

## Seeking order amongst the incoherence

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In a world where everything appears to be increasingly incoherent, I spent much of yesterday wondering where anyone might look to find the truth.

Keir Starmer's [performance over the Mandelson affair](#) answered no questions because, as veteran MP and Mother of the House, Diane Abbott put it, the real question about this affair was why Starmer asked no questions.

To that, of course, no answer was provided to, but I came away with the inescapable feeling that the former highly paid consultant, Sir Olly Robbins, knew what his client, Keir Starmer, wanted, which was the appointment of the former highly paid consultant Lord Peter Mandelson to be ambassador in Washington, where former highly paid consultants are greatly valued, and carefully ensured that he did all that was required to deliver what his client expected, as a former highly paid consultant would do. Keir Starmer, fully understanding how highly paid consultants work, did not seek an explanation as to how he reached his conclusion, knowing that too much information might spoil the apparent value of the advice provided, which is all too often the case when talking to such consultants.

Please forgive my cynicism, but when both Sir Olly Robbins and Lord Mandelson have used their state-provided careers, privileges and honours to their commercial advantage as highly paid consultants, to presume that such a game was not played would be naïve in the extreme.

It would be similarly naïve to think that Donald Trump knows what he is doing. [As the current ceasefire with Iran runs out](#), he has discussed whether or not it might continue and whether or not bombing will resume.

To be candid, I doubt that anyone, including Donald Trump, knows the answer to this one, but the mere possibility that hostilities might resume makes clear how desperate is the situation into which Trump has manoeuvred the USA. Having already used a significant proportion of its available weaponry in this war with Iran, Trump's options are limited, and his ambition is reduced to reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which was

both open and free for all trade before this war against Iran began. That Trump's aspiration is now to have what was available before he began this war reveals the level of incoherence behind his strategy.

The incoherence does not end there. One of the [most ridiculous stories that I read yesterday](#) was the claim made by cabinet minister Steve Reed MP that people should be wary of voting for the Greens because the Greens had welcomed into membership some of those who have been expelled by the Labour Party for antisemitic behaviour, meaning that the only political party in the UK currently headed by a Jewish person is, apparently, antisemitic in nature, ignoring the fact that many of those expelled by the Labour Party for being antisemitic were, in fact, Jewish.

Their 'crime' was to question Zionism, which a significant number of Jews think to be an antisemitic cause, most especially as now pursued by the government of Israel. Reed's incoherence was plain for all to see, as was the fact that a man who has so far appeared to fail in two ministerial appointments in a failing Labour government can provide no indication of what sense might be.

So what is all of this about? What is the common thread amongst these disparate elements? There are, I think, three.

The first is that neoliberal politicians have become so accustomed to seeking short-term gain that they are unable to do anything else. The creation of strategy is beyond them.

The second is that those same politicians believe that the ends justify the means, and that it is best to leave questions unasked and unanswered if doing so might expose the means by which they operate.

The third is the most obvious, which is that this strategy has ceased to work. At best, as far as they are concerned, we are left with incoherence. They can live with our confusion. It might in fact be what they desire. At worst, as is becoming increasingly clear, their fear is that we might see through them and be alienated by their actions.

That leaves, on the table, the question of what we do next?

The answer is that we create a politics for people, based upon principles of care, accountability, good governance, justice, transparency and integrity, with stated goals that relate to the improvement in the well-being of the only audience which democratic politics is really meant to serve, which is the population of the jurisdiction which politicians are elected to govern.

Such an approach would be revolutionary because almost everything about it has been forgotten by the politicians currently in power, who believe it is their sole responsibility to serve the commercial interests they think put them in that position.

There is, then, no incoherence after all; all that we are witnessing is a straightforward

conflict of interest between the desire of people who would wish that politics serve them, and the desire of politicians who think their obligations lie elsewhere.

There can be no reconciliation between these positions. They are in conflict with each other, and what that means is that, unless corrupt political thinking inspired by neoliberalism is consigned to history, democracy will fail, as was always its intention, [as John Christensen and I discussed](#) in a podcast at the weekend, and the people of all the countries afflicted by this curse will continue to suffer political, economic and social injustice, just as those who facilitate and promote this system always intended.

We have no perfected alternative as yet. I am quite candid about that, but the growing support for parties such as the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Greens in England makes clear that people are looking for that alternative. This is the moment to deliver it.