

Hello Shipmates,

The saying; 'If you have to eat crow - take it while it's hot'; today, fits me well.

First female Secretary of State for Defence, Penny Mordaunt, was accused, by me, of 'nil military experience', no knowledge of ship building and repeating only her civil servants' words. The latter may be correct, the former questionable. Her C.V. made available in scramble for posts in the new cabinet, should Blond Boris become the new P.M. The honourable lady joined 'naval reserve' on leaving university, resigned when standing for a



Member of Parliament, in Parliament; at that time a sub-lieutenant. When chosen as a cabinet minister our gracious queen granted promotion to Commander. The honourable lady's common use Christian name - Penny - is an abbreviation of Penelope, being named after the last cruiser of that name. Her C.V. does not read like the usual political hack. What makes me feel I would tug my forelock (if I had one) to this lady, at this time, is her determination to stop the spectre of 'repeated spurious investigations by 'dishonest lawyers' with no evidence, that

nets them thousands of pounds from the legal aid trough when in pursuit of ancient service men on 'their assigned duty'. - Foul, premeditated murders excepted. That the law follows 'average homo sapien conduct' with its percentage of 'crooks and rotten apples' is not news in itself.

Today we learn President Trump is in deep trouble at home for declaration, 'The U.S. military will be getting out of Afghanistan'. His view is not new; five years before being elected he declared 'Afghanistan is a complete waste'

We Brits were being ambushed and killed by the same local lads in the 1800's. Achievements - nil. The count after our latest adventure in that (literally) God forsaken place is 460 Tommies home in body bags. The United States has been there 18 years - their longest ever war - at last count 2,372 doughboys went home in similar manner, plus financial cost, to date, \$1 trillion; what could that have done at home? U.N.O. says 32,000 civilians have perished in that ghastly conflict.

OOPS! Iran caught the R.N. with its breeks round its ankles once again. We, obviously, did not learn one jot from the previous humiliating incident when they captured our pinnace, imprisoned the crew plus a number of unarmed marines. Their man-o-war, another plastic skiff with outboard hung on the transom. A cheap 'end of life' merchantman as 'mother vessel' with a couple of dozen such boats of our own, plus a 50 calibre in the bow would, if manned by trained assassins, (42 commando) be a suitable weighted counter balance. Recall historically those intrepid Italian frogmen based on such a vessel in 'Algeciras' (that place opposite) across the straits in WW2, created absolute mayhem in Gibraltar, then moved up the pond to sink our battleships in

Alexandria dockyard. Joined by the other interested party, U.S.A. with similar set up. If saturation is the Iranian guard tactic we have the collective capacity to swamp the Hormuz Strait, plus not getting involved in a major shooting war. (Rule one) do not consult the BBC press hacks, 'plausible deniability' is the name of the game these days; I cite Ukraine, Crimea, islands in the China Sea, even Russian Georgia.

Headless chickens on the commodity floor, as seen on TV, will be 'jacking up fuel prices' give above as reason? We know Russia's massive military expansion is based solely on oil, it has to sell it or they die on their feet. Biggest customer, Angela Merkel, has Germany in thrall to Comrade Putin. Total dependence to keep her lights on, having divested herself of all power-plants, fossil or nuclear. Here we sit in the United Kingdom on a veritable cornucopia - bonanza of natural gas. Technology for safe, clean extraction, with small unobtrusive foot print has been honed by U.S. practitioners.

Dependency on the mid-east in Obama's time, which he confesses gave him sleepless nights, has enjoyed a staggering about turn. In 5 short years the U.S.A. has become a major exporter of energy. Meanwhile, back here in this Sceptered Isle, a mob of Greens (for want of a better term) have us purchasing, by the hundreds of thousands of tons, biomass pelleted wood cut from the forests of Georgia, Alabama, Carolina, then sent here by rail and sea on fossil fuel burners. Up north, Drax power station no longer relies on coal, the mountains of fuel you see were green cover, oxygen generators in the above States of the U.S.A. last month.

Mention of last month here at home, we were threatened - 'Cease using your domestic log burner in the lounge or we all expire by spring '20' All quite like government exhortations 2 years ago to only purchase diesel motor cars and save the planet; now they bend over backwards to penalise you for following their lead. We joke and say, none of that seems like rocket science, well, I ask you to think on this. We, the U.K., have 20 redundant nuclear subs in various ports awaiting scrapping. Their hulls are 'Time Expired', no longer fit for the purpose of 'deep aggressive operations' against the common enemy. But! The reactors can still churn out vast amounts of emission free electricity. We have, in place, the infrastructure for fuelling them, lasting 20 years per fill up. Moored up, hooked up into the vast growing network of cables attached to wind turbine farms out in estuaries, their cooling requirements on tap and free and gratis, the distribution network in situ already seems manna from heaven. Chinese, Japanese, E.D.F. France could be told to up stakes and sling their hooks for holding the U.K. to ransom with their mega schemes that look increasingly unattainable whilst gobbling shed-loads of cash.

Ah! You will say, when writing back with verbal lashing 'It ain't that easy! J.F.K. used similar words when committing his nation to visit the moon, and then added, 'We have the will and the people'. How exciting it was when they did it (in 8 years). Back at the ranch London's much trumpeted Cross Rail still blunders on (twelve years) later, grossly over time and budget, a norm for the U.K. civil engineering projects, hogtied by health and safety executive and unions who owe no allegiance to Great Britain Inc.

Enough to make one weep into his milky coffee - sorry - Barista created Cappuccino, over-priced and no tax paid (in U.K.)

p.s. late news, Minister Mordaunt has been 'let go'; will anyone last long enough to purchase two dozen plastic speed boats in an attractive camo khaki scheme for '42 commando'; when your face goes blue, , hold your breath no longer.

Andy Brierley