

New review – April 7-13, 2025

Slide 2:

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, met with Donald Trump on Monday for the second time since the US president's return to office, marking the first effort by a foreign leader to negotiate a deal after Trump announced sweeping tariffs last week.

Speaking alongside Trump in the Oval Office, Netanyahu said Israel would eliminate the trade deficit with the US. "We intend to do it very quickly," he told reporters, adding that he believed Israel could "serve as a model for many countries who ought to do the same".

Trump said the pair had a "great discussion" but did not indicate whether he would reduce the tariffs on Israeli goods. "Maybe not," he said. "Don't forget we help Israel a lot. We give Israel \$4bn a year. That's a lot." The US is Israel's closest ally and largest single trading partner. Israel had hoped to avoid the new tariffs by moving to cancel its remaining tariffs on US imports a day before Trump's announcement.

Since Netanyahu's first visit in February, Israel has resumed its bombardment in Gaza, collapsing nearly two months of ceasefire with Hamas that had been brokered by the US, Egypt and Qatar.

Netanyahu's visit to the US comes as he faces pressure at home to return to ceasefire negotiations and secure the release of the remaining hostages in Gaza.

Netanyahu told reporters on Monday that he and Trump had discussed the US leader's "bold" vision to move Palestinians from Gaza, and that he is working with the US on another deal to secure the release of additional hostages. "We're working now on another deal, that we hope will succeed," he said.

Slide 3:

The US Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that the Trump administration must try to release a Maryland man who was mistakenly deported to a mega-jail in El Salvador.

In a 9-0 ruling, the justices declined to block a lower court's order to "facilitate" bringing back Kilmar Abrego Garcia, but they also said Judge Paula Xinis may have exceeded her authority.

On Friday Judge Xinis directed the Trump administration to provide her with daily updates on what steps they are taking to bring Mr Garcia back to the US.

The government has conceded Mr Garcia was deported due to an "administrative error", though it also alleges he is a member of the MS-13 gang, which his lawyer denies.

Slide 4: US budget

House Republicans have approved a multitrillion-dollar budget framework that allows the party to begin the process of drafting legislation to enact key elements of President Trump's domestic policy agenda — including tax cuts and spending on defense, energy and immigration.

The budget blueprint was approved Thursday by a vote of 216 to 214.

GOP Reps. Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Victoria Spartz of Indiana joined all Democrats in voting no.

The vote is a victory for Trump and congressional Republican leaders who spent days convincing fiscal hawks within the Republican Party to vote for the bill despite their frustration over the level of spending cuts included in the Senate version of the plan that was adopted on Saturday. The Senate framework outlines only about \$4 billion in spending cuts. The House version seeks at least \$1.5 trillion.

Now that Republicans have adopted identical versions of the framework in the House and Senate, they are able to unlock a special budget tool known as reconciliation — a complicated process that allows them to avoid a filibuster in Senate and pass a final version of the legislation with a 51-vote simple majority.

Both chambers will now get to work on drafting the final legislative product, likely a lengthy process requiring intense negotiations. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., told reporters that after the two-week recess that begins next week, House committees will work "in a collaborative fashion" with Senate committees on next steps.

Slides 5-8: the tariff saga

April 2: "Liberation Day" = Trump announced sweeping tariff increases

April 9 (Wednesday) = President Donald Trump announced a 90-day pause on all "reciprocal" tariffs except those imposed on China, which will see tariffs increased to at least 125%. The US stock market soared on the news, with the S&P 500 posting its best day since October 2008. Asian markets were also rallying early on Thursday. But markets plummeted again on Thursday, as the US trade war with China intensifies and as uncertainty runs high.

Slides 9-11: Jamelle Bouie's analysis of the Trump saga in The New York Times

Slide 12: As Canadians prepare to cast ballots on 28 April, senior officials say that India, China, Pakistan and Iran are all expected to make efforts to subvert the national vote through increasingly sophisticated disinformation campaigns.

The use of artificial-intelligence tools is likely to figure prominently in efforts to deceive voters and sway diaspora communities. Earlier this year, a landmark inquiry into foreign interference found that information manipulation is

the biggest risk to democratic institutions.

While intelligence officials have long anticipated and experienced efforts from hostile nations like India and China to sway a federal election, less predictable is the role Donald Trump might play. The US president has launched a trade war with Canada, and threatened to annex the country.

Trump has a reputation for sharing false information and his close ally and senior adviser Elon Musk, the owner of the social media network X, has been implicated in the amplification of misinformation.

Slides 13-15: Maori tribes in New Zealand

Slides 13-14: Good news for Māori:

It was the bill that launched 300,000 public submissions, sparked New Zealand's largest ever protest on Māori rights and prompted a haka in parliament that quickly went viral.

And now the treaty principles bill, which sought to radically reinterpret New Zealand's founding treaty between Māori tribes and the British Crown, is dead.

Lawmakers voted down the controversial bill on Thursday, drawing a line under a particularly strained chapter in the country's fight for Indigenous rights.

The Treaty of Waitangi is considered New Zealand's founding document and is instrumental in upholding Māori rights. The treaty principles bill – tabled by the minor libertarian Act Party – proposed abandoning a set of principles that courts and parliament have developed over decades to guide the relationship between the crown and Māori, in favour of its own.

Act has argued that Māori have been afforded different political and legal rights and privileges compared with non-Māori, because of the way the treaty has been interpreted.

Over the past year, the bill generated widespread criticism from lawyers, academics, politicians and the public who believed the new principles would weaken Māori rights, remove checks on the Crown and drive anti-Māori rhetoric.

The first reading of the bill in November, prompted Maipi-Clarke's haka, during which she ripped up a copy of the bill. Three days later, the largest ever protest over Māori rights descended on parliament in opposition to the bill.

The bill's demise may end this particular debate over the treaty, but for many who opposed it such as Eru Kapa-Kingi – the leader of the historic protest – **the battle for Indigenous rights is far from over. =**

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Since taking office in November 2023, the coalition government's broader policy direction for Māori – including sweeping rollbacks to policies designed to improve Māori health and wellbeing, scaling back the use of Māori language in public services and defunding Māori initiatives – has ignited condemnation, protests, mass meetings of Māori leaders, and multiple claims to the Waitangi Tribunal – an institution that investigates the crown's breaches of the treaty.

Prime minister Christopher Luxon has said services should be provided on the basis of need, not race and the government intends to "deliver outcomes for everybody".

"There's a whole catalogue of terrible policy and terrible law being pushed through by this government," Kapa-Kingi said.

Slide 16: Big food brands dramatically increased their spending on advertising last year, months before new junk food regulations aiming to curb Britain's obesity crisis are due to come into force, the *Observer* can reveal.

Food companies spent an extra £420m in 2024, an increase of 26% year on year that coincided with a bumper 12 months for sales of snack foods. Shoppers bought an extra 45.4m packs of chocolate, cakes and crisps from the top-selling brands.

The spending bonanza came as campaigners said food corporations were switching tactics to circumvent the impact of the upcoming regulations (= From October 2025, foods that are high in fat or sugar will not be able to be advertised on television before 9pm, or in paid online advertising.)

Outdoor posters, audio advertising on podcasts and streaming services such as Spotify, and partnerships with social media influencers are not covered by the regulations.

Slide 17: British Steel

Proposals to save British Steel's Scunthorpe blast furnaces (haut fourneau) (= the last primary steel-making facilities in the UK) have been granted royal assent after an extraordinary parliament sitting on Saturday. The bill passed the Commons and Lords in a single day unopposed.

The emergency legislation gives the government the power to instruct British Steel to keep the plant open. Jonathan Reynolds, the business secretary, has been given emergency powers that allow him to order the company to buy the raw materials it needs. The UK government is taking control of Chinese-owned British Steel. The government will pay the bill for running costs. The new legislation will prevent mass redundancies and manage a transition from blast-furnace-produced steel to electric arc furnaces, which can run on renewable energy.

Ministers had taken the unusual step of recalling parliament from its Easter recess to sit on Saturday after negotiations with British Steel's Chinese owners, Jingye, appeared to break down.

The business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, accused the company of failing to negotiate "in good faith" after it decided to stop buying enough raw materials to keep the blast furnaces at Scunthorpe going. But without enough raw materials, the furnaces face the prospect of cooling to a point where it is neither easy nor cost-effective to bring them back.

Starmer: "Today, my government has stepped in to save British steel. We are acting to protect the jobs of thousands of workers, and all options are on the table to secure the future of the industry." He said steel made in Britain "will be the backbone as we get Britain building once more," adding: "Our industry is the pride of our history – and I want it to be our future, too."

Slide 18: Birmingham bin strike

Birmingham has seen 17,000 tonnes of rubbish piled up in the streets since the industrial action started intermittently in January and progressed to an all-out strike in March.

The dispute is over council plans to scrap the higher-paid waste recycling and collection officer (WRCO) role from its fleets, because the council says it risks creating a "huge future equal-pay liability".

Slide 19: Britain's Universal Theme Park

A new Universal theme park near Bedford - the first in Europe - was announced to much fanfare earlier this week.

Set to open in 2031, construction is to begin at the 476-acre (1.9-sq-km) site, where attractions are likely to feature James Bond, Paddington and The Lord of the Rings.

Keir Starmer, the British prime minister, hailed the announcement as a boost for his country's sluggish economy and an example of his government's attempt to cut through the red tape that has long made it costly and difficult to complete complex projects in Britain.

"Today we closed the deal on a multibillion-pound investment that will see Bedford home to one of the biggest entertainment parks in Europe," Mr. Starmer said in a statement, adding that the project would create around 28,000 jobs.

Slide 20: The UK government is developing a "murder prediction" programme which it hopes can use personal data of those known to the authorities to identify the people most likely to become killers.

Researchers are alleged to be using algorithms to analyse the information of thousands of people, including victims of crime, as they try to identify those at greatest risk of committing serious violent offences.

The scheme was originally called the "homicide prediction project", but its name has been changed to "sharing data to improve risk assessment". The Ministry of Justice hopes the project will help boost public safety but campaigners have called it "chilling and dystopian".

The existence of the project was discovered by the pressure group Statewatch, and some of its workings uncovered through documents obtained by Freedom of Information requests.

Statewatch says data from people not convicted of any criminal offence will be used as part of the project, including personal information about self-harm and details relating to domestic abuse. Officials strongly deny this, insisting only data about people with at least one criminal conviction has been used.

The government says the project is at this stage for research only, but campaigners claim the data used would build bias into the predictions against minority-ethnic and poor people.

The MoJ says the scheme will "review offender characteristics that increase the risk of committing homicide" and "explore alternative and innovative data science techniques to risk assessment of homicide".

The project would "provide evidence towards improving risk assessment of serious crime, and ultimately contribute to protecting the public via better analysis", a spokesperson added.

The project, which was commissioned by the prime minister's office when Rishi Sunak was in power, is using data about crime from various official sources including the Probation Service and data from Greater Manchester police before 2015.

Slide 21: River Thames pier renamed

A pier on the River Thames in west London has been renamed St Mary's Wandsworth after criticism by anti-racism campaigners.

The pier, formerly known as Plantation Wharf Pier, is located between the Wandsworth Riverside Quarter and Chelsea Harbour piers.

Uber Boat by Thames Clippers acquired the site in 2019 and has been in consultation with stakeholders and residents from the wider local development to change the name after an outcry in 2021.

The name Plantation Wharf Pier was inherited from a nearby residential and commercial development of the same name. Critics of the name associated it with colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

Slide 22: Paddington is back

Never has the label around Paddington's neck reading "please look after this bear" been so pertinent.

On Wednesday morning, a repaired statue of the Peruvian ursine was unveiled in Newbury, Berkshire, after it was damaged by two Royal Air Force engineers out on a bender.

Daniel Heath and William Lawrence, both 22 and engineers at RAF Odiham in Hampshire, were

sentenced for the offence (= they were told to pay £2,725 each towards the costs of repairing the statue. They were also sentenced to a 12-month community order and required to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work) at Reading magistrates court in March with the judge telling the men they were “the antithesis of everything Paddington stands for”.

People cheered on the high street in Newbury as the chair of the Newbury improvement district, Ian Batho, and the vice-chair, Ashley Morris, removed the veil that covered the repaired statue.