

Letters from our readers

18 November 2010

On “Former Australian intelligence officer faces jail over Bali bombing documents”

To Mike Head,

I would like to thank you for a very well written and completely unbiased article, the first of which I have seen which relates to this case.

It is refreshing to see that there are some journalists out there who aren't afraid to ask the tough questions, unfortunately you seem to be one of the few.

Thanks again,

Matt O

17 November 2010

On “Australia: Privatisations send electricity prices surging”

Electricity prices have been rising steeply in Sydney and elsewhere in New South Wales so this is a very timely article. My local council already buys its electricity from Victoria due to the lower prices while everyone in the area must buy from EnergyAustralia; how absurd is that? Especially as some households in Victoria and Queensland are reportedly buying electricity from New South Wales at discounted prices! So in effect my household is subsidising electricity use in other parts of Australia.

Having electricity is no longer a privilege, it is an essential utility as so much of our culture, not just business or essential services, is now conducted over the Internet which relies on people having access to electricity if they do not use a laptop or iPad. People do their banking online, they buy things online, do their socialising on Facebook and Twitter, post CVs on networks like LinkedIn, write blogs, locate government services, read news. If households are deprived of electricity, they become impoverished in so many

ways.

In many parts of Australia, there is simply no alternative if people have their electricity cut off.

Already there have been many stories reported on WSWs and other web sites about people in parts of the US dying in house fires caused by accidents where someone knocked over a candle or a gas heater malfunctioned. It's just a matter of time before something similar happens somewhere in Sydney or elsewhere in Australia. State governments will simply shrug off any responsibility.

Jennifer H

NSW, Australia

16 November 2010

On the DSO strike

Dear David,

Thanks for the great coverage of the DSO strike. I hope you get a lot of players at your presentation. I was involved in the Charlotte Symphony players strike in 2003-2004 and what I learned is that the ED was allowed (ordered?) by the major donors to take a hard line with the players for as long as it took to bust the union and that as soon as that happened the money would come back. That is exactly what happened and it took a long time. As soon as the players took sufficient punishment to suit the taste of the bankers the CSO received two million dollar donations from the two richest individuals in Charlotte.

Everything I have read about the Detroit ED reminds me so much of Charlotte it makes me physically sick. If you exchanged their names and substituted the words “economic downturn” with “9/11” it could be the same story, except on a much larger scale of course (no pun intended!)

If I am correct, if and when the DSO players fold (as they indeed have started to unwittingly with their pay cut offer) that is when the GM and Ford bailout cash will come back and save the day.

Alex K
16 November 2010

On “The New York Times and the mystery missile”

Regarding your series of articles on the ‘missile launch’ off the southern California coast, I would advise extreme caution on jumping to any such conclusions based on the video footage provided.

Objects high in the sky near the distant horizon at sunset can be distorted by multiple atmospheric effects caused by the reflection and refraction of light, and particularly, as well, from misperceived perspective (that is, whether the object is moving away or approaching the observer and whether the illuminated plume is actually oriented vertically, horizontally or at an angle).

The extremely zoomed-in view only adds to the confusion, as any surrounding larger context that might offer some clues to the actual perspective are outside of the field of view. Station media logo on the bottom of the video cuts even more into any clues to perspective, as does the misleading aspect of the greatly magnified plume resulting from the highly zoomed-in camera view.

While your underlying conclusions may be hard to argue with, in this particular case what may look to the untrained eye like a possible ‘missile launch’ could well, in fact, be an airliner contrail in the distant west (that is, a distant airliner approaching the viewer with the plume being a horizontal one, extending beyond the horizon, all under unusual lighting and/or meteorological conditions at that particular time and location).

The failure of the federal agencies and military to provide firm answers may well stem from their general reluctance to get involved with trying to answer for every strange or unusual public sighting in the sky—not an effort to cover up for a possible known or unknown ‘missile launch.’

In the final analysis, such highly zoomed-in TV station video shot from a traffic helicopter toward the distant western sky at sunset would seem to be rather dubious evidence, at best, to come to any such conclusions regarding any planned or unplanned ‘missile launch.’

Dan K
Kansas, USA
16 November 2010

The answer to the first question at the end of this article is, maybe, probably; to the second, of course not.

CR
16 November 2010



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