

This country does not need a smaller state, but a more ...

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Sometimes I have to agree with Martin Wolf at the FT. This [afternoon he has written this](#) :

As Nicholas Stern has noted in the FT, the UK needs higher public and private investment. It also needs to spend more on defence. That does not allow for tax cuts. Beyond this, the country needs a radical decentralisation of spending and taxation to subordinate levels of government, tax simplification and reform, pension reform, liberalisation of planning controls, active support for innovation and acceleration of the energy transition. Andy Haldane is right that this will also require a break up of the Treasury. The country, in sum, needs not a smaller state, but a more active and more focused one, along with substantial reforms often in contentious areas. Business as usual has just not worked. Radical change is now urgently needed.

I agree with much of that. I wrote my book, *The Courageous State*, saying so, in 2011. That included a plan to address these issues, as did my next book, *The Joy of Tax* in 2015. I might have to do it again.