**Ignoring Stories Hidden in Plain Sight**

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In an instantly, intimately and interconnected world, every day, one or more explosive news stories roil domestic and international politics from the war in Ukraine to the release of basketball star Brittney Grinner from a Russian jail. But crucial aspects of many stories are hidden in plain sight and are missed both by leaders of government and the reporting media. Consider three.

President Joe Biden has 1.7 trillion reasons that could lead to his re-election if he chooses to run in 2024. Is anyone aware of them? Probably not. Why?

The 1.7 trillion refers to the number of dollars the administration will spend on the Infrastructure and Jobs; Chips and Science; and Inflation Reduction Acts. Properly employed, these resources will go a long way in modernizing US society for 21st-century competition. Yet, the administration has so far not publicized or exploited this unprecedented opportunity. Indeed, does anyone know who is in charge of overseeing this expenditure or has seen the plan for how this money will be spent?

Instead of hiding this opportunity in plain sight, the administration would be well advised to mount a major campaign to explain to the US public what this $1.7 trillion will achieve and what this means for the country and individual citizens. And it should frequently update the public as well as ensure that this spending is fully visible.

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A critical aspect of the Ukraine war is also hidden in plain sight. That is the sanctuary issue. Why does Russia have a free license to attack without restriction Ukrainian civilians and civilian energy and water infrastructure and Ukraine is restrained in retaliating in kind? Last week, however, Ukraine launched two drone strikes against air bases several hundred kilometres inside Russia. Whether Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will admit this or not, the war will end through negotiations. And, barring a miracle, Ukraine will not recover all of Donbas and Crimea in part because substantial numbers of residents prefer to remain under Russian rule and because Vladimir Putin will not agree. That said, for psychological reasons, launching drone or missile attacks deep into Russia could hasten negotiations as the myth of Russian invulnerability will be shattered.

As of April 1942, Doolittle’s raid over Tokyo shocked and awed the Japanese, even the occasional strike on Red Square and the Kremlin could have similar effects. Many in the West fear this escalation could provoke Putin to respond with nuclear weapons. However, last week, Putin definitively rejected their use in Ukraine. Hence, denying Russia sanctuary is an acceptable risk, given the priority of ending the war on favourable terms for Ukraine and not keeping it hidden in plain sight.

Finally, social media is transfixed with the Netflix series on the former Royals, Harry and Meaghan. What is hidden in plain sight is that Harry’s relationship with Meaghan is not unique to the House of Windsor. Indeed, unsavoury royal conduct is an old story.

Edward VIII abdicated in 1936 to marry the “woman he loved,” twice divorced Wallis Simpson. That made his brother, George VI, a monarch. George had two daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret and no sons. But Margaret disrupted Royal life with her romance with Group Captain Peter Townsend who was married and then with her stormy relationship with husband Tony Armstrong-Jones.

King Charles III as Prince of Wales had a long-term affair with Camilla Parker-Bowles, the wife of a good friend. Charles’ wife Princess Diana later complained that a ‘three-way” marriage could never work. Charles has since married Camilla. And, Charles’ brother Prince Andrew has been banned from Royal duties because of his friendship with the late Jeffrey Epstein, found guilty of crimes from rape to sex trafficking.

Whether Prince William and his son George will avoid this Windsor trap remains to be seen. However, it appears that William and his wife, Kate Middleton, are emulating Queen Elizabeth II in behaviour and not the male Windsor line.

Too often, too many stories have crucial aspects that are hidden in plain sight. At a time when “deep fakes;” fake news; conspiracy theories; and outright falsehoods passing for truth and fact reign, getting to the real and not distorted basis for stories and reports has never been more important. But will that happen? It must. “All the news that’s fit to print” must be the watchword for the media whether or not one reads the New York Times. If not, that may be the greatest danger to democracy.

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