

# Under The Radar

*While the media landscape is preoccupied by COVID-19, politics and business grinds on. 'Under the Radar' provides a concise overview and thoughtful analysis of critical stories currently being overlooked.*



# A Green New World

## *What happened?*

Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest lender, has pledged to double its green financing activities over the next five years, meaning it should reach a total of £200bn. This is the first time the bank has committed to sustainability targets, despite this being the general direction of travel of banking over recent years.

Meanwhile, in the UK, Scottish Power and Equinor are both pushing ahead with multi-billion wind farm projects in Scotland and the North East. The business secretary, Alok Sharma, praised both projects and hinted that Britain's economic recovery will be centred on achieving net-zero emissions.

## *What does it mean?*

Deutsche Bank's announcement underlines the growing pressure on banks to throw their considerable weight behind efforts to turn economies green.

This is also apparent in Deutsche Bank's financing of fossil fuel projects, which has almost halved since 2016 to just \$12bn. When compared to the \$200bn earmarked for green financing, the trend is clear for all to see.

More importantly, it indicates that pledges made by Christine Lagarde, the president of the European Central Bank,

to put climate change at the centre of European monetary policy, are taking some effect. This could embolden the Commission to enact further reforms that ease capital requirements on banks – alongside other risk reducing measures - in order to incentivise climate-friendly loans.

*“Green industrial projects are a failsafe way to create opportunities and jobs across a variety of regions”*

This push towards sustainability should also have knock on effects for how governments approach post-Coronavirus policymaking. As hinted by Alok Sharma, investment in wind farms, solar power, charging networks and tidal power will be central to the UK's economic recovery. And with unemployment likely to be higher, it would be wise for the government to invest in retraining and up-skilling the workforce in order to meet these ambitions.

Number Ten are acutely aware that Britain's economic recovery needs to be felt outside of London, as part of the 'levelling up' agenda. Green industrial projects are a failsafe way to create opportunities and jobs across a variety of regions, while also meeting energy diversification targets.

# Facebook moderators win lawsuit

## *What happened?*

Facebook has settled a lawsuit in the US, brought forward by contractors who were tasked with moderating content on the platform, for \$52 million.

The 11,000 claimants are a mix of former and current Facebook employees and the settlement means they each receive \$1,000 as standard with bolt-ons for additional stresses or illness and medical bill coverage. Many have been diagnosed with mental health conditions such as PTSD.

The nature of the job means repeat and routine exposure to footage of extreme acts including terror attacks and child abuse.

## *What does it mean?*

Facebook's status as a tech giant with a near monopoly on social media makes them a routine target for governments and regulators across the world. The company is regularly hauled before lawmakers and prosecutors, but what makes this case unique is that it was brought by past and present employees.

Large tech companies often seek to portray themselves as progressive employers, who treat their workers fairly. But the reality is that not all employees are happy as made starkly clear over the course of the court case.

One of the troubling issues brought to light was the apparent lack of safeguarding procedures to support staff employed in the content moderation department. The routine exposure to graphic and extreme footage – coupled with a lack of mental health support - produced widespread distress. These were also some of the lowest paid workers at Facebook, drawing salaries as low as \$28,000.

On top of the settlement, Facebook has agreed to make counselling available to all moderators, while also putting new guidelines in place to shield moderators from certain types of content. Firms responsible for hiring the contractors will also assess the emotional resilience of candidates.

This is a tough and unenviable gig. Although artificial intelligence plays a role in identifying graphic content, human beings are still required to sift through some deeply troubling material to protect other users. The least the tech giants can do is protect these poor souls.

# Shattered Peace

## *What happened?*

Over 100 people have been killed in a day of terror in Afghanistan. On Tuesday at 10:00 AM local time, militants dressed as policemen stormed a hospital in Kabul, made their way to the hospital's maternity ward, and massacred mothers, nurses and newborns. At least 24 were killed and a further 16 were injured. Afghan security personnel proceeded to neutralise the militants, following a protracted shootout.

But as they dealt with the incident, another attack was unfolding a hundred miles east of the city in the province of Nangarhar. As hundreds gathered for a local police commander's funeral, a militant detonated his suicide vest among the crowds of mourners, killing a further 25 and wounding 68. An IS affiliate has claimed responsibility for the attack on the funeral but as of yet, no group has claimed responsibility for the Kabul attack.

## *What does it mean?*

Afghanistan has sadly become accustomed to terror. Attacks, shootings and bombings have become part of daily life, in a country fighting one of the world's longest wars.

But yesterday's attack on a maternity ward, where newborns were slaughtered in their mothers' arms, will stand out among the most vile. This was probably the ambition, to commit an atrocity so devastating as to cut through the coronavirus noise. Still, the news coverage is firmly fixed on the pandemic, with the attack receiving little media attention in the UK.

*"It is now hard to imagine that the Afghan government and the Taliban will return to the negotiating table"*

In the first issue of Under The Radar, just over a month ago, we reported on how peace in Afghanistan may finally be finally in sight. But since then peace talks have stalled, and Taliban attacks have been steadily increasing. Although the group have denied responsibility, the government was quick to blame them, with President Ghani ordering retaliatory attacks for the first time since their suspension during peace talks.

It is now hard to imagine that the Afghan government and the Taliban will return to the negotiating table. Sadly, any hopes of an imminent peace deal are now sure to be scuppered.

# What Trafalgar Is Reading

## Taking #Obamagate Seriously [The Bulwark](#)

“When we just shake our heads and say *that’s just Trump being Trump*, we are buying into the false framing preferred by the president and his defenders”  
- Tim Miller on President Trump’s latest obsession and the danger it poses.

## One Journalist’s Wary, Frustrating Relationship With Edward Snowden [The New York Times](#)

“In the end, Gellman and Snowden seem to have understood each other’s motives, even if they didn’t always align”  
- Jennifer Szalai on Barton Gellman’s new book “Dark Mirror” is an account of his fraught relationship with Edward Snowden.

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## But if you must read about Coronavirus

### Fake news is spreading faster than the virus [The Spectator](#)

“Those of us who believe that we can distinguish between truth and falsehood using the evidence of our senses — the basis of scientific methodology — are finding it horribly difficult to locate the boundary between the two”  
- Damian Thompson on the pandemic of counterknowledge.



## What we do

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For more information about Trafalgar Strategy  
and our services, get in touch:

Email:

[info@trafalgar-strategy.co.uk](mailto:info@trafalgar-strategy.co.uk)

Phone:

+44 (0)207 043 1308

Or visit:

[www.trafalgar-strategy.co.uk](http://www.trafalgar-strategy.co.uk)

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