

There is no news from a government that's in office but...

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It is August, and it is not true to say there is no news, but there is certainly less of it being reported.

Donald Trump claims that his war is on hold at present, although no one should be taken in.

Andy Burnham has established the pattern for his premiership, and it is neoliberal. The likelihood that anything will change over the summer is low.

Minor events are being blown out of all proportion. That is why so much attention has been paid to the ridiculous rows over the World Cup, and the chaotic invasion of the Ceuta province of Spain, located in what should be Moroccan territory, by Moroccan residents.

These things will pass, even if questions about the destructive neoliberal influence on football and the right of European countries to still claim provinces should remain, because of their relevance in a world where the residues of empires should have become inappropriate long ago.

Some things are real, though.

The consequences of climate change are. They are also unavoidable, and even reluctant news media such as the Daily Telegraph are now admitting the evidence of it, which is hard to miss all around us. With parts of south-east England receiving no rain at all in July, the consequences are devastating.

In East Anglia, where I live, it is apparent that the harvest is over. As someone who has lived in rural areas most of my life, I've never seen anything like this before. When out over the weekend, I saw no field with a crop still standing, and I cannot recall that ever happening by the first week of August before now. Sometimes there are still crops waiting for harvest at the end of August, but this year whatever there is to collect is already in barns, and they will be nowhere near full.

I hear farmers' conversations about yields being massively down, losses being incurred, and doubts being expressed about when or what to sow for next year, given the prospect of making another loss. To contextualise this, having heard such conversations for more than 50 years, I am aware that farmers are usually a pretty pessimistic lot, who are all too willing to present their position as desperate in the hope of picking up another subsidy. But this time, I have a feeling that their concerns are real and their stress is appropriate.

They do not know what to do in an incredibly difficult situation.

They are not sure they have the capacity to face the risks of planting at a loss again.

They are genuinely gripped by doubt, and the UK's already existing dependence on imported food will only increase as a result, in a world market where prices are bound to rise because we are far from alone in facing poor harvests this summer; they are widespread across Europe.

At the same time, we have drought, which only highlights the failure of our so-called water industry, whose contribution to the problem has been its failure to build reservoirs and the massive water leaks that characterise its activity, but everywhere increased water usage is planned without there being any apparent awareness of the impossibility of meeting that demand.

When it comes to energy, things are little better. A nuclear power station is threatened by wildfires, and this time we can sigh with relief that disaster was avoided and that the Minsmere bird reserve, which I have visited for 60 years, absorbed the shock. But can we rely on that forever? The folly of relying on nuclear power, threatened on one side by rising sea levels and on the other by wildfire, is plain to see, but those who rely on market solutions assume such problems away in a fashion that no wise person would.

And let's make this personal. For many, the risk of their houses becoming uninsurable is rising. Floods and fires pose threats that markets will refuse to insure against at some point, and then governments must act.

Are we hearing anything about government reaction to all this, though? I am not, beyond appropriate praise for emergency services. And that is the real news. In the face of crisis, the noise coming out of Whitehall is so low that it is not reaching the airwaves.

If evidence is needed that this government will be dominated by neoliberal thinking, then that silence makes the point. The assumption is that the markets will solve the problems. They won't. They can't. This is macroeconomic risk, and markets do not deal in that. That is the terrain of government, and government must act, but it seems to be absent right now.

That should be the news. It isn't. That itself is the problem. As the world burns and the risk of damage to many lives grows, there is no news from a government that would appear to have got into office only to go on holiday. People will not put up with that for long.