

David Cameron: Comet or Icarus?:

Is he the Tories' Harry Potter or Wendell Willkie?

The Manufacturing of the Candidate

As Tony Blair's power-base in Britain wobbles despite winning a third successive general election (but with only 36% of the popular vote) Britain's media is hailing a bright new star in its political firmament. On 6th December, the world's oldest political party, Britain's Conservatives (also known as Tories) chose 39 year-old David Cameron as their leader. Until the last few weeks, "David who?" would have been the reaction of most of his fellow citizens.

What a turnaround!¹ Three months ago David Cameron was barely known to the British public. In September, 2005, only 4% of a BBC poll saw him as the best man to lead the Conservative Party. Even on the eve of the Tory Party Conference in October, only 13% of a nationwide poll backed Cameron. Yet after a single television focus group on BBC 2's "Newsnight" programme, 39% of Tory activists polled suddenly put the 38-year-old Shadow Education Secretary ahead of all his rivals for the leadership of the Conservative Party.²

What does the Tories' choice of Cameron mean for Britain and the world? And what does the manner of how he came to be chosen tell us about the state of British democracy?

Readers of this Group's reports on post-Soviet elections will be used to the sudden appearance of a new candidate or party which achieves instant approval from the Western media, analysts and Western-funded local NGOs and goes into battle against various "mad" or "bad" locals with universal backing. Even if such "Jack-in-a-box" candidates frequently turn out to have been chosen by focus groups organised and sponsored by Americans³, surely it couldn't happen here, could it?

Cameron's behind-the-scenes involvement in Tory disasters over the last fifteen years was forgotten if ever known by the public or Tory party members. Grainy film of him standing behind his first political patron, Chancellor Norman Lamont, on Black Wednesday in September, 1992, when the Pound was ejected ignominiously from the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) only surfaced late in the leadership campaign. His role in drafting the third successive election-losing manifesto in 2005 was largely ignored.

Yet David Cameron's sudden emergence from complete obscurity as an Old Etonian backroom boy during the debacles of the Major years - only an MP since 2001 - to near universal media adulation and stunning poll numbers and the leadership of the Conservative Party may be presented in the British press as unprecedented, but in politics there is rarely anything with as long a track record as the unparalleled.

¹ The official results counted by the Electoral Reform Society Ltd. were 198,844 valid votes cast: David Davies 64,398, David Cameron 134,446.

² See "Cameron rejects 'Tory Blair' tag" BBC News website (9th October, 2005) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4323668.stm

³ See, for instance, how Serbia's Vojislav Kostunica was selected to be the anti-Milosevic candidate by US advisers. Michael Dobbs reported, "U.S.-funded consultants played a crucial role behind the scenes in virtually every facet of the anti-Milosevic drive... Regarded by many as Eastern Europe's last great democratic upheaval, Milosevic's overthrow may also go down in history as *the first poll-driven, focus group-tested revolution*. Behind the seeming spontaneity of the street uprising that forced Milosevic to respect the results of a hotly contested presidential election on Sept. 24 was a carefully researched strategy put together by Serbian democracy activists with the active assistance of Western advisers and pollsters." See his "U.S. Advice Guided Milosevic Opposition" in *The Washington Post* (11th December, 2001), A01. *Emphasis added*.

The long-drawn out campaign to choose the Conservative Party's fifth leader since the fall of Margaret Thatcher in 1990 has been greeted almost universally as a triumph for a party which fell short of 200 seats in each general election since 1997. Over the six months since Michael Howard announced his resignation in May, 2005, following Tony Blair's re-election, the candidates for his succession have been featured on television, radio and in the press to an unprecedented degree.

What has been most striking is the unanimous support of anti-Conservative voices for David Cameron. All the more remarkable has been how far traditionally pro-Conservative media have swooned for him too. Unanimity of opinion in politics is always the mark of a grave error about to be committed. Think of any matter on which the Great and Good have been united and the shadow of disaster looms over it.

So how did an obscure young toff leap frog ahead of well-known and, by recent Tory standards, even popular leadership candidates? How did David Cameron pull it off?

Although great emphasis was placed on his ability to speak for fifteen or so minutes without notes at the Blackpool Conservative Party conference on 4th October – although no-one seems to remember what he said other than the repeated use of words like “new”, “hope” and “modern” – in fact, the Cameron bandwagon had already been set rolling the day before.

History may judge that it was what Australians call a media “beat up” that did the trick. A single television programme was used to set the Cameron juggernaut in motion. Rupert Murdoch's premier tabloid used to boast after the Tories trounced Neil Kinnock's Labour, “It was the Sun wot won it.” After Cameron's victory how long will it be before we hear the boast, “It was Newsnight wot won it”?

Who is Frank Luntz?

Everybody agrees on the moment that ignited David Cameron's candidacy. On 3rd October, at the height of the Conservative Party annual conference in Blackpool, BBC 2's *Newsnight* asked the American opinion pollster, Frank Luntz, to put the 5 declared candidates for Michael Howard's succession to a focus group. Although few knew much about David Cameron at the start of the session, when Luntz had finished presenting the candidates, old familiar faces and even younger rivals all fell by the wayside as the group plunged en bloc for Cameron. “David Cameron has reinvented politics for me,” Luntz concluded.⁴

The next day the Cameron campaign website was cock a'hoop about its media coup. “Cameron momentum builds” it declared noting that in the sample group leading US election guru Frank Luntz showed Cameron to be the overwhelming choice of a group of Conservative leaning voters.... 23 opted for Cameron, 5 chose Liam Fox, and none supported Kenneth Clarke, David Davis or Malcolm Rifkind.” Cameron's webpage quoted the “veteran” pollster – in fact a rough contemporary of Cameron at Oxford – as declaring, “David Cameron is exactly what swing voters are looking for in a Conservative leader.”⁵

Michael Portillo, once the leader-in-waiting told readers of *The Sunday Times* Cameron's “roll began with the sensational findings from a focus group survey conducted for BBC's *Newsnight* by the American pollster Frank Luntz. Once voters had been shown Cameron's speeches, they flocked to his support.”

Portillo described the mechanics of the operation to boost Cameron: “The Cameron team is the most media savvy. Reports of the *Newsnight* poll were pushed under the doors of

⁴ And as quoted widely in other media, e.g. John Paul Flintoff, “Focus: Can Boy Wonder save the Tories?” in *The Sunday Times* (8th October, 2005)

⁵ See http://www.cameroncampaign.org/downloads/newsletters/newsletter_04.10.05.pdf

Blackpool's hotel bedrooms. Behind the scenes, Steve Hilton, a genial professional operator in the new Labour mould, charmed journalists, even those from titles that would never endorse the Tories!"⁶

Luntz's focus group had made history. Will his name become as synonymous with focus groups as George Gallup's became for opinion polling seventy years ago? Despite the dramatic impact of his Carlton Club poll no-one in the British media asked, "Who is Frank Luntz?" or "what is a focus group?"

Unlike opinion polls which test what people think or how they will vote at a given moment, focus groups are used to find out how to sell a product or candidate. The purpose of focus group is not to find out what people want, but to find out how to persuade them that they want what you want to give them. Frank Luntz knows that better than any modern spin-meister.

Although a frequent participant in Newsnight programmes, Luntz has none of the controversial reputation in Britain that he enjoys in his native America. In May, 2000, *Salon.com's* Dante Chinni noted the role of Luntz in boosting George W. Bush by producing polls showing what seemed to be poorly-prepared or uneasy television appearances as actual triumphs:

"Frank Luntz... [is] possibly the best example of what we could call the pollster pundit: someone who both purports to scientifically poll the opinions of the public, and then also interpret that data to support his own -- in Luntz's case, conservative -- point of view. This is what allows Luntz to face a room full of journalists and, in all seriousness, proclaiming George W. Bush's jittery, time-delayed appearance on David Letterman -- the one which prompted boos from the audience -- a total success."⁷

Already, under Clinton, Luntz was mixing polls and partisanship, or at least that is what his peers in the professional organization of American pollsters thought. According to Chinni, "In 1997, Luntz was formally reprimanded by the American Association for Public Opinion Research for his work polling on the GOP's 1994 "Contract with America" campaign document."⁸

The basic question about Frank Luntz's methods is whether his purpose is study or persuasion. To many observers his approach seems more about learning how to persuade people of a particular line rather than finding out what they think. For instance, "Mr Luntz... uses focus groups to test marketing strategies..." according to the *New York Times's* Jennifer S. Lee.⁹ But what that means is how to sell the public something which it finds unpalatable, whether mining in nature reserves or war.

In June, 2004, Luntz advised Republican politicians that "No speech about homeland security or Iraq should begin without a reference to 9/11. ... If you describe it simply as a 'pre-emptive action,' some Americans will carry deep reservations about the rightness of the cause. Americans are conditioned to think that hitting first is usually wrong. ... By far, the better word to use than 'pre-emption' is 'PREVENTION'...."¹⁰

⁶ See Michael Portillo, "Cameron-mania could be an election too soon" in *The Sunday Times* (9th October, 2005).

⁷ See Dante Chinni, "Why should we trust this man? Frank Luntz is king of the pollster pundits, but don't ask him where his numbers come from." in *Salon.com* (26th May, 2000) @ <http://dir.salon.com/story/politics/feature/2000/05/26/luntz/index.xml>.

⁸ See *ibid.*

⁹ See "A Call for Softer, Greener Language" in *New York Times* (2nd March, 2003) <http://www.luntzspeak.com/graphics/NewYorkTimes.NewsStory.pdf>

¹⁰ Quoted by William Frey, "Confessions of a Repentant War Supporter" @ <http://www.antiwar.com/orig/frey.php?articleid=8011>

In April, 2004, Luntz was interviewed by Samantha Bee of the Daily Show about how he justified the vetting of audiences at Town Hall meetings for President Bush, which he apparently suggested was a way of avoiding “chaos”! ¹¹

No data has been provided on how the Newsnight focus group was chosen but Luntz’s claims that a third of them were die-hard Tories seems improbable given that they could not recognise the former Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, like Ken Clarke a high profile Tory critic of the Iraq War, or “the Prevention” as presumably Luntz would characterise it. Both Clarke and Rifkind had negative sound bites as their play to the focus group while Cameron’s feel-good bromides were offered.

Since at least one member of the vox pop part of the accompanying film on *Newsnight* was an avowed supporter of Cameron and a member of his campaign staff the neutrality of the sample must be in doubt. But however the members of the focus group came to their conclusions, they had an impact.

Luntz may have known nothing like it, but was it so unprecedented?

Class A Drugs are not as bad as fags

The nearest moment to a wobble in Cameron’s effortless rise to the top came when he failed to answer questions about any drug use in his past. As a member of Oxford’s notorious Bullingdon Club in the 1980s – a group which has spawned a generation of cokeheads on the one hand and neo-con politicians in Britain and the New Europe on the other - Cameron clearly expected his decision to keep his pre-political private life “private” would be accepted with deference. In fact it took a host of commentators to knock it into Britons’ heads that past use of Class A drugs are a qualification for representing the “future not the past” in post-modern Britain.

Cameron presented questions about any past drug use as unwarranted intrusions into his privacy, but that overlooks two key points. When it had suited Mr Cameron to parade his private life, for instance, the distressing disability of his young son, Ivan, he seems to have had few qualms about making political profit out of it. Secondly, drug use is not primarily a personal and private question. In all the hullabaloo about whether David Cameron smoked dope or snorted cocaine or even ingested heroin, no journalists took up the wider question: What was Mr. Cameron’s attitude to calls for drugs liberalisation?

The strange silence about David Cameron’s likely drugs policy while so much attention was focussed on speculating about any possible youthful follies was all the odder for two reasons. First of all, in David Cameron’s speeches there may not have been much content but the word “policies” was repeated as part of his forward-looking, future-orientated mantra. And secondly, Mr Cameron had been widely reported as backing the downgrading of some currently illegal narcotics and opening up “shooting galleries.” Only a few weeks before the Luntz launch of Cameron’s campaign *The Independent* reported, “David Cameron, the Tory leadership contender, believes the UN should consider legalising drugs and wants hard-core addicts to be provided with legal “shooting galleries” and state-prescribed heroin. He also supported calls for ecstasy to be downgraded from the class-A status it shares with cocaine and heroin and said it would be “disappointing” if radical options on the law on cannabis were not looked at.” ¹²

Interviewed at lunchtime on SKY News on 24th October, David Cameron was asked again about illegal drugs, but only whether he had taken them during his time as an adviser to ministers like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont. Again he refused to answer whether he had used drugs before entering Parliament in 2001. He did however launch into a

¹¹ Quoted @ http://www.progressiveu.org/235_frank_luntz_daily_show.

¹² See Marie Woolf, “Tory contender calls for more liberal drug laws” in *The Independent* (7th September, 2005).

policy proposal: he emphasised that the Tory Manifesto for the May general election written by Cameron and his colleagues had committed the Conservatives a large increase in publicly-funded rehab programmes. The interviewer, Kay Burley, asked Cameron three times about his own experiences with drugs – real or imagined – but failed to follow up on the policy question.¹³ The real question is whether a Tory Party led by David Cameron would downgrade or legalise hard drugs. It is quite clear that lucrative public-private partnerships would be needed on a vast scale if cheap and legal heroin and crack cocaine were available. Not only would providers of rehab make a killing but so would the companies granted a license to produce and distribute legal drugs.

Similarly, Cameron – until recently involved as director of his step-in-laws clubbing and bar business – was a supporter of New Labour’s open all hours policy on access to alcohol. Many Conservatives found the idea of 24-hour opening hours obnoxious even if some saw the need to relax closing times from 11pm to say midnight. Anyone familiar with Britain’s brutal booze-ridden streets can accept that excessive alcohol consumption fuels more random violence than drug abuse, but should either be promoted?

David Davis’s failure to make an issue of Cameron’s drug policy was a suicidal self-denying ordinance. The low turnout in the members’ poll with scores of thousands of Tory activists not voting probably reflects disillusionment with Davis’s failure to stand up to Cameron’s blackmail on the personal drug use issue. Once Tory big hitters had been removed by MPs reacting to the “Newsnight” stampede, then many activists switched off.

Cameron and his acolytes have made it clear that he backs a neo-Leninist approach to traditional supporters like party activists and *Daily Mail* readers – Better fewer but better. Anyone following the Cameron agenda could not avoid his desire to ditch not only old policies but old supporters. Yet the despised “wrinklies” who make up the bulk of the Tory Party’s membership were obviously “on something” because they formed the great majority of Cameron’s electors. None of them seemed to notice that the *sous-texte* of his rhetoric about youth and broadening the base of the party was his determination to ditch not just the old guard but the elderly rank-and-file too— once they had signed their suicide note by electing him. Cameron is terribly politically correct, or no hint of xenophobia is to be tolerated in his party but the elderly ought to be aware that senophobia is not just tolerated in New Tory ranks, derision for the old is the essence of the new-look party. One of Cameron’s *Conservative Future* activists, Nik Vaughan, could hardly wait for the pensioners to tire of clapping Cameron’s election before telling ITN, “We are finally flushing out the blue rinse brigade.”¹⁴

Once the darling of the elderly Tories himself, ex-*Daily Telegraph* editor and official Thatcher biographer, Charles Moore, revealed his OE tastes when he told readers of the unofficial party paper, “Despite being an unabashed Thatcherite” – something Mr Cameron’s snide remarks about believing “society” and taste in music makes clear he is not “my guess is that younger people will identify with Mr Cameron today. ‘Well,’ they will say, ‘if he did take drugs, that makes him no different from many of us...’ It is a far, far more normal thing in the 21st century to have taken drugs as a student... than to earn a six-figure salary selling tobacco to teenagers in the Far East, which is what Mr Clarke does.”¹⁵

It’s the War, Stupid

“International terrorism... I will never play politics with that issue. I will do what is right for the country.” David Cameron’s acceptance speech¹⁶

¹³ SKY News, 1.20pm (24th October, 2005)

¹⁴ ITN News, 4.16pm (6th December, 2005).

¹⁵ See Charles Moore, “If the Tories have a drug problem, it’s their addiction to past quarrels” in *Daily Telegraph* (10th October, 2005).

¹⁶ ITN News channel ((3.19pm, 6th December, 2005) The ex-Communist student activist, Alistair Stewart assured viewers that “it was a remarkable speech, delivered as at Blackpool without notes” He had earlier referred to George Osborne’s “barnstorming” attack on Gordon Brown the day before.

Maybe the hanging-and-flogging brigade backed Cameron because of his stance on the war. After all, he has repeatedly echoed George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" without feeling the need to switch on the safety catch of his metaphorical revolver. This may please old-style Tories, but the real cheerleaders for Cameron on this issue (as on so much else) comes from renegade leftists now the New World Order's diehard defenders.

Ex-Communists have rallied to Cameron as once they did to Tony Blair. For instance, the son of a CPGB bigwig and NUS boss in his own right, David Aaronovitch, told *Times* readers:

"But if you want to track the Cameronian journey, and understand that he is, if anything, an anti-populist, you have only to look at his views on Iraq. In February 2003 he opened his article for the *Oxford Journal* in the inevitable way: "Has the case for war fully been made? My answer is 'not yet'. I have received dozens of letters and e-mails from constituents — with some 60 against war and just a handful in favour. But our job as MPs is not just to listen to our constituents; it is to question the Government — and to make our own judgment."

"By August this year, and with the Iraq war less popular than ever, Cameron made a speech to the Foreign Policy Centre" and in it Aaronovitch found "a passage of analysis about the global threat that might have been written by Paul Wolfowitz or Tony Blair, rather than Douglas Hurd or Ken Clarke. 'Jihadism,' Cameron said, 'feeds into the bewilderment, alienation and lack of progress felt by many in the Muslim world. The corruption of many states in the Middle East. The lack of democracy. The concentration of power in the hands of elites whose lifestyles are noticeably un-Islamic.' In other words, until those regimes are democratised, we will always be at risk from fundamentalism. So, we in Britain, "share a responsibility . . . to promote change, reform and liberalisation".

Cameron, in his own write, is a reforming neocon. Here's a passage worth quoting to anyone who says they don't know who he is. "Just as there were figures in the 1930s who misunderstood the totalitarian wickedness of Nazism and argued that Hitler had a rational set of limited political demands, so there are people today who try to explain jihadist violence with reference to a limited set of political goals. If only, some argue, we withdrew from Iraq, or Israel made massive concessions, then we would assuage jihadist anger. That argument . . . is as limited as the belief in the 1930s that, by allowing Germany to remilitarise the Rhineland or take over the Sudetenland, we would satisfy Nazi ambitions. A willingness to cede ground and duck confrontation is interpreted as fatal weakness." Aaronovitch concluded that Cameron's speech on August 24, 2005, to the Foreign Policy Centre "There, for those who want it, is the beef."¹⁷ But there is a link between Cameron's old-style support for biffing and his apparently soft-line on spliffing.

Blair's wars have had the undoubted impact of freeing up the heroin trade. From Kosovo to Kabul the profitable by-product of Blair's crusades has been the facilitation of drugs smuggling by toppling regimes and undermining border controls which put some limits on the smugglers. Yet Cameron whose concern to wean drug addicts off their dope at public expense is endlessly rehearsed has endorsed the very conflicts which have helped to flood Britain with heroin.¹⁸

It was striking that leading Tory neo-con, Nicholas Boles who is the very model of a new-look Cameron candidate designed to appeal to the young and counter-cultural failed dismally twin the once safe Tory seat of Hove in the May election. Despite being an early openly gay Tory, Boles lost in a famously post-modern dope-smoking constituency where 500 same sex couples had applied for civil partnerships as soon as the registry offices opened to them in December, 2005. Perhaps his blind support for Blair's wars turned off the target

¹⁷ See David Aaronovitch, "Policy? David Cameron has lots. He's a new Neo-Con" in *The Times* (22nd October, 2005) @ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,17129-1837542,00.html>

¹⁸ For the Foreign Office's own figures for the leap in the opium harvest in post-Taliban Afghanistan from 200 tons in 2002 to 4,100 tons in 2004, and for the fall in Class A street prices since 1997 see Jason Lewis, "True legacy of the Afghan invasion... heroin at £10 a fix" in *The Mail on Sunday* (16th October, 2005).

constituents.¹⁹ The so-called Camerounians may want to play to the touchy-feely slightly dopey section of British society but their target group is not enamoured of their love affair with precision bombing and intervention.

The Politics of Harry Potter

The vogue for books and films about a vanished age of public school boy heroes, matrons and manners is the backdrop to the re-emergence of the politics of deference in Britain. After decades of dumbing down and a public school prime minister like Tony Blair who mangles his Estuary English in a desperate attempt to please the plebs, suddenly posh is the new divine right of politicians.

Although American neo-conservatives like to present themselves as representatives of commonsense man against pointy-headed elitists who oppose wars of aggression and open-cast mining, British neo-conservatives are born-again class warriors. Of course not every journalistic advocate of Cameron is an Old Etonian but that just adds to the delicious atmosphere of deference.²⁰

Whereas Murdoch's US vicar, the Hudson Institute's Irwin Steltzer, can assure readers of the *Weekly Standard* that the snobs were against George Bush's America, our own Lord Rees-Mogg – whose first venture into boosting alleged drug abusers was his immortally comic deferential interview with Mick Jagger long before Cameron was born – drew on all his arts of self-parody to explain how 22 or more family entries in *Burke's Peerage* and the *Dictionary of National Biography* made Cameron nature's own candidate to rule democratic even demotic Britain.²¹

Matthew Parris welcomed "The Peasants Rout" in *The Times*. He emphasised that the old-style establishment methods were behind Cameron's triumphant progress. For all the paraphernalia of an election, like Tory leaders before commoners like Heath and Thatcher, Cameron was chosen by the inner party, the magic circle which gently let him slide to the top. As Parris put it: "David Cameron has — well, *emerged*. The toffs are back in the saddle."

Helping his more socially-challenged readers to understand the restoration under way and Cameron's class, Parris replied to a series of queries about the new top toff: "How do I know he's one? I'm sorry but this is England and you just do. Can't explain. Is it the relaxed air of command? The hint of a tetchiness courteously suppressed? The apparent listening ear? The voice? The suits? The way he *never* drops names or pulls rank in a pushy way? The way you don't know what he's thinking but do not doubt he thinks?"

Parris's observation of the phenomenon of the new deference certainly fits this author's experience too: "It's being recognised, mostly unconsciously, all across the shires and suburbs of England. People are saying "heard him for the first time last week — like the sound of this chap" or "saw him on *Question Time* — good, wasn't he?" and they do not themselves know why they are saying it, but part of the reason is class. In both senses, Mr Cameron has class. What the English will tell you is that he "sounds like a natural leader"; what they mean, although they may not realise that this is what they mean, is that in ways they cannot begin to explain, Mr Cameron sounds like an officer and a gentleman."

¹⁹ For the merging of pro-war left and loser Tory right in Hove, see <http://talkpolitics.users20.donhost.co.uk/index.php?m=20050503>.

²⁰ Old Etonians like the BBC's political correspondent, James Landale (born 1968) have not recused themselves as reporters nor advised viewers and listeners of any conflict of interest – including *not* liking Cameron at school. It is amusing to note that a list of "famous Etonians born in the twentieth century" includes Landale but *not* David Cameron – evidence of how suddenly Cameron was catapulted to fame. See <http://www.home-fresh.net/DisplayArticle41951.html>.

²¹ See William Rees-Mogg, "Warriors, statesmen, prelates. Can young David live up to his ancestors?" in *The Times* (24th October, 2005) @ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-153-1840130-153,00.html>. *The Times* continued in this deferential vein up to the eve of the result. See Andrew Pierce, "Cameron's royal link makes him a true blue" on 5th December, 2005.

Parris went into a dithyrambic peroration: "This still matters to us. So do not be fooled by all the talk of Tory revolution. This is counter-revolution. Return of the Toffs. What a coup!"²²

Indeed, what an extraordinary *Putsch* to pass off on the post-political GSCE generation: a man who makes Anthony Eden seem possessed of the common touch!

The upper classes were under a three-line whip to back Cameron. According to *The Sunday Times* "A lifelong Conservative who has known Cameron since Eton said: "I don't like David. He's hugely arrogant. But everyone from my background is so enthralled about the idea of having a prime minister from among their ranks that to say anything against him would be seen as disloyal."²³

The *Daily Telegraph's* Vicki Woods quoted her daughter – and her active voting habits - and cited the shopping habits of Madonna's daughter as evidence of Cameron's suitability to lead the Tories: "David Cameron. A smoothie, a looker (better-looking than Blair; and with a nice head of lustrous, thick hair). A kind and caring family man. Who is only 38 years old. *My daughter - who has a vote, remember, and sometimes two votes owing to the oddities of our electoral system - thinks he's "young". Which is good.*" And almost fanciable. And "most people don't mind politicians having Eton and Oxford on their CVs, because you need to have a really strong sense of self-esteem to run a country. Eton must give you that. And Oxford is one of the top 10 universities in the world, so you should earn respect for having gone there.... Mr Cameron's wife is the lovely Samantha Sheffield, the creative director of Smythsons of Bond Street, the crested-stationery purveyors to the carriage trade. Sam has made the boring old company so deeply fashionable again that Madonna's daughter Lourdes now orders her correspondence cards from them. So all laud and honour to her. Pick Cameron."²⁴

Roosevelt chooses his opponent

Even someone who has never bought one of the books or watched one of the films spun off from them knows who Harry Potter is, but who can give a thumb-nail sketch of the career of Wendell Willkie?²⁵

Willkie is almost entirely forgotten today. Any reminder of who Wendell Willkie was is likely to be only in terms of seeing him as the classic also-ran. To be compared to Roosevelt's Republican rival in 1940 is routinely to be put down as a flash-in-the-pan. Maybe David Cameron will fizzle out overnight after his election as Tory leader, but even if he prospers in that role comparisons with how Willkie got the Republican nomination in 1940 are eerily prescient about the manufacturing of the Cameron phenomenon.

Willkie was a Johnny-come-lately to Republican politics. He had been a card-carrying Democrat and party activists in the 1920s and into the early Roosevelt years. Willkie voted for FDR against Herbert Hoover in 1932 and in fact only left the Democratic Party to join the Republicans in 1939. Although as the head of a big energy utility, Willkie opposed some of Roosevelt's New Deal measures as restrictive of business, he was hardly in step with the

²² See Matthew Parris, "Return of the Top Toff" in *The Times* (22nd October, 2005) @ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,1065-1837282,00.html>.

²³ See John Paul Flintoff, "Focus: Can Boy Wonder save the Tories?" in *The Sunday Times* (8th October, 2005). Old Etonian Cameron-backer Oliver Letwin told a post-victory "Newsnight" that he was "hardly upper class" because his grandparents had been poor immigrants.- an unconscious echo of the old Etonian complaint, "My whole family is poor – even the butler is poor!" *Newsnight* (6th December, 2005).

²⁴ *Emphasis* added. See Vicki Woods, "Politics is like sex - so pick David Cameron" in *The Daily Telegraph* (8th October, 2005).

²⁵ For the nearest thing to the authorised version, see Carl Peters, *Five Days in Philadelphia: The Amazing "We Want Willkie!" Convention of 1940 and How It Freed FDR to Save the Western World* (Public Affairs: New York, 2005).

virulent anti-FDR mood of the Republican grassroots which routinely lambasted the President as a socialistic dictator, traitor to his wealthy class origins and increasingly as a war-monger.

By 1940, the American Republican Party found itself in much the same bind as the Tories after 1997. Franklin Roosevelt and the Democratic Party kept on trouncing the Republicans, inflicting its worst defeat in 1936 when Alf Landon carried only two states against Roosevelt. The grandees of the Republican Party had two main sticks with which to beat Roosevelt: eight years of the New Deal had not ended mass unemployment and the depression and they played on fears that Roosevelt, Wilson's assistant Navy Secretary in the First World War would drag America into another one.

Isolationism like anti-EU or anti-immigration feeling in Britain sixty years later was unlovely but broadly popular in America. Many Americans resented the way the Europeans whom they had rescued in World War One defaulted on their loans after the great crash in 1929. The obvious risk of a new European war as the 1930s went on was seen by most Americans as yet another example of European folly. 95% or more of Americans had no sympathy for the European dictators but saw no reason why their country should rescue Britain, France or any other state given their bad experience after 1918.

By summer, 1940, Roosevelt was in a bind. He was desperate to flout convention and George Washington's precedent and to run for a third term but he knew he risked defeat at the hands of a Republican who could rally the New Deal's losers and those fearful that he was steering America into war on Britain's side. Roosevelt needed a Republican equivalent, so if the worst came to the worst, his policies would continue. Republican activists were desperate to back a winner for once. The Republican Party's interest in getting back into the White House regardless of policies was a deep-seated part of the political mood as election season approached in 1940. It was something that the Democrats and others who had an interest in an interventionist America could use.

In a boiling hot Philadelphia in July, 1940, Willkie came from nowhere to storm to the top of the Republican Convention delegates' list. How Wendell Willkie of all people ended up as the Republicans' candidate for president remains mysterious, though carefully scripted polls and media appearances played their part. Maybe 65 years ago people were more naïve about swallowing a media message or perhaps the people – so often invoked by politicians in tones of awed respect – are always gullible, particularly if the media is not split in its message.

Some contemporaries suspected dirty tricks at the term, particularly as a Willkie backer used his position on the Republican Convention team to pack the galleries with Willkie supporters, by no means all of them natural Republicans. As many as a million telegrams poured into the Republican Convention urging delegates to choose Willkie. They came mainly from the well-funded but allegedly spontaneous "Willkie Clubs" which had sprung up across America in a few months. The galleries were filled with Willkie supporters whose relentless chanting of "We want Willkie" often drowned out platform speakers like former president Herbert Hoover so that radio listeners at home only heard pro-Willkie slogans.

Willkie's backers were torn between their desire to boast of their success in hi-jacking the Convention and the need to conceal any underhand methods:

"The Willkie groundswell was not, as partisans of both political parties have claimed, a conspiracy, a take-over, a purchase, or a pressure manoeuvre by the big interests of the Eastern Establishment," wrote Marcia Davenport, the wife of Wendell Willkie's campaign manager, Russell Davenport, whose day job was managing-editor of *Fortune* magazine, published by Henry Luce, the East Coast magnate, author *The American Century* and promoter of Willkie. Far from being organised by a cabal, "the idea of Willkie for President struck simultaneously a number of eloquent people who promptly proceeded to express themselves and go into action... Wendell 'happened' to these individuals... It seems to be the case that he happened first in print to Arthur Krock of *The New York Times*." Mrs Davenport listed a long list of names – the George Osbornes, Bruce Andersons and very rich influence peddlers of those days – but had to admit "Wendell did not happen to the Republican Party." In fact, in the summer of 1940, "The idea of Willkie for President, gathering speed and size as

it snowballed... was promulgated almost entirely from outside the Republican Party....!"²⁶
That last line was the give-away – and a portent.

Marcia Davenport admitted in her memoirs, "The night after the 1940 election Russell and I were alone... The doorbell rang, about eleven o'clock. I went to open the door – to Harry Hopkins. I had never met him, though Russell had, *more times than he admitted*. Hopkins... shuffled into the drawing room with me, saying to Russell, 'Tell me all about it. Tell me how you did it.'"²⁷

Harry Hopkins was to FDR what Alastair Campbell has been to Tony Blair. Maybe one day David Cameron's Russell Davenport's widow or partner will spill the beans.

Willkie was unknown to the American public in the spring of 1940, when he was launched onto the multitudes via radio. An appearance on the equivalent of *Any Questions?*, *Information Please* on 9th April, 1940 was used to turn him overnight into a national figure. Roosevelt's biographer and Canadian neo-con, Conrad Black reports of Willkie's media debut: "He fully held his own in quick and sophisticated repartee with the hosts." Black assures his readers, "This was before the era of rehearsed sound bites."²⁸ Really?

In fact, Willkie had a regular media team of Henry Luce – the Conrad Black of his day – feeding him lines for his public appearances. They also reported on what a wow he was with the public.

Like Cameron sixty years later, opinion polls were soon reporting a Willkie surge among a public ignorant of his name weeks earlier and distrustful of big businessmen – except apparently this one.

Who knows with any certainty how the opinion polls are compiled today. Back in 1940 they were in their infancy. Dr. George Gallup had caused a sensation in 1936 by rightly predicting Landon's rout at the hands of Roosevelt when newspapers' surveys of readers suggested a Republican victory. But in 1940, shaping public opinion was too important a matter to be left the politicians and press.

A British advertising man, David Ogilvy, came to America in 1938 to work for Dr. Gallup as his day job, but with war looming as a patriotic Brit he did his stuff for MI6 by producing opinion polls which showed Americans how pro-British they were.²⁹ Promoting Willkie's candidacy over better-known but isolationist figures like Robert Taft was a key part of the job.

Although he was portrayed as a self-made man of the people in the US press, in private those in the know like Roosevelt's key aide, Harold Ickes, sneered that Willkie was the "barefoot boy from Wall Street" Alice Longworth Roosevelt countered the claim that the mushrooming of Willkie Clubs showed that he had grassroots support by remarking "He has the support of the grassroots in every country club."

After his triumph at the Republican Convention, Wendell Willkie went back to his home state, Indiana. A quarter of a million Hoosiers gathered to hear the local boy they had never known

²⁶ See Marcia Davenport, *Too Strong for Fantasy. A Personal Record of Music, Literature and Politics in America and Europe over Half a Century* (Collins: London, 1967), 232-33.

²⁷ See Marcia Davenport, *Too Strong for Fantasy* 249.

²⁸ See Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Champion of Freedom* (Public Affairs: New York, 2003), 563.

²⁹For Ogilvy, Willkie and the Davenports, see Thomas E. Mahl, *Desperate Deception: British Covert Operations in the United States, 1939-1944* (Brassey's: New York, 1998) and http://www.ciadvertising.org/studies/student/98_fall/theory/clark/two/history.html. Mahl: "David Ogilvy later wrote about his days at Gallup: 'I could not have had a better boss than Dr. Gallup. His confidence in me was such that I do not recall his ever reading any of the reports I wrote in his name'" (75). By careful manipulation of the questions asked, results could be contrived to order. "In 1940 and 1941, BSC [British Security Coordination] rigged a series of polls...to project the notion that the members of prominent organizations were pro-British, avidly in favor of intervention, and intensely antagonistic toward America First" (77).

but who now had made good speak. Boy were they bored by his platitudes! Without the “We want Willkie” claque – which mysteriously didn’t catch the campaign train home – Willkie had nothing to say to Mid-Western Republicans which could arouse a cheer. It was a harbinger of his fate in November, 1940. Roosevelt won 90% of the electoral college and an unprecedented third term in the White House. In practice Willkie’s candidacy had advanced the Republicans no further against Roosevelt than Michael Howard’s coup against Ian Duncan Smith achieved for the Tories in May, 2005. But then Willkie was pushed forward to produce a landslide for FDR so his backers got what they wanted even if the deluded Republican faithful at the Convention thought they were picking a winner. That was what the Gallup polls had told them!

Willkie switched off his isolationist inclined Republican base by calling for a peacetime draft ahead of Roosevelt and urging Congress to accept Lend-Lease while quietly lobbying against any inquiry into the US Navy’s undeclared war in the North Atlantic. Good for Britain, and good for the world this was, but open and above-board it wasn’t.

During the war, Willkie set out the world’s first “globalist” agenda. The word “global” trotted off his tongue as he promoted his ideas for the post-war world on far-flung trips. These brought out the flaws in Willkie which the FDR-friendly media hid. As author of “One World” he was a happy visitor to Stalin’s Soviet Union The NKVD supervisor of the propaganda tours of Stalin’s empire by both Willkie and Henry Wallace told Roosevelt’s teetotal vice-president that if Willkie wrote a book about his tour it should be called “Vodka, Vodka, Vodka”!³⁰

There was a revealing postscript to Willkie’s political career. In 1944, FDR decided that despite his waning health he would run for an unprecedented fourth term as U.S. president. But he was aware of the doubts about his decision even in the middle of war which beset many Democrats. FDR also wanted to remould American politics by permanently marginalizing both the Republicans and the Southern Democrats with their odious racist slant. He began to sound out Willkie about forming a new party which would triangulate left and right and permanently hold the centre ground. This new coalition might even be inherited by Willkie when FDR graciously chose to leave the White House.³¹ Eleanor Roosevelt, the bête-noire of the Republican faithful, wrote one of his most effusive eulogies just to rub in that Willkie had always been a One Worder and New Dealer at heart.

Everyone knows that Roosevelt died hardly three months into his fourth term. But Wendell Willkie didn’t even live long enough to see his rival-partner’s final triumph. A few weeks before the presidential election. Willkie died of one heart attack too many. Presented to the US public as a healthy living plain-speaking Mid-Westerner his heart-stopping lifestyle took its toll early. The American media hid Roosevelt’s disability and huge numbers of Americans were ignorant of his health problems so Willkie’s early demise was as much a surprise as Roosevelt’s death in April, 1945 came as a deep shock.

Willkie made a ghostly reappearance at a Republican Convention in September, 2004, when his name was invoked by the maverick Democratic Senator from Georgia, Zell Miller, as an honourable precedent for his switching parties to back a war president against isolationism: the difference was that Willkie joined the Republicans to manoeuvre them into backing war against Nazi Germany, the second most powerful state on earth, while Miller wanted to justify George W. Bush’s crusade against a hamstrung and disarmed Iraq. Zell Miller told Republican Convention: “In 1940, Wendell Willkie was the Republican nominee. And there is no better example of someone repealing their “private plans” than this good man. He gave Roosevelt the critical support he needed for a peacetime draft, an unpopular idea at the time. And he made it clear that he would rather lose the election than make national security a partisan campaign issue. Shortly before Willkie died, he told a friend that if he could write his own epitaph and had to choose between “here lies a president” or “here lies one who

³⁰ See William L. O’Neill, *A Better World. The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1982), 150-51.

³¹ For the Roosevelt-Willkie new party, see http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:0LTz48D6twJ:www.iptv.org/wallace/docs/Trans_RNSmith.pdf+Mencken+%22Wendell+Wilkie%22&hl=en&ie=UTF-8

contributed to saving freedom," he would prefer the latter. Where are such statesmen today? Where is the bipartisanship in this country when we need it most? ³²

Willkie's secret backers stampeded his candidacy onto a bewildered Republican Party to promote solidarity with Britain against Nazi Germany. For many people that motive will be sufficient justification for any deception of isolationist-inclined American citizens in 1940. However much defeating Nazi Germany by hook or by crook was a global benefit, few historians doubt that FDR's devious ways set dangerous precedents. His undeclared war in the North Atlantic against Hitler's U-boats (good) spawned the Gulf of Tonkin (bad) and his manipulation of elections and the media set the mould for Watergate and more recently the WMD "beat up" in the American and British media.

So even if Roosevelt's deviousness served good causes, shouldn't we ask what global benefit will follow for Britain and the world from stampeding the Tories into backing a die-hard proponent of globalist aggression plus drug liberalisation? If the long-term implications for American democracy of a bogus two party system after 1940 were negative as a narrow consensus was put before increasingly jaded and apathetic voters, what of politics in a Blair-versus-Son-of-Blair Britain?

If the Cameron campaign has been promoted by doctored polls and focus groups with activists masquerading as voters-in-the-street for BBC film crews, then the quality of British democracy is already fatally flawed. How can ordinary voters dependent on the decisions of a handful of media executives come to meaningful choices if the very candidates are manufactured by central casting choosing both government and opposition?

The "Force" is with Cameron

Ignoring the Harry Potter comparison, two ex-Tory MPs, Matthew Parris, now a *Times* columnist and Michael Brown now of *The Independent* both preferred a *Star Wars* reference when interviewed by Alistair Stewart on the ITN news channel. For them the essence of the Cameron phenomenon was that the "Force" is with him. ³³ They saw the irresistible rise of Margaret Thatcher and then of Tony Blair as precedents.

On this model the "Force" is a tidal wave of media opinion which swamps any other consideration. However, both before 1979 and afterwards, Margaret Thatcher never enjoyed anything like unanimously favourable media coverage. Quite to the contrary. The media establishment, including in large parts of the Tory press, was condescending at best and dismissive at worst of the "Iron Lady." Even eleven years in power never brought her a consensus of respect let alone admiration. ³⁴

Tony Blair, by contrast, was swept along by "The Force" of media adulation. Spin-doctors were seen as admirable acolytes after 1994 as the Blair candidacy was born aloft by an uncritical press. Recently things have begun to change. One war too many and far too few WMDs have cut into the prime minister's popularity and undermined respect for a self-proclaimed "pretty straight sort of guy", but it is striking that the original high priests at the Blair shrine are now intoning the Cameronian mantra. ³⁵

Cameron's unfortunate rival David Davis, is a die-hard supporter of anti-proliferation wars and regime change. In one of the more grotesque exchanges during their "good-natured debates",

³² See <http://www.xmfan.com/viewtopic.php?t=28193>.

³³ ITN News (1040am, 5th December, 2005).

³⁴ Cameron's attitude to Margaret Thatcher was perhaps revealed when he told a journalist that his favourite Smiths' track was "Margaret On The Guillotine" from their *Viva Hate!* album with its amusing line: "The kind people have a wonderful dream:, Margaret on the guillotine." BBC2 *Newsnight* (5th December, 2005).

³⁵ For an account of New Labour's self-assessment, see Nick Cohen, *Pretty Straight Guys* (Faber & Faber: London, 2003).

neither Cameron nor Davis could name the president of Iran but they thought action would be needed to stop Iran getting the Bomb!³⁶ Yet Davis has neither charm nor class. If another war is needed a natural NCO like Davis won't have the gravitas to foist it on the public. Posh is needed to sell tosh about the threat of WMD. Davis hasn't got class, just attitude.

Davis was therefore ruthlessly rubbished. Blackpool audiences were shown snoozing through one of his speeches. (A BBC journalist was – unidentified and not a household name – shown eyes shut in the focal centre of the shot!) Oddly enough, on the eve of the results of the leadership poll, *Newsnight* showed drooping eyelids at a Cameron speech to the Centre for Policy Studies – with Cameron admirer Bruce Anderson doing a very good impression of a man soothed by Cameron's charm into deep sleep.³⁷

Why bother? What's the point?

Although Cameron's backers emphasise that his candidacy is "re-engaging" politics with the public and reaching out to the previously apathetic, there are good grounds for doubting whether the mythical youth vote will flow to a man whose background and manner must seem more remote to them than Anthony Eden, the last "glamour boy" to lead the Tories.³⁸ But the claims about Cameron's appeal to non-Tories and non-voters are *the point*.

What Cameron's backers want is a continuation of Blairism under a new face. Blair's triumphs have coincided with a catastrophic fall in voter turnout, something which even Britain's fraud-friendly polling arrangements have not been able to disguise. Apathy not engagement is the key to the success of the Blair-Cameron policy agenda. If people turn out to vote, they might not choose it.

Two years ago, Nick Cohen set out a deadly analysis of how New Labour served the financial interests of the wealthy by killing off both left-wing politics and marginalizing the unreconstructed right. Back then Blair's dominance seemed assured, but a less than glorious and victorious little war has shown how worm-eaten were the popular roots of Blairism. In 2003, Cohen could still write about how "the stock market crash and the robbery of the middle classes which followed has produced a country in which the majority... no longer benefit[s] from the deregulated markets and regurgitated policies of the bubble world." But since Blairism's "greatest success... was to disable the only vehicle for change, the Labour Party... anger is directionless and the new elite can carry on as if nothing happened."³⁹

Now as a failed occupation eats into public respect for Blair and at home his mad cap devotion to public expenditure to promote private profits out of the NHS and state schools raises the likelihood of mass revolt on the Labour benches in the House of Commons, what Cohen calls the "new elite" is looking for a new leader or certainly for reinforcements for Blair. This is where David Cameron rides to the rescue.

Cameron has made much of his non-confrontational style. He has rejected "opposition for opposition's sake." No more "Punch and Judy politics" for him.⁴⁰ Unlike David Davis who helped manoeuvre Tony Blair into a humiliating defeat over his plans to hold terrorism suspects for up to 90 days without charge, David Cameron offers support in the war on terror and the war on socialism. Cameron has made it clear that Tory MPs should not expect him to lead them into the division lobbies against Blair's bills on so-called health service and education "reforms."

³⁶ SKY News (3pm, 24th November, 2005). Perhaps this ignorance puts both men "in touch" with "target voters" like the contestant on *Who wants to be a millionaire?* who wasn't sure of which country Belgrade was the capital city, "But I know we bombed it."

³⁷ BBC 2 "Newsnight" (5th December, 2005)

³⁸ Speed seems to have been Eden's drug of choice or prescription and his mood swings over Suez in 1956 were in part a reflection of his intake of uppers.

³⁹ See Cohen, *Pretty Straight Guys*, 266. Ironically, Cohen who skewered the self-serving economics of Blairism is a last ditch defender of Blair the warrior leader.

⁴⁰ As he insisted in his acceptance speech, ITN News (6th December, 2005)

As with his schemes for the tax-payer to fund private drug counsellors, so Cameron backs directing tax-payers' money from the health service and state schools into private balance sheets. George W. Bush's disgraced brother Neil and the refugee Russian oligarch, Boris Berezovsky, have been touting such new world order education policies around the New Europe.⁴¹

Although Cameron is routinely touted as the nemesis of New Labour, it seems at least as likely that he will be its saviour. Not only is he closely associated with its most unpopular policies which he has promised to back in Parliamentary votes even before putting them to the public as his own programme at the next general election, but his "fresh face" will be ruthlessly promoted by a pliant media as an alternative to the very policies which he has publicly backed! This "never mind the track record, vote for the vowel sounds" approach may well prove popular with a dumbed-down Harry-Potter loving Britain, but for how long?

Where does Cameron go next?

Possible scenarios of how a Blair-Cameron double act will save what Peter Mandelson called "The Project" are:

- 1) Cameron crashes and burns. This is the least likely outcome. The media and his backers have invested too much prestige and effort into promoting him to let David Cameron's lack of precision, flat delivery and tetchy response to occasional awkward questions pull him down.⁴² The fact that his "Ronald Weaseley"-style and even more youthful ally, Shadow Chancellor, George Osborne, has been praised for his puerile personal abuse of Gordon Brown in most British newspapers and on television rather than slapped down by the commentators shows where the proprietorial muscle lies. A Cameron-Icarus would not help save Tony Blair's tottering support among rebellious Labour backbenchers. If Cameron fails, Blair will fall with him.
- 2) Cameron sits out an increasingly harassed and despondent Labour government as Tony Blair waited for John Major's downfall from 1994 until 1997. The arithmetic of the membership of the House of Commons suggests that a Labour government should cling on to power until the next general election. Despite Tory abuse of Gordon Brown, it is not clear that the Chancellor or another adult Labour leader could not face down Cameron in an election when real voters decide not carefully selected focus groups. However, "time for a change after 12 years of Labour could carry Cameron eventually into 10 Downing Street but in four and a half years the wheels could fall of his wagon as easily as Gordon Brown's. Even if he could glide on hot air for that period, this scenario ignores a likely alternative:
- 3) Cameron and Blair become the Baldwin and MacDonald of our days. Just as Ramsey MacDonald's infatuation with duchesses distanced the first Labour prime minister from his working class backbenchers so Blair's evident taste for the high life Berlusconi-style has increasingly alienated normal Labour members. Just as the Conservative leader, Stanley Baldwin, propped up Ramsay MacDonald as premier in 1931 against the great majority of his own Labour MPs so Cameron's promise not to "oppose for the sake of opposing" offers Blair a chance to slip his Labour moorings once and for all. A Blair-Cameron nexus could bring about the sort of new party envisaged by Roosevelt and Willkie in 1944.⁴³ If Blair can rally a hardcore of New

⁴¹ For the pedigree of education reform, see http://www.baltictimes.com/hot1.php?art_id=14067

⁴² On BBC 2's "Newsnight" (17th November, 2005), Jeremy Paxman grilled Cameron over policy and his emphasis on presentation and the candidate's irritation with other than fawning questions about his new and content-free forward-looking agenda showed – though not in other media reports which lauded yet another triumph of presentation and style.

⁴³ Neville Chamberlain, too, wanted to establish a new party after the 1931 coalition between Labour and Tories: "I hope that we may presently develop into a National Party, and get rid of the odious title of Conservative, which has kept so many from joining us in the past." See http://conservativehome.blogs.com/toryleadership/2005/11/tory_newspapers.html

Labour MPs into a reform-minded and WMD-hunting alliance with Cameron's Tories he could both push through the Agenda of mass privatisation at the tax payers' expense and give himself a new lease of political life shorn of any need to pay homage to Labour's few remaining shibboleths. The Tories will swallow such an alliance **because their MPs queue** up to praise Blair⁴⁴ while damning Labour and Gordon Brown. Also, Tories will remember that Stanley Baldwin eased himself into 10 Downing Street after a decent interval. Maybe David Cameron will be in office sooner than the next general election, just sitting around Tony Blair's cabinet table before he inherits the only chair with arms in the Cabinet Room after a decent interval.

⁴⁴ See http://conservativehome.blogs.com/platform/2005/11/michael_gove_mp_1.html For Nicholas Boles's "principled support" of "Tony Blair's foreign policies" as well as his membership of the MI6-heavy "Henry Jackson Society", see http://oliverkamm.typepad.com/blog/2005/04/the_state_of_th.html