BRUTAL RESPONSE

Campaigning for president in 2016, Duterte would proudly point to the killings in Davao City and promise a drug war that would murder 100,000 Filipinos if necessary

mayor of Davao City, a site of endemic violence that left a lasting imprint on his political persona. In 1984, after the communist New People's Army made Davao its testing ground for urban guerilla warfare, the city's murders soared, doubling to 800, including the assassination of 150 policemen. To check the communists, who took over part of the city, the military mobilised criminals and ex-communists as death squad vigilantes in a lethal counterterror campaign. When I visited Davao in 1987 to investigate death squad killings, that remote southern city already had an unforgettable air of desolation and hopelessness.

It was in this context of rising national and local extra-judicial slaughter that the 33-year old Rodrigo Duterte launched his political career as the elected mayor of Davao City. That was in 1988, the first of seven terms that would keep him in office, on and off, for another 21 years until he won the country's presidency in 2016. His first campaign was hotly contested and he barely beat his rivals, taking only 26 percent of the vote.

Around 1996, he reportedly mobilised his own vigilante group, the Davao Death Squad. It would be responsible for many of the city's 814 extra-judicial killings over the next decade, as victims were dumped on city streets with faces wrapped bizarrely in packing tape. Duterte himself may have killed one or more of the squad's victims. Apart from liquidating criminals, the Davao Death Squad also conveniently eliminated the mayor's political rivals.

Campaigning for president in 2016, Duterte would proudly point to the killings in Davao City and promise a drug war that would murder 100,000 Filipinos if necessary. In doing so, he was also drawing on historical resonances from the Marcos era that lent some political depth to his violent rhetoric. By specifically praising Marcos, promising to finally bury his body in the National Heroes Cemetery in Manila, and supporting Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for vice president, Duterte

identified himself with a political lineage of populist strongmen epitomised by the old dictator at a time when desperate Filipinos were looking for new hope of a decent life.

On taking office, President Duterte promptly started his promised anti-drug campaign and dead bodies became commonplace sights on city streets nationwide, sometimes accompanied by a crude cardboard sign reading, "I am a pusher," or simply with their faces wrapped in the by-now trademark packing tape used by the Davao Death Squad. Although Human Rights Watch would declare his drug war a "calamity," a resounding 85 percent of Filipinos surveyed were "satisfied," apparently seeing each body sprawled on a city street as another testament to the president's promise of order.

At the same time, like Marcos, Duterte deployed a new style of diplomacy as part of his populist reach for unrestrained power. Amid rising tensions in the South China Sea between Beijing and Washington, he improved his country's bargaining position by distancing himself from the Philippines' classic alliance with the United States. At the 2016 ASEAN conference, reacting to Barack Obama's criticism of his drug war, he said bluntly of the American president, "Your mother's a whore."

A month later during a state visit to Beijing, Duterte publicly proclaimed "separation from the United States." By setting aside his country's recent slam-dunk win over China at the Court of Arbitration in the Hague in a legal dispute over rival claims in the South China Sea, Duterte came home with \$24-billion in Chinese trade deals and a sense that he was helping establish a new world order.

In January, after his police tortured and killed a South Korean businessman on the pretext of a drug bust, he was forced to call a sudden halt to the nationwide killing spree. Like his role model Marcos, however, Duterte's populism seems to contain an insatiable appetite for violence and so it was not

long before bodies were once again being dumped on the streets of Manila, pushing the death toll past 8,000.

Success and the strongman

The histories of these Filipino strongmen, past and present, reveal two overlooked aspects of the ill-defined phenomenon of global populism: the role of what might be termed performative violence in projecting domestic strength and a complementary need for diplomatic success to show international influence. How skillfully these critical poles of power are balanced may offer one gauge for speculating about the fate of populist strongmen in disparate parts of the globe.

In Russia's case, Putin's projection of strength through the murder of selected domestic opponents has been matched by unchecked aggression in Georgia and Ukraine – a successful balancing act that has made his country, with its rickety economy the size of Italy's, seem like a great power again and is likely to extend his autocratic rule into the foreseeable future.

In Turkey, Erdogan's harsh repression of ethnic and political enemies has essentially sunk his bid for entry into the European Union, plunged him into an unwinnable war with Kurdish rebels, and complicated his alliance with the United States against Islamic fundamentalism – all potential barriers to his successful bid for unchecked power.

In Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto failed in his critical first step: building a domestic base large enough to sweep him into the presidency, in part because his call for order resonated so discordantly with a public still capable of remembering his earlier bid for power through eerie violence that roiled Jakarta with hundreds of rapes, fires, and deaths.

Without the popular support generated by his local spectacle of violence, President Duterte's de facto abrogation of his country's claims to the South China Sea's rich fishing grounds and oil reserves in his bid

for Chinese support risks a popular backlash, a military coup, or both. For the time being, however, Duterte's deft juxtaposition of international manoeuvring and local bloodletting has made him a successful Philippine strongman with, as yet, few apparent checks on his power.

While the essential weakness of the Philippine military limits Duterte's outlets for his populist violence to the police killings of poor street drug dealers, Donald Trump faces no such restraints. Should Congress and the courts check the virulence of his domestic attacks on Muslims, Mexicans, or other imagined enemies and should his presidency run into further setbacks like the recent repeal-Obamacare humiliation, he could readily resort to violent military adventures not only in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Libya, but even in Iran, not to speak of North Korea, in a bid to recover his populist aura of overweening power. In this way, unlike any other potential populist politician on the planet, he holds the fate of countless millions in his much-discussed hands.

If populism's need for what scholar Michael Lee calls an "apocalyptic confrontation" and a "mythic battle" proves accurate, it might, in the end, lead the Trump administration's "systemic revolutionaries" far beyond even their most extreme rhetoric into an endlessly escalating cycle of violence against foreign enemies, using whatever weapons are available, whether drones, special operations forces, fighter bombers, naval armadas, or even nuclear weapons. **CT**

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Alfred W. McCoy is the Harrington professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His newest book, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of US Global Power* (Dispatch Books/Haymarket) will be published this September. This article is based on a lecture he delivered in February at the Third World Studies Center at the University of the Philippines. This article was first published at www.tomdispatch.com

Unlike any other potential populist politician on the planet, Donald Trump holds the fate of countless millions in his much-discussed hands

In The Picture

Photographer **Chris Baker** captures the thrills and spills of Sunday league football, one of the UK's most-loved pastimes - where some players want to be stars, but most just want to escape the wife and kids

FEVER PITCH

“One of the most important jobs of a Sunday morning football manager is being Taxi Driver. This usually means picking players up from various young ladies’ houses or on the rare occasion, the local police station . . . all for free, I must add”

Playing weekend football is a tradition for British males, from starry-eyed teenagers, nursing not-yet-shattered dreams of becoming a superstar, to their adult teammates fleeing the tedium of an afternoon in a shopping centre with a moaning wife and whining kids.

I've been there: Winter afternoons in bleak rain- and snow-swept villages deep in the Lincolnshire Wolds. The changing room is a barn; the playing area – bovine occupants shooed away, their shit hastily shovelled to the side – is a rutted field on the slope of a hill. A frigid chill from the not-so-distant North Sea is eased by a few beers before the start and the half-time warmth of a cigarette cupped between shivering hands. Then, a brain-numbing second half, endured by the knowledge that more beer and a portion of hot, greasy, fish and chips await the final whistle. If this isn't heaven, would someone please tell me what is?

London photographer Chris Baker has been there, too. His stamping ground – East London's Hackney Marshes, with its 80 pitches and 50 games each Sunday – is a world away from that Lincolnshire farmland, but



London's Hackney Marshes: 800 football pitches.



Getting ready for the struggle



Hat trick!



Two's company.

In The Picture



Sunday victim.

“Our keeper was in mid-air when the opposition striker kicked him so hard it broke his leg through the shin pad. When he landed from that he broke the ankle on the other foot. It’s fucked his everyday life because he’s got twin kids”

his memories are similar to mine, and, no doubt, to those of thousands of others.

Baker, who spent three seasons at the Marshes shooting pictures for his recently-published photobook, **Sunday Football**, recalls in the book’s introduction, “As a kid growing up in rural England, all I did was play football every waking moment, all the while dreaming of one day being a professional.”

That dream, like mine, died after unsuccessful trials with a couple of professional clubs. “Then, several years later, I discovered adult Sunday League. Football was back to being playground football: hanging out with mates, having a laugh, and if you won, great, if you didn’t, who cared? One player told me, ‘My wife doesn’t get it, this is my social life, this is where I come to hang out with my mates!’

“I’d wake up on Sunday morning, see the weather and know the type of shots I’d get. If it was raining, the teams would be light on players turning up, there would be horrible



Over the bar.



Ready for kick-off.



Famous victory.



Dedicated fans.

tackles flying around and some great portraits to be taken at the end of the games. If it was sunny, the fags and spliffs would be out and the sidelines would look like a hangover recovery clinic, with players lying around looking like they'd barely be able to get up off the floor, let alone run around a pitch for 45 minutes."

The new book, adds Baker, "is my love letter to the game that consumed me for so many years. It's a visual interpretation of the beloved game at amateur level. An ode to those players that turn up late, hung-over and discussing last night's conquest, those that get lost in the emotion of the game and start the occasional brawl on the pitch, and those that round off the weekend with a quick pint of beer with their team mates

"Our old goalkeeper wore glasses but couldn't wear contacts. This was a bit of a problem as he could only really see a player or the ball when they reached the edge of his area. We conceded a lot of long-range shots that year"



Field of streams.

“It keeps me off the streets, something to do on a Sunday morning, although they try and discriminate against us because we like to puff and play football”

.....
Chris Baker
is a London
photographer.
His web site is
www.bakerworld.uk

post-game before heading back to the mis- sus and kids for a roast dinner.”

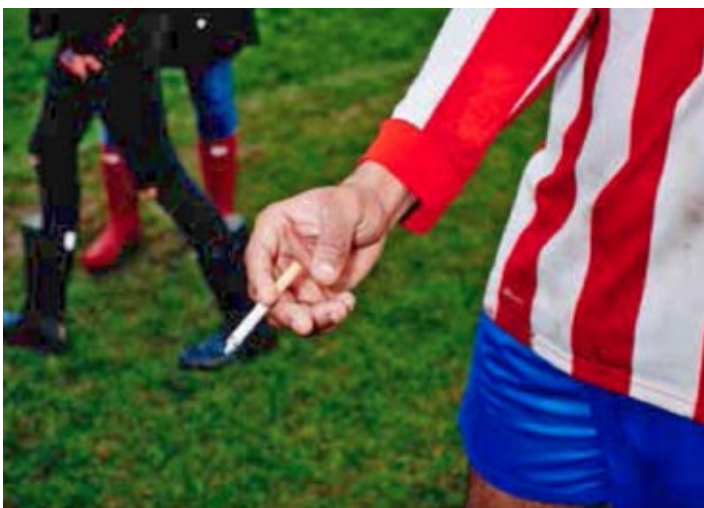
The photographs in Sunday Football show a side of the game ignored by daily newspapers and glossy fan magazines, which occupy a fairytale world where soaring transfer fees and the eye-watering pay cheques of a few money-grubbing soccer ‘heroes’ are every- thing. Baker’s world is real. Here, the amount of money in your pocket doesn’t matter; winning is okay, but not essential; and hav- ing fun is the most important element of the game for everyone – except the psycho def- ender on the other team, whose sole desire is to sink his boot firmly into the groin of the opposing striker!
– Tony Sutton



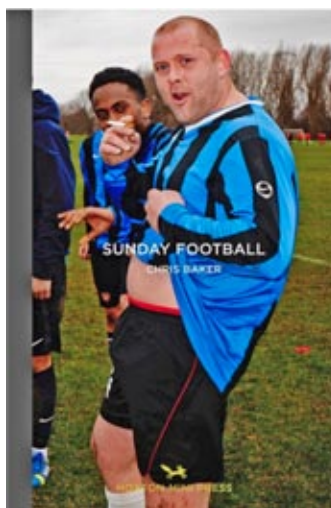
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Israel's new dirty tricks against boycott leaders

Jonathan Cook tells how Israel is stepping up its campaign against members of the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement

Recent videos have shown an Israeli policeman savagely beating a Palestinian lorry driver, and soldiers taking hostage a terrified eight-year-old after he crossed their path while searching for a toy

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed cohorts of Israel loyalists in the United States by video link at the beginning of April at the annual conference of Aipac, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee.

They should, he said, follow his government's example and defend Israel on the "moral battlefield" against the growing threat of the international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement. In Netanyahu's simple-minded language, support for Palestinian rights, and opposition to the settlements, is equivalent to "delegitimisation" of Israel.

The current obsession with BDS reflects a changing political environment for Israel.

According to an investigation by Haaretz newspaper last month, Israeli agents subverted the human rights community in the 1970s and 1980s. Their job was to launder Israel's image abroad. Yoram Dinstein, a professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, led the local chapter of Amnesty International, the world's most influential rights organisation of the time, running it effectively as a wing of Israel's foreign ministry.

Dinstein's interference allowed Israel to falsely characterise the occupation as benevolent while presenting the Palestinians' liberation struggle as terrorism. The reality of Israel's oppression of Palestinians rarely reached outsiders.

Israel's task is harder five decades on. The human rights community is more independent, while social media and mobile phone cameras have allowed Palestinians and their supporters to bypass the gatekeepers.

Recent videos have shown an Israeli policeman savagely beating a Palestinian lorry driver, and soldiers taking hostage a terrified eight-year-old after he crossed their path while searching for a toy.

If concealment at source is no longer so easy, the battle must be taken to those who disseminate this damning information. The urgency has grown as artists refuse to visit, universities sever ties, churches pull their investments and companies back out of deals.

Israel is already sealing itself off from outside scrutiny as best it can. Last month, it passed a law denying entry into Israel or the occupied territories to those who support BDS or "delegitimise" Israel.

But domestic critics have proved trickier. The Israel government has chipped away at the human rights community's financial base. Media regulation has intensified. And the culture ministry is cracking down on film productions that criticise the occupation or government policy.

But the local boycott movement is feeling the brunt of the assault. Activists already risk punitive damages if they call for a boy-



ARRESTED: Omar Barghouti, BDS leader, was accused of tax evasion and arrested.

cott of the settlements. Transport minister Yisrael Katz stepped up the threats last year, warning BDS leaders that they faced “civil targeted assassination.” What did he mean?

Omar Barghouti, the movement’s Palestinian figurehead, was arrested last month, accused of tax evasion. He is already under a travel ban, preventing him from receiving an international peace award this month. And Israeli officials want to strip him of his not-so “permanent” residency.

At the same time, a leading Israeli rights activist, Jeff Halper, founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, was detained by police on suspicion of promoting BDS while leading activists on a tour of an illegal settlement.

These are the first signs of the repression to come. The police minister, Gilad Erdan, has announced plans for a database of Israelis who support BDS, to mirror existing spying operations on BDS activists overseas. The information will help a “dirty tricks” unit whose job is to tarnish their reputations.

Erdan also wants a blacklist of companies and organisations that support boycotts. A law passed in February already shames the few companies prepared to deny services to the settlements, forcing them publicly to

“out” themselves.

Why is Israel so fearful? Officials say the immediate danger is Europe’s labelling of settlement products, the first step on a slippery slope they fear could lead to Israel being called an apartheid state. That would shift the debate from popular boycotts and divestment by civil society groups to pressure for action by governments – or sanctions.

The inexorable trend was illustrated last month when a United Nations commission found Israel guilty of breaching the international convention on the crime of apartheid. Washington forced the UN secretary-general to repudiate the report, but the comparison is not going away.

Israel supporters in the United States have taken Netanyahu’s message to heart when they unveiled an online “boycotters map”, identifying academics who support BDS – both to prevent them entering Israel and presumably to damage their careers.

For the moment, the Israeli-engineered backlash is working. Western governments are characterising support for a boycott, even of the settlements, as anti-Semitic – driven by hatred of Jews rather than opposition to Israel’s oppression of Palestinians. Anti-BDS legislation has passed in France, Britain, Switzerland, Canada and the US.

This is precisely how Netanyahu wants to shape the “moral battlefield”. A reign of terror against free speech and political activism abroad and at home, leaving Israel free to crush the Palestinians.

On paper, it may sound workable. But Israel will soon have to accept that the apartheid genie is out of the bottle – and it cannot be put back. **GT**

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Jonathan Cook won the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His latest books are “Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East” (Pluto Press) and “Disappearing Palestine: Israel’s Experiments in Human Despair” (Zed Books). His website is www.jonathan-cook.net

The police minister, Gilad Erdan, has announced plans for a database of Israelis who support BDS, to mirror existing spying operations on BDS activists overseas

Heroes of the Palestine resistance

Bassem Tamimi has defied Israeli aggression for years; and now Australia won't allow him into the country without Israel's permission, writes **Vashti Kenway**

Palestinian activists have been brutally attacked by the Israeli military, which is concerned that the village's defiance will inspire others

In the occupied West Bank, the Tamimi family name is synonymous with Palestinian struggle. They are the mainstay of the protest movement in the village of Nabi Saleh, which has been battling against Israeli settlement building, occupation and water theft for decades. Mothers, brothers, uncles, daughters, sons, young and old have all participated in the movement, which, until recently, took to the streets of the village every Friday to demand their rights.

The demonstrations raise awareness about the encroachment of the illegal Israeli settlement of Halamish, the regular demolitions of Palestinian homes and the siphoning of vital drinking water from Nabi Saleh to the Israeli outpost.

Palestinian activists have been brutally attacked by the Israeli military, which is concerned that the village's defiance will inspire others. One extended family member, Mustafa, was shot on December 10, 2011, by a high-velocity tear gas projectile fired at his head at close range from an Israeli military jeep. He died the next day in hospital.

More recently, in 2015, a photograph of 12-year-old Muhammad Tamimi being assaulted by a fully armed Israeli soldier went viral. The photo shows the boy screaming in agony as two women, an elderly man and a young girl strain to rip the soldier off the boy. The women who intervene are Muhammad's mother Nariman Tamimi, his sister

Ahed Tamimi and aunt Manal Tamimi. Two days before the incident, the 12-year-old boy suffered a broken arm during an Israeli raid in the village and can be seen wearing a cast in the photos.

The violence of the Israeli soldier received widespread condemnation from around the world, but the Israeli state defended the soldier, claiming that he was the victim of a riotous mob.

This situation is heartachingly familiar to the Tamimis. The Israeli state steals their land, assaults their children and then twists the story so that victim becomes oppressor and oppressor becomes victim. Regardless, the family refuses to allow the violence of the occupation forces to dissuade them.

Bassem Tamimi, the father of Muhammad, is one of the most prominent organisers of the resistance. Bassem has been invited to a speaking tour in Australia by a variety of Palestine solidarity groups and Socialist Alternative. He is a keynote speaker at the annual Marxism conference in Melbourne in April.

The Australian government has demanded he gain approval from Israeli police before his visa will be granted. Bassem holds a Palestinian Authority passport and can travel without agreement from the Israeli authorities. Nevertheless, the Australian government, one of Israel's key international backers, wants to ensure that Palestinians



An Israeli soldier (above) grabs Mohammed Tamimi, 11, around the neck as he tries to arrest him. He was resisted by members of the boy's family (left). The violence occurred during a weekly protest against the Israeli occupation in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh, on August 28, 2015.

Photographs:
www.activestills.org

Freedom Fighter

“What incites protesters to throw stones is the sound of bullets, the occupation’s bulldozers as they destroy the land, the smell of tear gas and the smoke coming from burnt houses”

know their lives are, in fact, ruled by Israel. Bassem has thus far not been granted his visa.

This denial of a visa is just the latest offence against Bassem. A longstanding activist who participated in the first intifada, he is seasoned in the ways of the Israeli state. He has been arrested more than 10 times and imprisoned frequently. He was held for three years in administrative detention without trial.

While in prison in 1993, he was tortured for weeks by the Israeli Shin Bet in order to extract a confession. Tamimi said that during the torture he was dropped from a high ceiling onto a concrete floor and woke up a week later in an Israeli hospital. While in prison, his sister visited him. According to her family, she was struck and pushed down a flight of stairs by an Israeli army interpreter. She was killed. No-one was ever charged over her death.

At that time, Bassem was cleared of all charges. But in 2011, he was put on trial for inciting protesters to throw stones at the Israeli police. In a statement to the court he said: “International law guarantees the right of occupied people to resist occupation. In practising my right, I have called for and organised peaceful popular demonstrations

against the occupation, settler attacks and the theft of more than half of the land of my village ... I organised these peaceful demonstrations in order to defend our land and our people ... The military prosecutor accuses me of inciting the protesters to throw stones at the soldiers. This is not true.

“What incites protesters to throw stones is the sound of bullets, the occupation’s bulldozers as they destroy the land, the smell of tear gas and the smoke coming from burnt houses. I did not incite anyone to throw stones, but I am not responsible for the security of your soldiers who invade my village and attack my people with all the weapons of death and the equipment of terror.”

He was convicted and imprisoned. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience. On his release, Bassem declared his commitment to continuing the struggle until the occupation is ended.

“We know they want a land without people – they only want the land and the water – so our destiny is to resist. They give us no other choice.” **CT**

.....
Vashti Kenway wrote this article for Red Flag, the newspaper of the Australian socialist newspaper - www.redflag.org.au

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The anti-Russian campaign gathers force

Who's to blame for increased military aggression and spying? It's not the side the Western media and politicians suggest, says **Brian Cloughley**

On January 30, NBC News reported that “On a snowy Polish plain dominated by Russian forces for decades, American tanks and troops sent a message to Moscow and demonstrated the firepower of the NATO alliance. Amid concerns that President Donald Trump’s commitment to NATO is wavering, the tanks fired salvos that declared the 28-nation alliance a vital deterrent in a dangerous new world.”

One intriguing aspect of this slanted account are the phrases “dominated by Russian forces for decades,” and “vital deterrent,” which are used by NBC to imply that Russia yearns, for some unspecified reason, to invade Poland. As is common in the Western media, there is no justification or evidence to substantiate the suggestion that Russia is hell-bent on domination, and the fact that US troops are far from home, operating along the Russian border, is regarded as normal behaviour on the part of the world’s “indispensable nation.”

Then Reuters recorded that, “Beginning in February, US military units will spread out across Poland, the Baltic states, Bulgaria, Romania and Germany for training, exercises and maintenance. The Army is also sending its 10th Combat Aviation Brigade with about 50 Black Hawk and 10 CH-47 Chinook helicopters and 1,800 personnel, as well as a separate aviation battalion with 400 troops and 24 Apache helicopters.”

As the US-NATO military alliance continues its deployments along Russia’s borders, including the US-UK supported Joint Viking 2017 exercise in Norway that began on March 1, the campaign by the US and British governments against alleged “Russian aggression” continues to increase in volume and intensity, aided by an ever-compliant media.

During his visit to Washington on March 6-7, Ukraine’s foreign minister Pavlo Klimkin met with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Senator Marco Rubio of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and received assurances of US support in “confronting Russian aggression,” while in Britain it was announced that its foreign minister, Boris Johnson, the “mop-haired buffoon,” was about to visit Russia in to tell it to “keep its nose” out of Western affairs. Mr Johnson declared that Russia “was up to all sorts of no good” and “engaged in cyber-warfare.”

The splendid irony of the Johnson allegation about cyber warfare is that it came just before the revelation that Britain’s intelligence agencies were deeply involved with those of the United States in cyber-chicanery on a massive scale. WikiLeaks once again showed the depths of deceit and humbug to which the West’s great democracies submerge themselves, and revealed that leaked files, “describe CIA plans and descriptions of malware and other tools that could be used to hack into some of the world’s most

In Britain it was announced that its foreign minister, Boris Johnson, the “mop-haired buffoon,” was about to visit Russia in to tell it to “keep its nose” out of Western affairs

Who's Spying?

In June 2013, it was revealed that the United States of America had been spying on European Union computer networks in the EU offices in Washington and New York

popular technology platforms. The documents showed that the developers aimed to be able to inject these tools into targeted computers without the owners' awareness . . . the documents show broad exchanges of tools and information between the CIA, the National Security Agency and other US federal intelligence agencies, as well as intelligence services of close allies Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom."

ABC News hastened to announce, without the slightest shred of proof, that "Julian Assange, the man behind WikiLeaks, appears to have a strong relationship with Russia," but could not disguise the report by CNN that the documents disclosed that, "to hide its operations, the CIA routinely adopted techniques that enabled its hackers to appear as if they were Russian."

There has been no comment on the WikiLeaks revelations by people such as US Senator Amy Klobuchar, who declared in January that "Russia used cyber attacks and propaganda to try and undermine our democracy. We are not alone. Russia has a pattern of waging cyber attacks and military invasions against democracies across the world." She was echoed by, amongst others, Senator Ben Sasse, who declared that increased US sanctions would "upend Putin's calculus and defend America from Russian cyber attacks and political meddling."

It would be difficult for the Senators to swallow their rabid distrust of Russia and overcome their pride to acknowledge that on March 1 the US National Reconnaissance Office launched a spy satellite carried by an Atlas V rocket that was powered by a Russian RD-180 engine. In an astonishing example of petty-minded obfuscation, the 1,500-word official report on the launching mentioned RD-180 three times – but failed to state its country of manufacture. Naturally, the mainstream media followed suit. On March 19 there was another Atlas V launch, carrying supplies to the International Space Station. This, too, was powered by a Russian

engine, which would, of course, have been greeted with appropriate approval and gratitude by Washington and especially by fair-minded legislators like Senator Sasse.)

The reaction on the part of the US government to the disclosures has been to denounce them because they supposedly "not only jeopardise US personnel and operations, but also equip our adversaries with tools and information to do us harm." Predictably, Senator Sasse tweeted that "Julian Assange should spend the rest of his life wearing an orange jumpsuit. He's an enemy of the American people and an ally of Vladimir Putin."

There should be no surprise about the activities of US and British intelligence agencies, because they already have a record of spying on UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Chancellor Merkel of Germany, French Presidents Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande, and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, to name but a few world leaders subjected to the indignity of greasy little eavesdroppers sniggering at their private conversations.

In June 2013, it was revealed that the United States of America had been spying on European Union computer networks in the EU offices in Washington and New York. According to Germany's Der Spiegel, a document of September 2010 "explicitly named the Union's representation at the UN as a 'location target.'" Der Spiegel discovered that "the NSA had also conducted an electronic eavesdropping operation in a building in Brussels where the EU Council of Ministers and the European Council were located." Together with their British colleagues, the techno-dweebs of Government Communications Headquarters, the US agencies have been having a ball – but have been unable to prove that Russia "used cyber attacks and propaganda to try and undermine our democracy."

The faithful CIA mouthpiece, the New York Times, stated in December that "American spy and law enforcement agencies were united in the belief, in the weeks before the

presidential election, that the Russian government had deployed computer hackers to sow chaos during the campaign." Not only this, but "CIA officials presented lawmakers with a stunning new judgment that upended the debate: Russia, they said, had intervened with the primary aim of helping make Donald J Trump president."

But there is no evidence whatever that there was election-time hacking by Russia, and now there is proof that "to hide its operations, the CIA routinely adopted techniques that enabled its hackers to appear as if they were Russian."

Although none of the assertions that Russia has been conducting a cyber war against America can be substantiated, Washington's anti-Russia propaganda campaign will continue for the foreseeable future, while President Trump's initial intentions to enter into dialogue with his counterpart in Moscow wither away to nothing. Even if he does resurrect the sensible policy he seemed to endorse, his acolytes in Washington will

do their best to maintain confrontation by spreading more allegations of Russian "aggression" and "cyber attacks." The anti-Russia campaign is gathering force, and it is not difficult to put a finger on why such a counter-productive crusade appeals to so many in the West.

The US arms and intelligence industries are the main beneficiaries of confrontation with Russia, closely followed by the hierarchy of the US-NATO military alliance who have been desperately seeking justification for its existence for many years. For so long as the US military-industrial complex holds sway in Washington, there will be international friction. But US spy satellites will continue to be carried aloft on rockets powered by Russian engines. **CT**

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Brian Cloughley is former deputy head of the UN military mission in Kashmir and Australian defence attaché in Pakistan. This article first appeared at www.strategic-culture.org

"To hide its operations, the CIA routinely adopted techniques that enabled its hackers to appear as if they were Russian"

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ColdType Insights

A cold dose of reality for May and her team

Theresa May has signed Britain out of Europe, now things are beginning to get difficult for her, warns **Ian Dent**

If you put a frog in boiling water, it jumps out. If you put it in cold water and slowly turn up the heat, it will sit there and boil to death without noticing. Looking at the reality of Britain's EU predicament just a days into Article 50, everything feels a million miles away from where we were even a few weeks ago. It bears no comparison whatsoever with the fevered optimism of the referendum campaign.

Back then, the Brexiters promised free unicorns to everyone and a pot of gold at the end of every rainbow. There'd be more money for the NHS, more control for the British people, everyone would know their neighbours again and a friendly bobby would stroll on every street. Today, the conversation is, at the very best, about minimising the negative repercussions of Brexit. It has gone from a solution to everything to a problem for everyone.

Once upon a time Boris Johnson implied Europe needed us more than

we needed them. David Davis told us that we would go to individual member states to strike up trade agreements. Liam Fox told us he would finalise trade deals with non-EU countries while we were conducting Brexit negotiations.



Prime Minister Theresa May signs the letter of notification to the President of the European Council setting out the UK's intention to withdraw from the European Union.

Photo: Jay Allen

All of that is false. Draft guidelines from Donald Tusk at the Council of the European Union showed that Europe is in complete control of the negotiation process. Britain is barred from holding bilateral talks with EU member states on Brexit during nego-

tiations and it cannot negotiate trade deals with other countries at the same time, either.

The balance of power is evident throughout. The British demand that talks deal on the divorce run in parallel with talks on the future trade relationship are dismissed. Instead, "the European Council will monitor progress closely and determine when sufficient progress has been achieved to allow negotiations to proceed to the next phase." The wording tells you everything about the dynamics of the negotiation. They are in control. They decide when they are ready to move to the next stage.

Davis' vision of a UK-German trade deal was always fantasy, but it's now clear even bilateral meetings on Brexit are ruled out. "So as not to undercut the position of the Union, there will be no separate negotiations between individual member states and the United Kingdom," the paper reads.

The attitude to the thorny budget issue, in which the EU is demanding around £50-billion for financial items and pensions, seems unchanged. "A single financial settlement

should ensure that the Union and the United Kingdom both respect the obligations undertaken before the date of withdrawal," it reads. This refers to promises in the current seven-year financial period, which lasts to the end of 2020. It therefore means we're on

the hook for seven quarters after our March 2019 exit. Then it says: “The settlement should cover all legal and budgetary commitments as well as liabilities, including contingent liabilities.” That seems to refer to pensions. No discernable movement on any of these issues.

May has been speaking for months about British firms’ ability to have “access to and operate within” the single market. We’ve heard it so much from her that it almost trips off the tongue. That gets very short shrift here.

“Preserving the integrity of the single market excludes participation based on a sector-by-sector approach,” the draft guideline says. Any future free trade agreement could not “amount to participation in the single market or parts thereof.” It is remarkable to see months of prime ministerial rhetoric dismissed with a flick of the pen in Brussels.

May spoke of agreeing the final terms of the free trade deal during the Article 50 window, then getting it ratified across the EU, before initiating an “implementation period” for it coming into force. That gets short shrift, too. The EU only envisages “preliminary and preparatory discussions” towards a trade deal. This second phase of negotiation, which starts when it is satisfied with the budget issue, would only create an “overall understanding on the framework of the future relationship.”

The deal would only be “finalised and concluded” once the UK is out the EU. Transitional arrangements must be “clearly defined, limited in time, and subject to effective enforcement mechanisms.” And when a future trade deal is signed, “it must ensure a level playing field in terms of competition and state aid, and must

encompass safeguards against unfair competitive advantages through, inter alia, fiscal, social and environmental dumping.” That suggests Britain will still not have control over its environmental standards, state aid rules and other issues, even outside the EU, despite having lost any voice in formulating them.

There are positives in the document. The EU commits to trying to avoid a chaotic no-deal scenario, although it says “it will prepare itself to be able to handle the situation also if the negotiations were to fail.” It reiterates that it wants the UK as a close partner in future. It says it intends to “reduce uncertainty” and “minimise disruption.” It commits to “flexible and imaginative solutions” to avoid a hard border in Ireland. And it wants a deal on EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU as “a matter of priority.”

But, generally, this is a cold splash of water in the face for the May team. It shows how quickly their rhetoric falls apart in the face of a stronger ne-

gotiating partner. All those optimistic promises from Brexit campaigners and government ministers disappear as soon as the European position emerges.

Britain is now the junior partner in a negotiation which will define its economic future. It is operating to a timetable set by the larger partner, according to rules imposed by them, with an end-result that they have decided without us and which contradicts the stated aims of the UK government. If people were asked whether they wanted this nine months ago their answer is unlikely to have been particularly encouraging. Put the frog in boiling water and it jumps out. But if you raise that temperature bit by bit, if you degrade expectations steadily, it hardly notices what is happening.

This is the reality of what taking back control entails. Two more years to go. **CT**

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*Ian Dunt is the author of **Brexit: What The Hell Happens Now?** He is the editor of Politics.co.uk*

War’s dubious claim of making a homeland

The fog of war obscures the truth from Vimy to Mosul and Aleppo, says **Rick Salutin**

Who knows what to make of war, even when it’s happening as we speak and read? It so easily gets distanced: it’s foreign, literally and psychologically – like the sieges of Mosul or Aleppo. Young men die there in battle each

day. But for us, it’s a mention in the news, so like yesterday’s and tomorrow’s that we normally slide past.

Military deaths are rarely reported; civilian deaths, sometimes. Names – they have none. Their deaths pass as quickly as people in

Insights

cars driving in the other direction on the highway – whoosh – lives as complex, hopeful or fearful as ours, yet we never register them as individuals.

Can people actually be dying every day to win back these cities for their side? Yes. They wake each morning knowing some won't go to sleep that night. Imagine the agony if it was us and our kids.

Then what can we make of the centenary of Vimy Ridge, a battle a century ago, April 9 to 12, 1917? Yet it can be that distance itself that finally lends sense.

Here's a peculiar example. Shortly after the war, in 1925, English crime diva Agatha Christie wrote a short story, *Witness for the Prosecution*, a classic revisited often – as a play, a film, for television – for almost as long as Vimy has been commemorated. It never mentions the war, but like the war, it was about murder and guilt. In the original, the murderers get away with it, ingeniously. This bothered Christie who almost always made the guilty pay; so in her stage version, in 1953, they are killed, deservedly. But still, no mention of war.

Then, in the most recent BBC-TV version, last fall, with Christie long dead, there's a brilliant twist. The murderers survive and thrive, but the lawyer who got them off, kills himself when he realises their guilt.

Why? Because by winning the case, he was trying to expiate his own guilt: he'd survived the war but his son hadn't. So the guilty don't go free – which would have pleased Christie – but we find out more about where guilt truly resides, and it's not simple.

In this latest remake of a tale of death and guilt, the war finally speaks its name, but in a way Christie couldn't: she was too English, too of her time. It rings truer, and just as cleverly, as her versions. It's as though it's taken this long for the full significance of that war to work its way to the surface, like shrapnel. The story and its meaning existed on some autonomous level, just waiting, separate from its author, who merely unearthed it and left it for others to improve at a later time. Trust the song, not the singer.

I think also of English poet Edward Thomas, who died on the first day of the Vimy attack, April 9. A stray shell landed near his battery and a "pneumatic concussion" sucked the air from his lungs so his heart stopped. That's all, no wounds.

He'd just started writing poetry with encouragement from his friend, US poet Robert Frost, and he wrote a lot, sometimes a poem a day; fine work but rarely about war. Unlike other war poets, he didn't take the war as his subject, but the

war made him feel the urgency of saying what he had to say.

Thomas could have stayed home without censure, due to his age, but he joined. His motives were murky (the fog of war, extended). He felt Frost might have been criticising him for dithering in his poem, *The Road Not Taken*, though, in fact, Frost wanted him to come to the US and write there.

He enlisted finally out of a feeling of debt to England itself in a literal, landscape sense. He was a lover of English countryside and wrote about walks through it: Nothing really against the other side but a deep feeling he should protect his own place.

In Vimy's time war was often seen as the noble force that "turns a people into a nation" (German nationalist Heinrich von Treitschke, quoted by Pankaj Mishra), which is the claim made often about Vimy: it created Canada.

But today it's the more homely justification given by Thomas that sounds familiar. Young Canadians or Americans are sent off to die in Iraq or Afghanistan, under the dubious claim that they too are making "the homeland" safe. **CT**

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Rick Salutin is a social activist and author. This article originally appeared in the Toronto Star, where he writes a weekly column.

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Yes, Canada's story also includes slavery

Canada holds itself as a paragon of virtue, but beneath the veneer is the unpleasant reality, writes **Yves Engler**

We love our tales about how Canada offered sanctuary to US slaves for decades, but the unabridged version is it sustained African bondage for much longer.

In a recent rabble.ca story titled “Canada’s earliest immigration policies made it a safe haven for escaped slaves,” Penney Kome ignores the fact that Africans were held in bondage in Canada for 200 years and that the Atlantic provinces had important ties to the Caribbean plantation economies.

According to Kome, Canada’s relationship to slavery consisted of the oft-discussed Underground Railway that brought Africans in bondage north to freedom. But, she ignores the southbound “underground railroad” during the late 1700s that took many Canadian slaves to Vermont and other Northern US states that had abolished slavery. Even more slaves journeyed to freedom in Michigan and New England after the war of 1812.

For more than 200 years, New France and the British North America colonies held Africans in bondage. The first recorded slave sale in New France took place in 1628. There were at least 3,000 African slaves in what are now known as Québec, Ontario and the Maritimes. Leading historical figures such as

René Bourassa, James McGill, Colin McNabb, Joseph Papineau and Peter Russell owned slaves and some were strident advocates of the practice.

After conquering Quebec, Britain strengthened the laws that enabled slavery. In *The Blacks in Canada*, Robin Winks explains: “On three occasions explicit guarantees were given to slave owners that their property would be respected, and between 1763 and 1790 the British government added to the legal structures so that a once vaguely defined system of slavery took on clearer outlines.”

It wasn’t until 1833 that slavery was abolished in what is now Canada and across the rest of the British Empire.

Canadians propped up slavery in a number of other ways. Canada helped the British quell Caribbean slave rebellions, particularly during the 1791-1804 Haitian revolution, which disrupted the region’s slave economy. Much of Britain’s Halifax-based squadron arrived on the shores of the West Indies in 1793, and many of the ships that set sail to the Caribbean at that time were assembled in the town’s naval yard. Additionally, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick provided “sticks for the furnishing of a variety of naval stores, especially masts and spars,

to the West Indies squadron at Jamaica, Antigua, and Barbados.”

A number of prominent Canadian-born (or based) individuals fought to capture and re-establish slavery in the French colonies. Dubbed the “Father of the Canadian Crown,” Prince Edward Duke of Kent departed for the West Indies aboard a Halifax gunboat in 1793. As a major general, he led forces that captured Guadalupe, St. Lucia and Martinique. Today, many streets and monuments across the country honour a man understood to have first applied the term “Canadian” to both the English and French inhabitants of Upper and Lower Canada.

In what may be Canada’s most significant contribution to the British war effort in the Caribbean, a dozen Nova Scotia privateers captured at least 57 enemy vessels in the West Indies between 1793 and 1805. Licensed by the state to seize enemy boats during wartime, “privateers were essential tools of war until the rise of large steam navies in the mid-nineteenth century.”

But Nova Scotia privateers weren’t solely motivated by reasons of state. They sought to protect a market decimated by French privateers. In *A Private War in the Caribbean: Nova Scotia Privateering, 1793-1805*, Dan Conlin writes that “in a broader sense privateering was an armed defence of the [Maritimes’] West Indies market.”

Outside of its role in suppressing Caribbean slave rebellions, the Maritimes literally fed the slave system for decades. In Emancipation Day, Natasha Henry explains: “Very few Canadians are aware that at one time their nation’s economy

was firmly linked to African slavery through the building and sale of slave ships, the sale and purchase of slaves to and from the Caribbean, and the exchange of timber, cod, and other food items from the Maritimes for West-Indian slave-produced goods.”

A central component of the economy revolved around providing the resources that enabled slavery. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland generated great wealth selling cheap, high-protein food to keep millions of “enslaved people working 16 hours a day.”

In *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*, Mark Kurlansky explains: “In the 17th-century, the strategy for sugar production, a labour-intensive agro-industry, was to keep the manpower cost down through slavery. At harvest time, a sugar plantation was a factory with slaves working 16 hours or more a day – chopping cane by hand as close to the soil as possible, burning fields, hauling cane to a mill, crushing, boiling. To keep working under the tropical sun the slaves needed salt and protein. But plantation owners did not want to waste any valuable sugar planting space on growing food for the hundreds of thousands of Africans who were being brought to each small Caribbean island. The Caribbean produced almost no food. At first slaves were fed salted beef from England, but New England colonies [as well as Newfoundland and Nova Scotia] soon saw the opportunity for salt cod as cheap, salted nutrition.”

In *Capitalism and Slavery*, post-independence Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Eric Williams high-

lights the role of cod in the Caribbean plantations: “The Newfoundland fishery depended to a considerable extent on the annual export of dried fish to the West Indies, the refuse or ‘poor John’ fish, ‘fit for no other consumption.’” High-quality cod from today’s Atlantic Canada was sent to the Mediterranean while the reject fish was sold to Caribbean slave-owners.

From 1770-1773 Newfoundland and Nova Scotia sent 60,620 quintals (one quintal equals 100 pounds) and 6,280 barrels of cod to the West Indies, which comprised 40 percent of all imports. These numbers increased significantly after the American Revolution re-

sulted in a ban on US trade to the British Caribbean colonies. In 1789 alone 58 vessels carried 61,862 quintals of fish from Newfoundland to the Caribbean Islands.

When it comes to our histories, we choose where and how to focus our lens. A bird’s eye view of the historical landscape quickly reveals that Canada did a great deal more to support African enslavement than undermine it. **CT**

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No sense of ‘me’ in My Country

Darach MacDonald has a few questions for the cast after watching a new play about Brexit

I went to the first night of *My Country*, the verbatim theatre production of the National Theatre in the Playhouse, Derry, last night (April 5). It was superb theatre, a lively, wonderfully engaging and compelling piece of drama by a marvellous cast drawn from – and “representing” – the countries/regions of the United Kingdom which voted by a very slight margin for Brexit.

Yet I left the theatre troubled and I remain so this morning, because it left me cold. What emerged from the dialogue and from the views expressed in *My Country*, was certainly

not my country despite the best efforts of Penny Layden, the wonderful actor playing the part of Britannia. That may well be because I am not British and I hold no particular affection for the concept or legacy of the “British nation.” Yet I am most certainly a European living in the United Kingdom and I voted remain in the referendum with many others sharing my status.

In the structured discussion with the cast and production team afterwards, I tried to frame this in a question: Why in the myriad voices we heard, the cacophony of views

Insights

that rose to a crescendo and then subsided sharply as the ballot result played out on stage, did we not hear a single voice of a committed European?

What I meant was the voice that was also absent from the Brexit debate before the vote and the voice that is still glaringly absent from public discourse since, with the sole exception of Kenneth Clarke in the Commons debate on Article 50 (and it still troubles me that a hoary old Tory can articulate my view of the European Union).

This play was constructed from relatively lengthy interviews with ordinary people in a wide range of places throughout the UK, including Derry. It was filtered down by selection and exclusion to the theatrical production we saw last night. That process of winnowing out the views voiced in the drama was undertaken by the production team, the cast and by poet Carol Ann Duffy, who was engaged as the writer.

Yet not one voice that remained (in the general as well as the literal sense), said that Europe is a worthwhile endeavour in and of itself. No-

body argued that despite its flaws, its strains and its frustrations, the European Union is a good thing for peace, for harmony and for general prosperity. Nobody advanced the argument that the EU can (and will be) wrested back from the neo-Liberals. Nobody said it should be reformed for the common good, rather than risk rupture, factionalism and fascism.

A member of the cast said in answer to my question that they had chosen voices for their dramatic impact and excluded those rhyming off statistics and data. So those timid voices voting remain were the voices of fear, of regional distinction and of resignation. On the winning side, we heard once more on stage the strident voices of xenophobia, anti-immigrant rants, regional disaffection, disdain of central power and bendy bananas from Brussels. We heard disinformation and dissonance born of anger and propaganda.

So where was youth saying, “Hold on, this is my identity, my future in Europe?” Where was the voice saying the “lesser union” of the UK can only remain united within the

“greater union” of Europe? Where was the voice saying Europe’s inglorious past of fascism and Britain’s of imperialism can only be redeemed by brotherhood/sisterhood and humanity on an international scale?

A cast member suggested that this was an attempt to get to the heart of the issue, to bypass the media and all the received views on Brexit from headlines and public pronouncements? This was the voice of real people, in Derry and other places, we were told.

I left the theatre and walked home through the Bogside wondering if I might be living in another dimension. For the fragile peace we enjoy, the first tentative steps we take to living in harmony, and the precarious place we now inhabit on the frontiers of xenophobia seem much less secure than they did before this Brexit debacle. **CT**

Darach MacDonald is a writer/editor living in Derry after a journalism career that started in Dublin, spread throughout Europe, settled briefly in Canada, and finally took root in Northern Ireland

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The media and all its failings

Brian Mitchell digs out some quotations that might make you think a little more about the role, and state, of our media

“Now that we control television, we control public opinion.” – *Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco.*

“The media are a pitiful lot. They don’t give us any history, they don’t give us any analysis, they don’t tell us anything. They don’t raise the most basic questions: who has the most weapons of mass destruction in the world by far? Who has used weapons of mass destruction more than any other nation? Who has killed more people in this world with weapons of mass destruction than any other nation? The answer: the United States.” – *Howard Zinn.*

“I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.” – *Abraham Lincoln.*

“... buy the top academic reputations of the country to add credibility to corporate studies and give business a stronger voice on the campus.” – *US Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell, on how corporations gain influence in academic circles.*

“The first condition of freedom of the press is that it is not a business activity.” – *Karl Marx.*

“If we let people see that kind of thing, there would never again be any war.” – *Pentagon official explaining US military censoring of footage from the Gulf War.*

“Propaganda is persuading people to make up their minds while withholding some of the facts from them.” – *former London Sunday Times editor Harold Evans.*

“If you are not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.” – *Malcolm X.*

“The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure, when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them.” – *US Attorney Patrick Henry.*

“The owners of the Washington Post long ago acknowledged that the Post is the government’s voice to the people. In 1981, Katherine Graham, who owns the Post and Newsweek announced that her editors would “cooperate with the national security interests.” National security in this context means “CIA.”” – *John Stockwell, former CIA official and author.*

“We are grateful to the Washington Post, The New York Times, Time Magazine and other great publications whose directors have attended our meetings and respected their promises of discretion for almost forty years. It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subjected to the lights of publicity

during those years. But, the world is now more sophisticated and prepared to march towards a world government. The supranational sovereignty of an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national auto-determination practiced in past centuries.” – *US billionaire David Rockefeller, founder, to The Trilateral Commission, June 1991.*

“The US public is depoliticised, poorly informed on foreign affairs ... Even though the public is normally averse to war, even with modest propaganda efforts ... the public can be quickly transformed into enthusiastic supporters of war.” – *Edward S. Herman, US media and foreign policy critic.*

“The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers” – *US President Thomas Jefferson 1743-1826.*

“By the end of the millennium five men controlled the world’s media. And the people rejoiced, because their TVs told them to.” – *US film maker and activist Michael Moore.*

“Most of the press is in league with government, or with the status quo.” – *English writer and playwright Harold Pinter.*

“The enormous gap between what US leaders do in the world and what Americans think their leaders are doing is one of the great propaganda accomplishments of the dominant political mythology.” – *Michael Parenti, political scientist and author.*

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