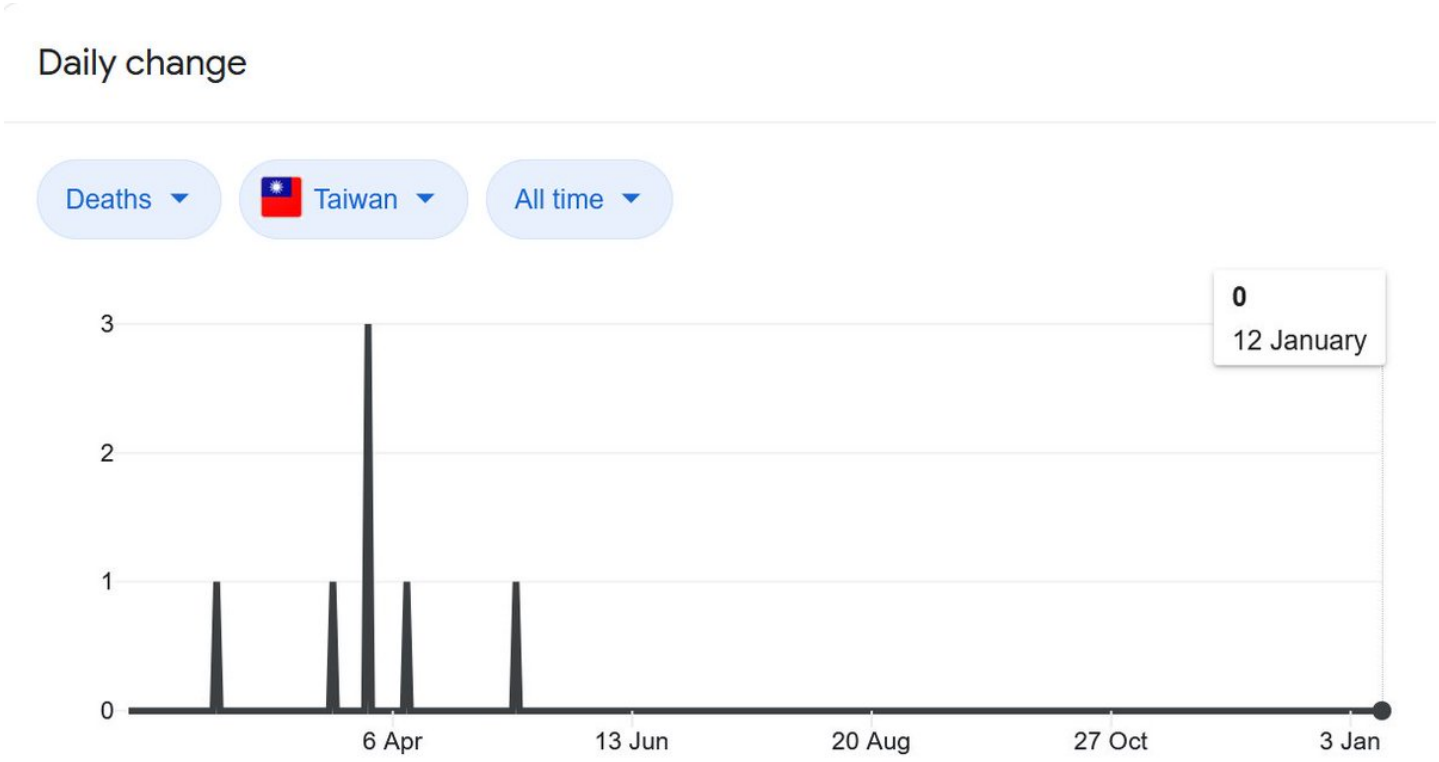
Twitter Thread by George Monbiot



George Monbiot
@GeorgeMonbiot

This is the mind-blistering fact that everyone should be aware of. The government still has *no plan* for ending the pandemic. Or even for ending the lockdown. I knew we had a troupe of clowns in charge, but this is beyond incompetence.
My column.

Taiwan's most recent death from covid-19 was on May 11th last year. It stopped the virus without lockdowns. How? Mostly through its genuinely world-beating test-trace-isolate-and-support system, developed with the help of participatory democracy. Compare, contrast and weep.



See those numbers on the y axis? They are the actual numbers. SEVEN deaths in total from covid-19, in a nation with over twice our population density. This is what competent government looks like.

From the outset, the Taiwanese government built its system on mass popular engagement and active consent. It also understood the central importance of getting TTIS right, part of which means providing a 5-star service for people who have

to go into isolation.

Taiwan's approach was the exact opposite of the racist trope with which some people have tried to explain its success: "people in East Asian countries do what they're told, we don't". It actively built public engagement and enthusiasm, while our government centralised everything.

We have the worst of both worlds: a government of incompetent dilettantes, with authoritarian tendencies. Johnson's administration insisted on clutching power tight to its chest, while being completely incapable of using it effectively.

The Taiwanese government pioneered new forms of participatory democracy long before the pandemic. It seeks to share power with the people, rather than hoard it. But to the Westminster government, this is an alien and frightening concept.

WH Auden said this about an Oxford University education, and I feel this is exactly how Johnson and his troupe see it. Fill your boots, you're king of the world. The proles exist only to serve you.

> Promising to the sharp sword all the glittering prizes,
> The cars, the hotels, the service, the boisterous bed,
> Then power to silence outrage with a testament,
> The widow's tears forgotten,
> The fatherless unheard.

Here they are, living it. Johnson seated right, Cameron standing second left.



Our problem, in other words, is not the people's culture.
It's the governing culture.