

ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 197 8 MARCH 2024RAFOC

GREETINGS

"Cyril in Wonderland" ...a saga longer running than Senzo Meyiwa and Thabo Bester... South Africa playing key role in sending funds to ISIS branches in Central Africa (Well I never...).... Taxpayers forked out R250 000 for Mad Hatter Cele's assistant's Rugby World Cup jaunt...5,608 hijackings reported in last quarter 2023...American tourist shot and robbed in Nyanga to sue Avis and Google...Bloemfontein illegal land invasions...4 workers perish in KZN factory fire... Dirty, dusty and broken – team of international experts visited Eskom power stations...13 000 Megawatts at risk due to poor condition of water treatment plants... MASSIVE fuel price increase expected this week (Just to cheer you up...) ... combined SA sales of Audi, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz sank from 71,889 (2014) to 26,202 (2023)... UCT invites Eskom 'Gupta agent' Matshela Koko to lecture students on 'ethics and professionalism'...well, now...

Trump and Biden dominate Super Tuesday as they march towards rematch... Navalny's grave starts looking like pilgrimage site..." Send Taurus missiles like we sent Storm Shadow", UK tells Germany.... German security leaks serious...Houthis cut Red Sea cables, interrupt international traffic...Ukraine sinks Russian ship... "Extremists trying to tear us apart", says Rishi Sunak in impromptu No 10 speech -

However, columnist says “shameless, dangerous speech - masterclass in gaslighting and new art form of rank hypocrisy”... California battles fifth day of snowstorms and 190mph winds as life-threatening blizzard knocks power out, freeways shut down... Florida swamped by disease outbreaks as quackery replaces science... ‘Musk needs to be adored ... Zuckerberg is out of his depth’: the toxic giants of Big Tech... Jordie Barrett red-carded on his 100th Hurricanes appearance last Sunday.... Princess of Wales’ uncle says Harry ‘threw his family under a bus’... How nightlife died in Sadiq Khan’s London

ANGER AS RAF MOTHBALLS TYPHOONS



Anger as RAF retires 30 'quick reaction alert' Typhoon jets used to protect Britain from potential attacks by Putin. The plan has been likened to 'scrapping Spitfires before the Battle of Britain'

Air Force chiefs are refusing to back down on a decision to retire 30 'quick reaction alert' jets used to protect British skies from potential attacks by Vladimir Putin. In a move likened to 'scrapping Spitfires before the Battle of Britain', bosses at the cash-strapped RAF are to retire the Tranche 1 Typhoons to save money. The jets, which still have “thousands of miles left on their clocks” and could continue to fly for several years, will be grounded after completing just 40 per cent of their predicted flying hours. MPs demanded a rethink by RAF chiefs in response to rising concerns surrounding conflict with [Russia](#), but to no avail... Later, official RAF sources justified the plan on financial grounds, including the cost of maintenance and technological upgrades. Quick reaction alert (QRA) operations are coordinated from RAF High Wycombe. The Typhoon crews are based at RAF Coningsby and RAF Lossiemouth. (Daily Mail and others)

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...



Secret call by German air force chief who claimed British troops were 'on the ground' in Ukraine is intercepted by Russian spies

A German air force chief has revealed secret UK operations in Ukraine after discussing highly sensitive military secrets on a telephone line.

A call between the Lieutenant General Ingo Gerhartz and senior Luftwaffe officers was bugged by Russian spies after they used an unsecured telephone line to discuss military planning. The talks included confirmation that the British military is deployed in Ukraine and important details on the transport of British Storm Shadow missiles to the country. German Olaf Scholz confirmed a recording released by Russia's state broadcaster was genuine and described the security breach as 'very serious'.

The breach could compromise Britain and France's arms transfers to Ukraine and hamper the vital use of cruise missiles by Kyiv in its war against Russia.

Britain and other Nato allies will be horrified by the security blunder, as they increasingly see Germany as unreliable. Russia intercepted the 38-minute call between General Gerhartz and three senior officers on February 19 after they used standard video conferencing software instead of an encrypted line.

The head of Russian state broadcaster RT, Margarita Simonyan, published the audio recording on messaging app Telegram on Friday. According to a Russian transcript of the call, the head of the German air force said: 'If we're asked about delivery methods, I know how the British do this. They always transport them in Ridgeback armoured vehicles. They have several people on the ground.' Gerhartz also explained during the call how the French 'send [Audi] Q7s loaded with Scalp missiles to Ukraine'.

The revelations in this second security blunder will help Russian intelligence to track and locate such vehicles in Europe and on Ukraine's territory.

Gerhartz further added that Britain had outfitted Ukrainian aircraft with Storm Shadows and could help with the transfer of Taurus missiles to Ukraine.

According to the air force chief, Germany is considering sending 100 of its 600 Taurus missiles to Kyiv in two batches of 50. Gerhartz says this is to ensure the missile 'won't change the course of hostilities'.

German politicians said Russia had leaked the conversation to put pressure on the Chancellor not to supply the Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine.

Mr Scholz has so far refused to send the missiles, which are similar to the British Storm Shadow, amid political divisions in the country.

Former defence secretary Ben Wallace told the Times: 'We know Germany is pretty penetrated by Russian intelligence so it just demonstrates they are neither secure nor reliable.'

The Ministry of Defence has refused to comment. (Reuters and others)

CONCORDE MAIDEN FLIGHT, 1969

The supersonic plane Concorde flew for the first time 55 Years ago on 2 March 1969. The Anglo-French plane took off from Toulouse and was in the air for just 27 minutes before the pilot, Andre Turcat, made the decision to land.

Concorde's first commercial flights took place in 1976 between London and Bahrain, and Paris and Rio de Janeiro.



Concorde 001 was finally retired in 1973, after just four years of flying. It has been preserved at the Air and Space Museum in Le Bourget, Paris, where the public can view the aircraft for a deep dive into history.

This BBC News report was broadcast on 3 March 1969.

[Concorde makes its maiden flight, 1969 - BBC Archive](#)

SPITFIRE MAIDEN FLIGHT

On 5 March 1936, Spitfire K5054 took off for its maiden flight. This first test flight was from Eastleigh, Southampton. At the controls was Captain Joseph 'Mutt' Summers, chief test pilot for Vickers, who is quoted as saying 'Don't touch anything' on landing. This had often been interpreted as stating the Spitfire was perfect, but the reality was more prosaic: he wanted to report his observations before any modifications were made. The first Spitfire Mk. I to enter service with the RAF did so with No.19 Squadron on 4 August 1938. The pilots immediately fell in love with the aircraft, which flew as beautifully as it looked. They recognised it as a thoroughbred combining a perfection of design with superb handling characteristics. The Spitfire came to the fore during the evacuation of Dunkirk, and of course, the Battle of Britain. After 1940 the Spitfire gradually replaced the Hurricane in Fighter Command and remained the main fighter aircraft until the end of the war, serving into the 1950s.



RNLI 200th ANNIVERSARY

The Westminster Thanksgiving Service was held on the 4 March 2024 - provided by Westminster Abbey. An RNLI representative from every RNLI community was invited to come together for this special moment in London, which incidentally took place at the same time the RNLI founding papers were signed back in 1824. The service itself was choreographed by both the RNLI and Westminster, and is designed to commemorate all that has come before, celebrate the lifesavers of today and inspire the next generation who will continue lifesaving for many years to come. There were moments that represented all the RNLI regions and countries, all of the various people that come together to form the One Crew, and there were also some very special readings and poems that bring the lifesaving story to life. Watch the Service here: [RNLI 200th Anniversary Thanksgiving Services](#)

SPRINGBOK SACRILEGE



SA Rugby, which oversees the reigning world champion Springboks team, expects to double sponsorship revenue by the 2027 World Cup on the back of a planned private equity deal that values its commercial rights at \$375 million (approx. R7.1 billion).

The organization, following the Springboks' back-to-back World Cup victories, including last year's triumph in France, is seeking approval at a general council meeting on 30 May to sell a 20% stake of the rights to Seattle-based private equity firm Ackerley Sports Group, according to SA Rugby Managing Director Rian Oberholzer.

"If we only had to worry about the Springbok balance sheet," a deal wouldn't be necessary, Oberholzer said by email in response to a Bloomberg News query. "But we're a national federation as well, required to support and promote rugby across the country with many mouths to feed." The prospective deal is part of a growing trend among national federations of the world's most successful rugby teams to raise funds from private equity. Money managers are increasingly turning to sports leagues and federations rather than teams to diversify their investment risk. SA Rugby targets sponsorship revenue of R800 million in 2027, about double last year's level, according to Oberholzer.

GUERNSEY UNEARTHES GERMAN BUNKER

A World War II bunker that had been hidden since the end of the Nazi occupation of Guernsey has been unearthed again. The type 631 B bunker at L'Ancrese, is one of several along the coastline which was installed to monitor the beach. It has five rooms which, almost 80 years later, are still dry and intact with German instructions

on the walls. The Festung Guernsey group, which restores the island's German fortifications, plan to have it open to the public in the next few months.



THE BARONESS, BENZ AND BLIMP



Here is Prussian Baroness, Gisela Josephine von Krieger with her 1936 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Roadster and the Hindenburg, the famous Zeppelin, above. The Baroness lived in the United States, but died in Europe in 1989. However, the car remained in the United States, stored in a garage in Greenwich, Connecticut,

forgotten for 40 years. One of the 25 built in 1936 and 1937, the 540 K was purchased for 28,000 Reichmarks in 1936 (app. 115,000 Euros today). It sold for \$11,700,000.00 in 2012, making it the most expensive pre-war vehicle ever sold at an auction at the time.

CHEERS FOR NOW

As the week draws to an end with warnings of severe thunderstorms in Gauteng and other provinces, Ekurhuleni proposes to sue Moody's for their latest, richly earned, poor credit rating...Ja, wel, no fine...The AGM was well attended and your Committee was duly re-elected. **Captain Karl Jensen** has decided to stand down after many years of service to the Club, and we recorded a vote of thanks to him for this and in particular the many, outstanding audiovisual presentations that he has compiled and from which we have all benefitted, Next Month's function will be the "**Annual Dinner**" (now lunch) **Saturday 6 April, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers.**

Please plan to attend, and bring your ladies and like minded friends. This is when we commemorate the founding of the RAF in April 1918. Also, please book as early as you can – it helps the organisers greatly to have an early handle on numbers attending so that a suitable function venue can be arranged.

WOULD YOU TRUST THIS MAN WITH YOUR BIKE?



TAILPIECE

One way to find out if you are old is to fall down in front of people. If they laugh, you're still young. If they panic and start running to you, you're old.

Try to remember the greener grass on the other side of the fence may be due to a septic tank issue.

If your eyes hurt after drinking coffee, best take the spoon out of the cup.

If you're paying \$3 for a bottle of smart water, it isn't working

A PARABLE

The Startling Truth... "Catching Pigs" Just something to think about. You will appreciate the final statement.

There was a professor in a large college that had some exchange students in the class. One day while the class was in the lab, the professor noticed one young man who kept rubbing his back and stretching as if his back hurt. The professor asked the young man what was the matter.

The student told him he had a bullet lodged in his back. He had been shot while fighting Communists in his native country who were trying to overthrow his country's government and install a new communist regime. In the midst of his story, he looked at the professor and asked a strange question.

"Do you know how to catch wild pigs Professor?"

The Professor thought it was a joke and asked for the punch line. The young man said that it was no joke.

"You catch wild pigs by finding a suitable place in the woods and putting corn on the ground. The pigs find it and begin to come every day to eat the free food. When they are used to coming every day, you put a fence down one side of the place where they are used to coming. When they get used to the single fence, they begin to eat the corn again and you put up another side of the fence. They get used to that also and start to eat again. You continue until you have all four sides of the fence up with a gate in the last side. The pigs are now so used to the free corn, they find the gate, enter to get more free corn.

You then slam the gate on them and catch the whole herd.

Suddenly the wild pigs have lost their freedom. They run around and around inside the fence making a commotion realising they are trapped but it's too late. They are caught.

After a while they settle and eat the corn again and lose the ability and the need to forage in the woods for themselves. So they accept their captivity and when their offspring are born in captivity they know no better, are raised in captivity and survive off the free corn"

The young man then told the professor that is exactly what he sees happening across the world in many places.

Governments keep pushing us toward Communism/ Socialism and keeps spreading the free corn out in the form of programs such as supplemental income, tax credit for unearned income, tax exemptions, tobacco subsidies, dairy subsidies, payments not to plant crops (CRP), welfare entitlements, medicine, drugs, etc., While we continually lose our freedoms, Just a little at a time.

One should always remember two truths:

There is no such thing as a free lunch AND

and you can never hire someone to provide a service for you cheaper than you can do it yourself.

If you understand the students story, you should definitely recognise that all of this wonderful government "help" is simply a ploy to crush global democracy and the human right to freedom. It is NOT governments trying to assist and uplift its citizens. If you think the free ride is essential to your way of life, then you will probably not share this and continue to live in a beholden, dependent and trapped life.

BUT, God help us all when the gate slams shut!

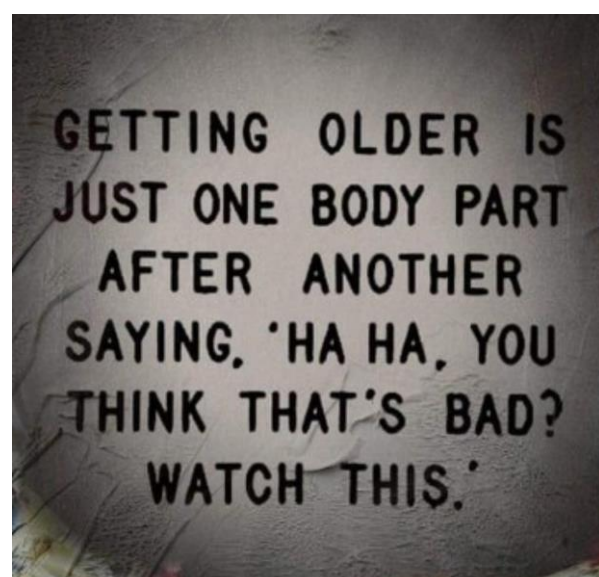
Quote for today: "The problems we face today are there because the people who work for a living are now outnumbered by those who vote for a living."

A thought to remember, Marx said,

"Remove one freedom per generation and soon you will have no freedom and no one would have noticed."

In the USA, South Africa, Australia and NZ the fences are in place and the solitary gate has already been installed waiting to be shut.

It's Time to Wake Up or pretend it's not happening.... You might want to share this with your friends.



Planet Beer

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The wife came home with four cases of beer, three boxes of wine, two bottles of whisky and two loaves of bread.

"Are we expecting guests?" I asked.

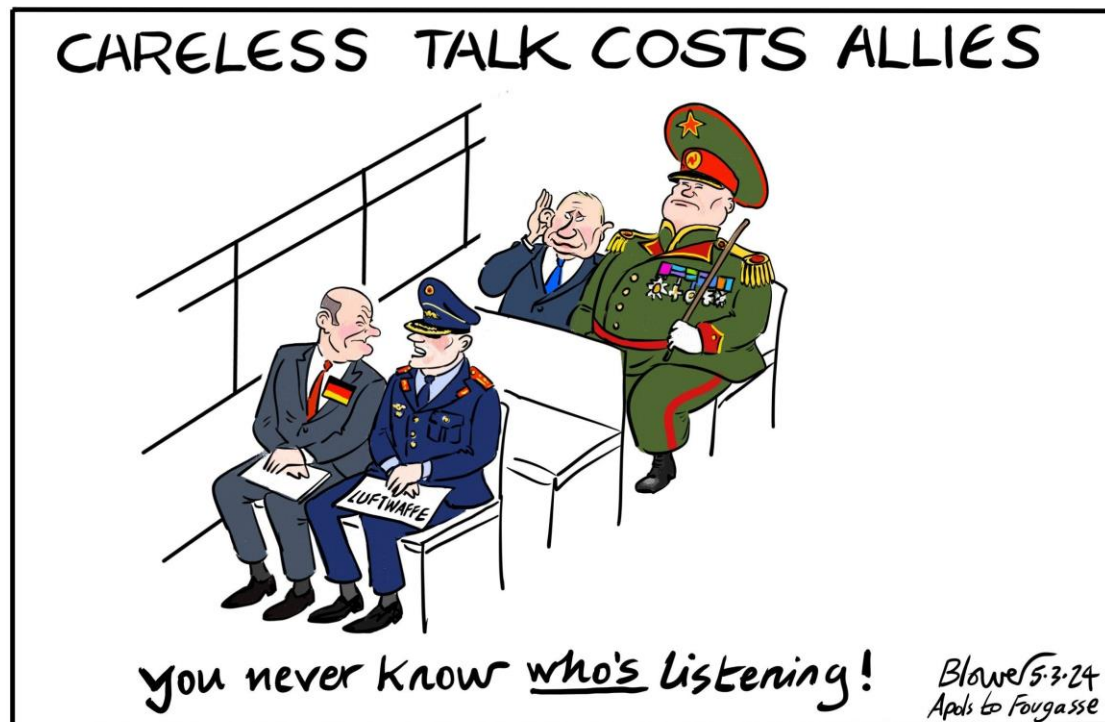
"No," she replied.

"Then why did you buy so much bread?"

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Facebook has taught me a couple of things. First, there are some incredibly brilliant people in the world. Second, they are vastly outnumbered.





OPINION PIECE: Suellen Braverman

Masked men delighting in “jihad”, thugs punching and kicking poppy sellers, and gruesome terror attacks celebrated by thousands. For months our streets have become festivals of extremism, vitriol and, in the worst cases, violence.

I know I am far from alone in wanting to live in a Britain where we are proud of our nation, united in our shared values, and respectful of our differences. Where hatred and division are confined to isolated incidents and where those who share our values feel welcome. A country, generally speaking, at peace with herself.

Instead, our country has become unrecognisable. We’ve become accustomed to hundreds of thousands of people regularly taking to our streets to glory in the murder of innocent men, women and children – one of the most barbaric terror attacks the world has seen. Demonising Israel and Jews with racist slogans and bile. They defile our monuments and despise our country. Flares and fireworks are used as weapons. In some cases, it’s organised by those with links to Hamas. Tolerated by the police, enabled by the authorities and, simply put, a disgrace.

As home secretary, I made no secret of my disgust at these hateful marches and urged the police to do more. In my opinion, the Metropolitan Police made the wrong decision when they refused to ban the march on Armistice Day and yet I was powerless in law to do anything about it.

I, and others, made clear to police chiefs that “from the river to sea” – a call for the elimination of Israel and her seven million Jews – is an anti-Semitic chant, but no arrests were made. I probed as to why they justified the chanting of jihad as “an exercise in theological struggle” rather than a call to arms. I was alarmed when the Met had to apologise for taking advice during the protests from an extremist at the

highest levels in the force. Why are you standing by and just watching, I would ask them?

There is a way out of this mess. I'm pleased that the Government is finally acting and introducing some of the changes I set in train in October, such as proscribing Hizb ut-Tahrir. I also read reports that face coverings will be banned during protests and a specific offence to stop the desecration of war memorials will be introduced.

But we must go further if we are serious. Firstly, we need new laws to address the phenomenon of mass extremism on our streets. The bar is set too high, so prosecutions are typically not sought. In order to charge, the police and CPS need to prove "incitement" or "encouragement" of terrorism, specifically. Not so easy when you're dealing with lawyered-up groups who know how to operate just beneath the threshold, but in a threatening and odious way nonetheless. So we need to change the Terrorism Act 2000 to better capture those cheerleaders of terrorism. Surely any expression of support of terrorism, whether it galvanises emulation or not, should have no place in our society?

Secondly, the Government should legislate to introduce an amendable list of conduct that constitutes "threatening, abusive or insulting" behaviour as required under the Public Order Acts. This would help the police and prosecutors understand what Parliament deems unacceptable conduct. This would include examples such as Nazi/Holocaust imagery, "from the river", "with soul, with blood, we will return to Al Aqsa", and "Khaybar Khaybar" chanting, jihad and intifada rhetoric, and the "one fingered" salute of Isis.

Next, the law is very clear about proscribing terrorist groups. But less so on groups of "extremist concern", which may not be involved in terrorism but which cause significant damage to our communities and disrupt public order. There needs to be a new category that can catch groups such as Palestine Action, Friends of Al Aqsa or the Palestinian Forum in Britain.

And lastly, we need a law that enables the home secretary to prevent a protest from going ahead. Ministers, answerable to the public, are powerless while the police are the ones who technically possess the legal power to initiate a ban of a march. This doesn't strike the right balance and so a power should be taken, as in France, to enable ministers to make the decision when it is believed violence may occur or a protest is causing ongoing distress to a community.

I will fiercely defend the right to peaceful protest in a democratic society. But these marches are not about peace. Rather they are outpourings of vicious bigotry. This cannot become our new norm. We need leadership to unequivocally condemn Islamism and anti-Semitism on our streets. To reassert what Britain means to the world: civility, tolerance, and order.

Above all, we need to find our backbone. Hatred must fail. We need to stand up and take on the mob. We need to win this fight and reclaim our streets. If we don't, we could find ourselves living in a very different country.

Suella Braverman is the former Home Secretary