

Wednesday, May 20th, 2020

Dear Mustafa,

It's coming up to 5pm and so I am writing to you just before the next episode of 'Control the Virus'. I wonder who will be our lead actor today - The recovering hero? The repetitive scientist? Perhaps a flashy new character? Over the past 8 weeks I have repeated the officially proscribed 3-word slogans, furiously clapped on Thursdays, and gladly shone a light on a Tuesday - even though the sun is still up. I fear that I am morphing into an obedient 'citizen slave' cheering for our 'Supreme Emperor'. So when I hear a government minister saying "Now is not the time to ask questions - make comparisons - or apportion blame" I know that that is precisely what we should be doing.

Our entire lock-down script is based on an Imperial University paper (I wrote on this in the last postcard); it is now clear that this paper was seriously mathematically flawed. However, let's adopt a 'Imperialesque' hyperbole. Instead of their estimate of 500,000 deaths let's make it 1.1m people that would have perished without this lock-down. Therefore let's assume that the government's action plan will save 1m lives.

Behaving like a life insurance company let us 'cost' these 1m lives (I am sure I will be called heartless for doing this!). To save 1m souls the government has reduced by 25% the UK's £2trillion economy - let's call that £500bn. Adding to this we have spent £200bn since the lock-down, with another £100bn in the pipeline till September - so £300b in 6 months (to give this context we spend £60b a year on the military to fight wars). Let us leave aside the Bank of England's action of zero rates and Quantitative Easing for the time being. So on the back of an envelope it will

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have cost the government roughly £800b to 'insure' 1m people (of which 650,000 will be dead anyway in 2 years...again heartless). This means that this insurance policy cost £800,000 per person. Now please repeat slogan, clap, and shine light. This ludicrous scenario does not include the environment this government policy has created - of scaring the living daylights out of the citizenry and the permanent damage that this has done. This damage will be made up of little nameless acts of cancelled operations, not visiting the doctor and getting hold of basic prescriptions.

So if the Imperial paper was wrong...and the lives saved are a fraction of their number, let alone our inflated calculations...then the costs are enormous. The insurance policy has been mispriced. This current government, with its Brexit medals, surely considers itself better than the rest of Europe, yet we slavishly follow them. Ironic.. Will our sloganeers admit to an error in policy? Highly unlikely. A more likely path is one of doubling down and creating new slogans so that we remain frightened and afraid to ask questions. It is simpler to provide 'Bread and Circuses' than make an adult admission of error and find a practical path out. It is time to watch the 5pm show; we know it is providing faulty advice, yet we must accept these flawed instructions.

Happy days...and hope to see you soon. Chris