

Greetings Club Member

Last month I invited you to join me for Africa's ultimate Cold War countdown as *Beneath a Bloodied Sun* went live.

Now that the excitement of publication has settled, I think less about the launch and more about why I wanted to write this story.

It began with something shared in a pub late at night many years ago. A spark that led me into the world of South Africa's secret nuclear programme. A contentious subject, as the world's "nuclear club" has never sought new members (Iran, a case in point).

The more I discovered, the more I wondered what it would have been like to be an ordinary person inside that extraordinary world - especially against the backdrop of southern Africa where the Cold War was anything but cold.

And one pleasure about writing historical thrillers is taking actual events and asking: What if?

I'm going to devote a few newsletters to some of the history that is too good not to share (while skirting story spoilers!) September's edition, however, is already taken. It marks the 84th anniversary of Wolfpack *Eisbär*, so I'll be returning to that remarkable episode from *Darkness Shall Cover You*.

Beneath a Bloodied Sun takes place between 1977 and 1979. South Africa was refining uranium west of Pretoria at a facility called Pelindaba. The nuclear program was indigenous, beginning with the need to refine uranium for a new nuclear power plant at Koeberg before military exigencies drove enrichment to weapons grade. In 1977 a "cold test" (i.e. without uranium) was to be conducted at a site called Vastrap in the Kalahari Desert. Next month I'll pick up with how a Soviet satellite came to acquire photographs of the site, amongst other interesting facts.

In the meantime, I've a favour to ask. If you've purchased any of my books from Amazon, a few sentences about what you liked – or simply a star rating – makes a remarkable difference. You can find the facility at the bottom of my Amazon Author Page under: Share your thoughts with other customers.

As always, thank you for your support.

til next time.

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