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BRYANSTON 2021
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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 123
12th AUGUST 2022

GREETINGS:

East and West, continued unrest – Kagiso and Munsieville shutdowns... artisinal mining out of control in SA – who would have believed it?... why not just license and tax them?... local community burning out Zama-Zamas in Mohlakeng... No SAPS in sight... Eskom in and out of Stage 4 again... subjected to cyber-attacks (see piece at end)... State Security Agency compromised by factionalism, mismanagement and inefficiency... CSANDF General Mbatha calls in Sapper Regiments... are they going to mine township roads? – potholes readily available... Fikile Mbalula in a Russian hat to rival the Mad Hatter has just discovered that "we have a problem called potholes"... Mkwhebane a serial loser in yet another Court case... cocaine worth R400 million intercepted in a truck in Cape Town – what a windfall!... tons of SA citrus stranded in Europe due disease claims… Boks romp all over All Blacks in first Test.

RAF training crisis – pilots flying desks instead of aircraft (see below)... Richie Rishi robs poor to pay rich... biggest UK interest hike in 27 years... rave from the grave from yesterday man Gordon Brown about what should be done... why can't UK handle water crises?... costly Commonwealth Games drag to a close in Birmingham... Heatwave Level 3 alert for all UK in face of water crisis... UK intelligence warns of nuclear threat as Ukraine war enters new phase... BoJo back at work after his honeymoon... Criminal gangs in UK are stealing everything from livestock to Land Rover parts from farms... Russia is forming 40 "volunteer battalions" to make up for losses in its regular army... Bosnia nearing boiling point of religious and racial tensions – Balkans war clouds all over again with threat of Russian intervention... Serbian President says NATO the equivalent of Nazi Third Reich (must have been listening to Putin...) Israelis wallop Palestinian terrorists...

Chinese yellow-faced with fury after Pelosi visit to Taiwan... missiles fired into sea near Japan – Emperor p**sed off as well... warships shadow each other as war games due to wind down... Taiwan cannot become a second Ukraine... Revolt at Beijing's tracking app... 'California is no Garden of Eden, it is now a woke basket case who's rich and poor are fleeing alike'... Blinken visits SA (but without Winken and Nod)... Spider crabs swarm Cornish beaches, catching the crabs on the beach a new pastime... From 1966 to 2022: why the UK Lionesses' win felt even sweeter...

'SPIRIT OF THE FEW' MONUMENT:

The ‘Spirit of The Few’ Monument was unveiled on Friday 29th July 2022, to mark the sacrifice of 2,938 men who later became known as ‘The Few.’ It depicts the seven life-size bronze sculptures of airmen from 32 Squadron, who were famously photographed at RAF Hawkinge on 29th July 1940, a couple of hundred yards away from where the Museum now stands. Only one of the seven lost his life during the World War Two, so fortunately most of the sons and daughters were able to attend the unveiling of their fathers. Over seventy next of kin were among the two hundred invited guests, including members of each family, widows, children, and nieces and nephews of the airmen. Some even travelled from as far around the world as America, Bahamas, Switzerland, Gozo, Australia and France.

Special celebrity guest of honour, Sir David Jason OBE, English actor, comedian, screenwriter and producer known for his role in *'Only Fools and Horses,'* was due to unveil the Commemorative plaque. However, after testing positive for COVID-19, he was unable to attend. Squadron Leader Woods, Officer Commanding 32 (The Royal) Squadron took up the role instead; while a beautiful letter written by Sir David Jason was read in his absence, along with his promise to visit in future. Aviators from 32 (The Royal) Squadron and their Acting Officer Commanding attended, as well as the Standard Bearer; Colour Party, and RAF Padre who blessed the Monument during the event. The roar of four Hawker Hurricanes did a fly-past to the delight of spectators, only a handful of Hurricanes are left which can fly in the world. The aircraft were kindly provided by the owners and Peter Monk of the Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar. The Monument was originally born from the imagination of Dave Brocklehurst MBE, some thirty-two years ago. Dave often visualised the seven bronze airmen by the three Gate Guardian Hurricanes in the Museum Grounds, open for the public to interact with, rather than being behind a plinth or railings. Dave's imagination became reality, after funds were generated by members of the public and the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust and fourteen months of sculpting clay and casting bronze at the *SPACERs* studio in Thanet, Kent.

The airmen commemorated in the Monument are:

- Flying Officer Rupert Frederick Smythe - died in 1980, in Gibraltar
- Flight Lieutenant John Ernest Proctor - died in 1991, in South Africa
- Pilot Officer Keith Reginald Gillman - reported ‘missing’ on 25th August 1940, three miles off Dover
- Flight Lieutenant Peter Malam Brothers - died in 2008
- Flight Lieutenant Peter Mervill Gardner - died in 1984
- Flying Officer Douglas Hamilton Grice - died in 1998
- Flying Officer Alan Francis Eckford - died in 1990

A number of those who gave donations were invited to attend the unveiling, including an elderly retired couple who gave the largest donation to date, three lads that ran multiple marathons in aid of the Monument, and a lady who apologised for not being able to pay it all but still gave £1,000... (God Bless her!)

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OBITURAY:

JAMAICA FAREWELL:

It is with sadness that the Royal Air Force family announces the death of World War Two veteran Albert Jarrett. Albert, aged 98, grew up in Jamaica and joined the RAF at the age of 17 in 1942, starting his basic training on the island before travelling to the UK in 1943. He continued with his training at RAF Melksham, Wiltshire. Albert then posted to Maintenance Units, working mainly in Logistics and serving at RAF Sutton Coldfield and RAF Grantham, before he demobilised in 1946 and returned to Jamaica. “I spent more time on the range with new recruits. I was very small, and they couldn’t understand why I was so good at using the rifle, so they kept me behind to teach the recruits. It is wonderful, this is the memory. I’m so pleased at 98, not many of my type around and I’m so pleased to be here.” Albert soon came back to the UK in 1953, as part of the Windrush generation, living and working in Birmingham. Albert later met retired Warrant Officer Donald Campbell and the pair founded The Forgotten Generations, a charitable archive highlighting the contributions to the Armed Forces of British African and Caribbean people. The pair recently attended a Jamaican cultural day at RAF Wittering, in celebration of the history, dedication, and sacrifice made by thousands of Jamaican service men and women on the anniversary of Windrush. Here, Albert also met the Honorary Air Commodore of 7644 Squadron, Dr Marcia McLaughlin, who represented the Royal Auxiliary Air Force at the event. Albert thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the recruits, as well as the heart, soul and food of Jamaica through mutton curry and steel drums.
After inquiries to the Ministry of Defence, Albert belatedly received his War Service Medal in 2021. In June 2022, at a Platinum Jubilee reception at Number 10 Downing Street, Albert received a Points of Light Award for people who make change in their community. In July 2022, Albert carried the Queen’s Baton on its relay prior to the opening of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. During his leg of the relay Albert was pushed in a wheelchair by his old friend, former Warrant Officer Donald Campbell. Albert was married three times and leaves a widow Shirley.

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THE FIRMIN SWORD OF PEACE AWARDS:

The Firmin Sword of Peace Awards celebrate the most valuable humanitarian contributions by the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, and Joint Service Units to establish friendly relations between the British Armed Forces and communities at home or overseas. RAF Aldergrove, RAF Brise Norton, RAF Cosford, RAF High Wycombe, RAF Leeming, RAF Linton on Ouse, RAF Marham, RAF Shawbury, 22 Squadron and the RAF Police have all been previous winners since 2005.
The salute was taken by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Nigel Corner, who then presented the Firmin Sword to RAF Leeming Station Commander, Group Captain Gareth Prendergast.
In 2020, RAF Leeming proudly passed the RAF's first NATO assessment of capability for 16 years. However, the world was soon hit by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the station flew to the support of the NHS. The Aviation Task Force helped develop the Track and Trace application, while others deployed on Operation RESCRIPT. RAF Leeming also collaborated with agencies on Operation PANTHER, a complex contamination investigation lasting six months. It saw the recovery of over 64,000 artifacts posing a serious health risk to the public across the UK. Despite harsh terrain, treacherous weather and Coronavirus restrictions, RAF Leeming conducted themselves with great professionalism and teamwork, epitomising the RAF's workforce spirit to pull together and deliver success amid complex challenges. The operation formed cooperative relationships between all agencies involved, including the local joint North Yorkshire Police and MOD Police, while strengthening operating procedures for future civil-military work and showcasing a few ways the RAF defend the public in the United Kingdom.
"It is an honour for RAF Leeming to be awarded the Firmin Sword of Peace, recognising the contribution and relationship that RAF Leeming has with the civil authorities and communities of North Yorkshire. The people of the region are incredible, always welcoming to RAF Leeming personnel and their families. I look forward to deepening the relationship and finding more ways that we can further this mutually supportive association". Group Captain Prendergast, RAF Leeming Station Commander. *(postscript – The Station moto is "Straight and True" – with the sword as the emblem in the badge. Quite fitting)*

RAF PILOT TRAINING CRISIS:

Meanwhile, back on the ranch, the RAF is going through a turbulent time as it is unable to train fast jet pilots due to faulty aircrafts, a need for more instructors and an influx of foreign students filling up the course, a news report suggested. A set of "leaked documents" assessed by Sky News shows that Royal Air Force recruits are spending months - sometimes years - effectively flying desks instead of warplanes as they wait for training slots to open. As per the report, the delays could hamper the future availability of crews to operate frontline Typhoon and F35 squadrons at a time of growing threats from Russia and China and with a war raging in Europe, defence sources said. An internal memo from May and slides from a meeting of top RAF officers in July, seen by Sky News,

revealed: “An ‘emerging’ problem with the Rolls-Royce engine on the Hawk jet, used by fast jet recruits for training. It will ‘reduce pipeline capacity over the next three years.’ This will increase waiting times for some trainees to join the course to about 12 months.” It further stated: “Concern about a ‘damaging drain’ of qualified pilots who quit the RAF for better-paid jobs in industry, rather than staying in frontline or instructor roles.” One slide said: “The draw is so great from such a small pool we are approaching a critical mass point.” But an RAF source said there was no ‘mass exodus.’ A serving officer with knowledge of the training pipeline said: “At the moment, it's the biggest f*** up in the RAF.” Asking to stay anonymous, they told Sky News: “To have a selection process that is second only to astronaut selection, so you're getting the cream of the cream, and then make them complete their flying training over a six-to-eight-year process, when it should only take two-to-three years, is absolutely mad, especially when it is taxpayers' money.” A former senior air force officer, also speaking anonymously, agreed. He called the situation “a scandal… a crisis”, saying it has been a chronic problem for almost 30 years that air chiefs have consistently tried and failed to fix. But a second serving RAF source defended the situation and strongly denied there was a crisis. He said this year was always going to be a “challenge” as the air force prepared to retire a number of aircraft and bring in new platforms as part of modernisation plans. Russia's war in Ukraine added additional pressure, with the RAF called upon to provide more fast jets and crews to patrol the skies of NATO allies in the east of the alliance. *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LV237W2uNvc*

BOEING 747-300 FREIGHTER SEIZED:

Bruce Prescott sends in interesting snippets... Kenya Airways wants South African Airways to leave for it some of the routes it operates in Europe and West Africa as the carrier seeks to expand its reach ahead of the planned formation of a Pan-African airline. So, at the outset before the ink has dried KQ is dictating its rules [desires]. The US Department of Justice moved to seize a 747-300 that has been left in Buenos Aires (Argentina) since June 2022. The airplane, a Venezuelan-flagged 1986-build aircraft, was formerly operated by Iran’s Mahan Air and flew numerous flights this spring between Moscow, Tehran and Caracas, in potential violation of US trade policy using American-made aircraft. The aircraft has been grounded at Ezeiza Airport in Buenos Aires, unable to purchase fuel, with its Iranian crew unable to leave the country as well. The airplane began operations for Emtrasur in early February after re-delivery in Minsk (Belarus). Emtrasur is a subsidiary of Venezuela’s state-owned CONVIASA Airlines. It was originally delivered to France’s UTA in 1986 and flew for Air France between 1992 and the early 2000s. *(sent in by Bruce Prescott)*

MEMBERS WRITE:

Philip Weyers writes:
“For the past 25 years I've devoted considerable time, energy, passion and on the odd occasion, expertise to two organisations due to them being close to my heart. One does such things without expectation of benefit or reward, but it is nonetheless extremely gratifying to be acknowledged. The General Smuts Foundation recently hosted a glorious dinner to recognise my efforts and bid me farewell as I leave South African shores. Surely one of the very finest and most humbling evenings of all my three score and a few years and I will be eternally grateful to those wonderful friends who initiated and executed the wonderful event, it was quite simply extraordinary.”

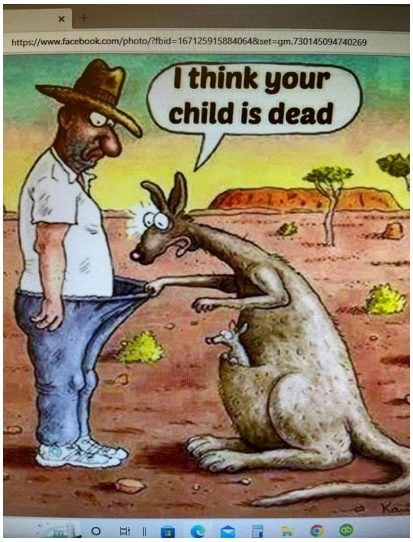
CHEERS FOR TODAY:

We had a great lunch last Friday at Wanderers. Only 16 were booked but 25 arrived. The caterer rose to the occasion and both Starters and Main course were served on time and without a hitch. Karl Jensen produced an excellent running presentation of pictures taken at Oshkosh (from whence he had just returned). Dr John Ledger gave us an insightful presentation on climate change and the Eskom situation: it was almost three years to the day that he had given his previous presentation on the topic. Some light relief from Eskom loadshedding...
Members and others from EAA SA are on their way back from Oshkosh full of the “total immersion” aviation experience, the first since Covid.
And a bittersweet farewell to Philip Weyers who was also at the lunch was held. Save up Phillip as many will be at your door for a beer or four!
The days are getting steadily longer and the early of Spring evidence is to be seen in the blooms of the Coral trees and the first of the Clivias… but there’s still likely to be some cold ahead…
Our next lunch to brighten the bleak outlook will be the Battle of Britain Ladies Lunch at the Wanderers on Friday 10th September *(this is the second Friday)* 12h30 for 13h00 and weather permitting there will be a Fly-Past of the Harvards to commemorate the day... As normal, limited wine will be available on the table. Price remains R250 per head and we request you to pay by EFT to our account - Nedbank - Melrose Arch - Br: 19 66 05 - Account 19 66 278 063. Please note that we are committed to pay for the number of meals booked. Look forward to seeing as many as possible...
And so... keep the bright side up... and enjoy this edition of Ramblings... and the chilling piece on hybrid attacks on infrastructure at the end...

TAILPIECE:

Senior Citizen’s Pride...
Two old men, Koos and Albert used to meet regularly for breakfast. Then Koos disappeared for a month. Albert was worried but he could not remember Koos’s home address. After one-month Koos reappeared.
Albert: "What happened to you? You had me worried."

Koos: "I was in jail."
Albert: "Jailed for what?
Koos: "Remember Lily, the waitress who once worked at the coffee shop?"
Albert: "Yes I do. What about her?"
Koos: "She filed rape charges against me. At 85 years old I was so proud of my manhood that I pleaded guilty. The damn judge gave me 30 days for lying under Oath."



Long Term Destruction: (Brought to mind by the debate in UK about cost of living)
What has caused more long-term destruction – the A-bomb, or Government welfare programs created to buy the votes of those who want someone to take care of them? Japan does not have a welfare system. Work for it or do without.

These are possibly the 5 best sentences you'll ever read and all applicable to this experiment:

1. You cannot legislate the poor into prosperity by legislating the wealthy out of prosperity.
2. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving.
3. The government cannot give to anybody anything that the government does not first take from somebody else.
4. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it!
5. When half of the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that is the beginning of the end of any nation.

Can you think of a reason for not sharing this? Neither could I.

MATT

'You become hardened after a while. You wouldn't believe some of the herbaceous borders I've seen'

MATT

'Had any nice holiday plans ruined recently?'

MADAM & Eve
BY STEPHEN FRANCIS & RICO
FOLKS, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR HORSE RACING!
GWEN! EVE! IT'S THE ANC POLICY CONFERENCE HANDICAP!
AND...THEY'RE OFF! IT'S STEP ASIDE GOES OUT IN FRONT!
...FOLLOWED BY STEP ASIDE STAYS IN SECOND PLACE!
COMING UP FAST... RAMAPHOSA MUST GO AND TALIBAN FACTION... WITH FARMGATE NOWHERE TO BE SEEN!
...AND RENEWAL COMING UP LAST!
COME ON, RENEWAL!!
NOW IT'S LACK OF URGENCY, CONSPIRACY THEORY AND PRO ZUMA FACTION RUNNING NECK AND NECK!
AND INTO THE HOME STRETCH! IT'S CADRE DEPLOYMENT AND CORRUPTION FOLLOWED BY KICKBACK, NEPOTISM, INCOMPETENCE AND SAME OLD G#☆@!
WAIT! LOAD SHEDDING SURPRISE IS GRABBING THE LEAD! IT'S LOAD SHEDDING SURPRISE! ...LOAD SHEDDING SURPRISE! AT THE FINISH, IT'S --
©RAPID PHASE 2022
EITHER THIS IS AN AMAZING COINCIDENCE, OR ESKOM HAS A REAL SENSE OF HUMOUR.

BACK TO THE 1970s

QUO VADIS ESKOM?

President Cyril Ramaphosa recently outlined plans to solve the country's devastating electricity supply crisis. But he didn't mention the country's ability to protect its energy infrastructure as a prerequisite to any solution. South Africa has had power cuts since 2007 when Eskom, the power utility, began failing to meet demand. This got worse every year. The power utility is struggling to keep its ageing coal-fired power stations running after many years of poor maintenance. It is also struggling to get its two new power stations to operate at full capacity.

Explaining some of the recent power cuts, Ramaphosa said that some of the energy infrastructure had been sabotage. We flagged this in an earlier conversation. We argued that Eskom was the target of cyber warfare operations aimed at destabilising South Africa's national power generation capability. The question is whether the country has the necessary security capabilities to protect its energy infrastructure from such threats and risks. An assessment of the security capabilities also has to include a fit for purpose test of the legislation for the protection of critical infrastructure. Enhanced intelligence capacities are required to detect, deter and neutralise threats such as sabotage, or subversion caused by rioting. More – and appropriately equipped – security forces are also needed to physically secure critical infrastructure. These could be privately or publicly funded. Our view is that the country does not have what is required where and when it is needed. A comprehensive approach is needed – including managing security threats – to address its energy crisis. This requires collaboration between the state and private sector to implement the president's long-term energy security vision.

Cyber-attacks now common - South Africa is not the only country whose energy infrastructure is facing security threats. There are numerous reports of attacks on critical infrastructure. These are typically cyber-attacks. But physical attacks such as sabotage, as in the case of Trans Freight Net, also occur. The ISS (Institute for Security Studies) argues that attacks on the critical infrastructure of developing countries, such as South Africa, could be "potentially devastating." South Africa's national security vulnerabilities, combined with the security risks to a monolithic state-owned entity with no backup, could exacerbate the country's power supply insecurities. Cyber-attacks on Eskom's critical infrastructure could lead to severe damage. The result could be corresponding losses of generation capacity and damage to the economy.

National security vulnerabilities can be reduced by state security capabilities that are equal to the task. A report by the Expert Panel into Civil Unrest in the country in July 2021 revealed serious capacity problems within the state security sector. The sector is mandated to forewarn government, and to protect critical infrastructure and the public against hybrid threats. These include terrorism, subversion, sabotage, espionage and organised crime.

This weakness was also highlighted in the 2018 high level Review of the Panel of the State Security Agency. It concluded that the country's State Security Agency (SSA) had been compromised by factionalism, mismanagement and inefficiency.

The agency is South Africa's primary authority tasked with protecting the country against such cyber threats. Yet it is in a state of disrepair. This calls for the country to focus efforts on (at least) the capability to secure Eskom against obvious national security threats, the importance of critical infrastructure. The protection of South Africa's energy infrastructure falls within the remit of the new Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2019... Such infrastructure is crucial for the effective functioning of the economy, national security and public safety. Critical infrastructure consists of national assets that are viewed as having strategic importance. South Africa has plenty of critical infrastructure spread across its length and breadth – measuring about 1,129 million Square Km. These include the Eskom energy grid – including power stations, sub-stations and transmission networks – dams, the banking system and oil storage. The sheer scale requires extensive security capabilities necessary for physical protection and monitoring threats.

Beyond physically securing this infrastructure, the state also needs to have the ability to detect, deter and neutralise threat actors. These are classical counterintelligence prerogatives. Failure on this front makes the country vulnerable to destabilisation. The stretched nature of the country's security agencies was laid bare during the violent riots and looting in July 2021. It is thus reasonable to question the capacity of the police, and other security agencies, to secure Eskom's critical infrastructure and that of private power producers.

Planning for security - in our view, all planning to develop and diversify the national power grid and energy supply should include enough resources to protect them. This requires cooperative planning between Eskom and the South African security sector (both state and private). The exact role of the South African National Defence Force in providing security for critical infrastructure remains unclear. The National Key Points Act 1980, the Defence Act 2022, and the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2019 are not explicit on the issue.

The protection of critical infrastructure has been assigned to the South African Police Service, with the defence force supporting it. Given that the defence budget has been shrinking annually, the military will probably not be able to sustain this. With the private sector playing an increased role in the energy sector, South Africa needs to develop dedicated private security capacities to protect its critical infrastructure. At the very least, it should adopt a mixed public-private security model akin to the police service's Community Policing concept.

The president's energy vision envisages a much larger private industrial capacity. If left unsecured, such capacity would be just as vulnerable to sabotage as the current Eskom infrastructure is. It is time the country took stock of its security requirements in the same way it has started being serious about its energy vulnerabilities. There's also the question of whether the penalties prescribed by law are fit to deter sabotage.

What needs to happen? The cyber nature of threats to the county's infrastructure can only be solved by an integrated solution. That requires, firstly, clarity about mandates as well as state security capabilities. Secondly, security sector capacity needs to be developed alongside critical infrastructure. Thirdly, legislation needs to increase existing sanctions in terms of fines and imprisonment. Lastly, public-private security partnerships must be established to bolster the security of the country's electricity infrastructure.

Written by Sascha-Dominik (Dov) Bachmann, Professor in Law and Co-Convener National Security Hub (University of Canberra), University of Canberra, and Dries Putter, Lecturer at the Faculty of Military Science / Affiliate Member, National Security Hub, University of Canberra and Researcher for Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa (SIGLA), Stellenbosch University.

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