



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia Dispatches 4 December 2020

The Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia provides a forum for the study, promotion and debate of defence and security issues.

Dispatches is a weekly collection of links and news of current interest, included those tweeted and posted by the Institute on social media. Links to articles are checked at the time they are put into *Dispatches* but may be unavailable at a later date or in some states other than Canada.

If you are not a routine recipient of *Dispatches* but wish to be so, email the Institute's Chief Information Officer (CIO) at RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. If you do not want to receive *Dispatches*, or wish to receive it at some different frequency, please inform the CIO. If you wish to receive *Dispatches* at a different address (i.e., not your work address), please inform the CIO. Past editions of *Dispatches* may be requested by contacting the CIO.

Everyone is encouraged to email to the CIO links and other content to be included in *Dispatches*.

Submissions and feedback are welcome anytime. Comments to articles can be from members or non-members of RUSI(NS). Any comment in *Dispatches* is the sole opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of the Canadian Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

RUSI(NS) also publishes:

1. a weekly Dimensions Newsletter, (formally called *Defence & Security Newsletter*) aimed at opinion leaders and industry. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, email admin@duncom.ca; and
2. a weekly *China Open Source Newsletter* of articles curated from Chinese military-related websites based inside mainland China. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

Visit the Watch. A publication from NORAD/USNORTHCOM on Face Book.

To view go to <https://www.facebook.com/TheWatchNorthcom/>



Events:

To list an event in *Dispatches*, email the CIO by noon Thursday. If you have an idea for a topic or speaker, please email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. RUSI(NS) events may be cancelled at short notice – email RUSI(NS) if there is a question of an event occurring.

9 December, Wednesday - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker Derek Moss, Canadian Coast Guard, to present “Canadian Coast Guard Fleet Renewal.” 1300-1500, via Zoom. To register, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com by end Sun, 6 Dec. Zoom instructions will be emailed by end Mon, 7 Nov.

New: 9 December, Wednesday - Women in Defence and Security presentation on Op LASER. Members of 28 Field Ambulance deployed to support high-priority, long-term care facilities will share their experiences. 5-6 pm EST. Via Zoom. To register: <http://bit.ly/32Y4xu9>

New: 10 December, Thursday - American Enterprise Institute webinar "Building transatlantic resilience: Why critical infrastructure is a matter of national security." "An expert panel on the importance of critical infrastructure, how countries can improve their societal resilience, and how NATO members and partners can prepare for this new age of geopolitical confrontation." See: <https://www.aei.org/events/building-transatlantic-resilience-why-critical-infrastructure-is-a-matter-of-national-security/>

New: 12 January, Tuesday - RCN presentation "Canadian Surface Combatants - the RIGHT ship for the Royal Canadian Navy, the RIGHT ship for Canada" by Captain(N) Christopher Nucci, Director Naval Strategy. This is a reschedule of the event previously scheduled for 2 December 2020. Invitation to follow.

20 January 2021, Wednesday – RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker TBA. 1300-1500, via Zoom. Call-to-meeting and invitations will be sent soon.

New: 27 January, Wednesday - RCN presentation "A portrait of an artist - Sculptor-in-Residence, Royal Canadian Navy, Mr. Christian Corbet." In 2012, Christian Corbet was named SiR for the RCN. Attendees to this virtual presentation will have access his workshop and a once-in-a-life time opportunity to learn more about the RCN SiR and the worldwide work of Christian Corbet, widely recognized as one of Canada's pre-eminent artists. Invitation to follow.

Recent Publications:

RUSI(NS) Presentations "Arctic Continental Defense: Canada and US Perspectives" by LCol Burke, JTFN, and Mr Davis, NORAD and NORTHCOM, 18 November 2020
https://rusi-ns.ca/arctic_continental_defence/

RUSI(NS) Presentations "Marine Industry Supply Chains of Canadian Shipyards in the Era of the National Shipbuilding Strategy" by Philippe Flébus, Lindsey Kettel and Steve Christiansen, 14 October 2020
<https://rusi-ns.ca/marine-supply-chain/>

University Training Divisions Association Gunroom Shots Volume 1, Issue 1, November 2020, is available on request to RUSIINovaScotia@gmail.com.

New: The Edmonton United Services Institute President's Enews November 2020 is available on request to RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

New: The Military Institute of Windsor Communiqué, Volume XXXVIII Number 11 December 2020 is available on request to RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

New: The United Services Institute of Nanaimo and North Island (USINNI) Newsletter Vol 28 No 12 December 2020 is available on request to RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

Tweeted by @RUSI_NS: RUSI(NS) tweets may also be viewed by clicking on the icon at <https://RUSI-NS.ca>. To have something tweeted or retweeted, email the CIO at RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. Original article title in parentheses.

Acquisition of search&rescue #SAR boats by @FishOceansCAN for Innu Coast Guard Auxiliary good way to strengthen local coastal resiliency
<https://maritimemag.com/en/le-gouvernement-du-canada-sassocie-aux-communautes-autochtones-pour-ameliorer-la-securite-maritime-sur-la-cote-du-labrador/> Appropriate names for boats. Hopefully built by local yards to common standards (Government of Canada Partnering with Indigenous Communities to Enhance Marine Safety on the Coast of Labrador)



Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations 28 Nov tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: #CAF Rangers have been activated in Hatchet Lake Denesuline FN, Sask. to work beside other community members providing humanitarian assistance & support as the province sees a surge in #COVID19 cases. #OpLASER <https://bit.ly/3o407Kj> (Operation LASER <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/laser.html>)



Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations Nov 27 tweeted: The Canadian Armed Forces continued its support to our French allies in the Sahel, by helping the French l'Armée de terre transport a Tiger Reconnaissance/Attack helicopter to Mali via a Royal Canadian Air Force CC-177 Globemaster from 429 Squadron. @EtatMajorFR #OpFREQUENCE RUSI(NS) retweeted: #OpFREQUENCE - @CanadianForces aircraft move French military equipment & personnel between France & the Sahel, Africa, in support of global efforts in the region against terrorism & to help make region more secure & stable <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-frequence.html>



Canadian Global Affairs Institute @CAGlobalAffairs 29 Nov tweeted: "I don't think that changes the fact — that at least from my vantage point — having the military involved in this right now would be a very good thing for every Canadian that's waiting to get a needle" @DavePerryCGAI on the military's involvement in the COVID-19 rollout:

twitter.com/DavePerryCGAI/

(Military help with vaccine rollout is a blessing and a curse, experts say

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-covid19-vaccine-rollout-1.5820382>)

RUSI(NS retweeted: Military forte is logistics ("gettin' stuff there"), @CanadianForces engagement in whole-of-government effort to build/op national cold chain of supply system (incl civil-commercial) of vaccines is good recognition of #CAF planning expertise. #CounterCOVID19 CAN🇨🇦 operation name?



Australian Army Research Centre @AARCAusArmy Nov 27 tweeted: NEW RELEASE: Read 'Every Possible Capability: Some Implications of the Army Reserve Call Out for Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-2020', our latest @AustralianArmy Occasional Paper by COL Mark Armstrong >>> <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/land-power-forum/every-possible-capability-occasional-paper-now-available>

RUSI(NS) retweeted: Hmm, lessons & points for reflection for the @CanadianForces Reserve? Especially as the #CAF increasingly deploys for domestic operations #OpLENTUS



Posted on Facebook Royal United Services Institute NS with comments:

Britain's Defences: The Biggest Spending Boost Since the Cold War

<https://rusi.org/commentary/britain-defences-biggest-spending-boost-cold-war>



"The acknowledgment of a blended landscape of conflict, where the threat is as real at home from military forces as it is abroad, is also a welcome shift in narrative ..."

Okay, great, somebody's figured it! States are no longer isolated as they once were. Defence, security and safety have to be looked at differently than before. Especially since modern weapons are not necessarily made of metal. Watch out for inbound memes. "The <insert your country name here> will need to start seriously considering how they protect the population at large, rather than just forces deployed to conflict areas."

Offshore patrol vessels tracking well while Defence still ponders if west is best for submarine upgrade

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/offshore-patrol-vessels-tracking-well-while-defence-still-ponders-if-west-is-best-for-submarine-upgrade/>



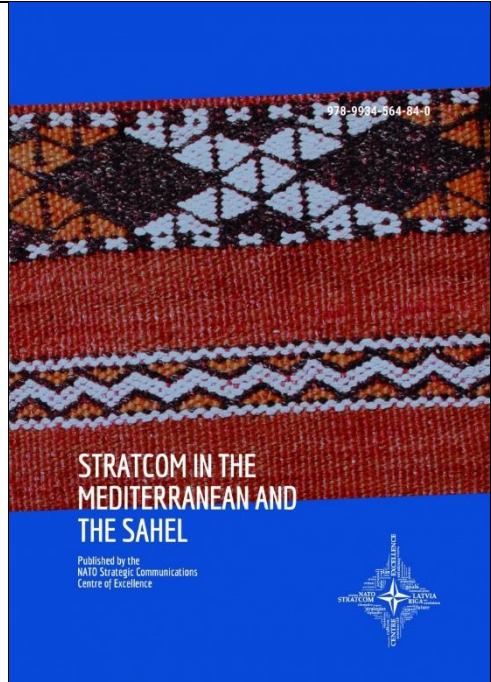
"... both of these unusual things were done at the direction of the defence ministers." "... not covered in the terms of the original request for tender; imposed greater cost, effort and scheduling pressures ...; and posed 'potential reputational risk to Defence and the ... Government.'" "... the oldest (unwritten) rule of the public service: when a minister directs you to do something unusual, get it in writing."

It has always been, and always been understood, that defence procurement, because of its size and therefore potential for general and regional economic advantage, has been subject to government, and therefore at times to political, direction. But there should be ways to do it right. Open, transparent, and with explanations that the public (and the military people who have to live and die by the consequences) can understand and accept.

War is too important to be left to the generals. Defence (especially defence procurement) is too important to be left to the politicians.

StratCom in the Mediterranean and the Sahel

<https://www.stratcomcoe.org/stratcom-mediterranean-and-sahel>



NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence tweeted that the conclusions of this report provide recommendations on how to conduct an informed and successful strategic communications campaign in the region (which, by the way, is one in which the Canadian Armed Forces is operating). One wonders how applicable/transferable the recommendations may be to other regions of the world.

BAE Systems Opens First Visualization Suite for Canadian Surface Combatant

<https://defpost.com/bae-systems-opens-first-visualization-suite-for-canadian-surface-combatant/>



"The visualization technology will transform the way warships are designed, built and delivered for the Royal Canadian Navy. Using the technology to create a virtual prototype and "Digital Twin" enables a deep understanding of the vessel and the experience of those serving on board before manufacturing begins."

Could really help with training, too, even before sailors step aboard the first-of-class.

The technology should allow identification of issues before items are built. Even little issues, such as boot lockers that don't fit boots as the early Halifax-class frigates had to endure.

De Havilland Canada Providing Support to Aero HygenX in the Development and Marketing of an Autonomous Robot to Disinfect Dash 8 Aircraft Cabins Using UVC Light

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/de-havilland-canada-providing-support-to-aero-hygenx-in-the-development-and-marketing-of-an-autonomous-robot-to-disinfect-dash-8-aircraft-cabins-using-uv-light-881512952.html>



Drones to clean aircraft interiors. Gosh, I really could have used something like this for all the cleaning stations aboard my ship!

On a serious note, one wonders how applicable this technology can be for other vehicles. Interesting.

Royal Navy's New Type 32 Frigate to Serve as Unmanned Systems Mothership

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2020/11/royal-navys-new-type-32-frigate-to-serve-as-unmanned-systems-mothership/>



"... Type 32 will be a platform for autonomous systems, adding to the Navy's capabilities for missions such as anti-submarine warfare and mine countermeasures."

Really, one would think that any warship, certainly any of size (hundred tonnes up), from here on could and would be a 'mothership' (gotta find a better word, despite that being a long-time military codeword - hmm, control ship?) for drones. Drones (air, surface and subsurface) are so readily deployable and operable from vessels, especially if the drone package is containerized and designed to 'plug and play' into a navy's ships (and those ships are configured to take containers, but that's another thing).

One can be reasonably assured that the Canadian Surface Combatant project ships will be drone-capable.

Nike, Coca-Cola, and Apple reportedly lobbied to weaken a bill aimed at preventing them from manufacturing products in China using forced Uighur labor

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/money/markets/nike-coca-cola-and-apple-reportedly-lobbied-to-weaken-a-bill-aimed-at-preventing-them-from-manufacturing-products-in-china-using-forced-uighur-labor/ar-BB1bvKrN?ocid=msedgdhp>



The article is a testament to the bi-partisan efforts against the corrupt regime that is the Communist Chinese Party (CCP). It is also a reason for all liberal democracies to take note that businesses will often be willing to circumvent efforts that will enhance human rights. It is something that Canada should investigate especially as the Canadian business community has possibly also taken the same approach. The CCP is a malign tumor in the world that will not get better. It is aided and abetted by what the CCP refers to as “useful idiots” as we have seen in former Canadian politicians, diplomats and senior civil servants. Canadians are starting to realize that the CCP is not a friend and that any deal, investment and treaty with the CCP must be scrutinized carefully and fully. Canada must be especially careful in understanding the corrupt, reptilian nature of the CCP. As long as the CCP remains in power there is little hope that China will ever truly evolve - the CCP is centred solely on its own survival. Until the government in China changes, China can never be a friend but at best a competitor and at worst an enemy.

Holding Canada's 'Two Michaels' is part of China's larger strategy

<https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/dahlin-holding-canadas-two-michaels-is-part-of-chinas-larger-strategy>



This article by Peter Dahlin, a Swedish Human Rights activist who was imprisoned, or rather disappeared, is worth a read. The article “Dahlin: Holding Canada's 'Two Michaels' is part of China's larger strategy” is a personal view of someone who was captured in the same way as the “Two Michaels.”

Canada continues to be naive about the Communist Chinese Party as it relates to prisoners who are disappeared, such as happened to Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. Peter Dahlin's views must be considered when facing the current China-Canada relations. The article points to the recent list of 14 grievances handed to the Australian Government by the CCP. Mr Dahlin makes the comment that acceding the 14 grievances would turn Australia into essentially a vassal state, and that Canada's circumstances are similar except that Canada is still trying normal diplomacy, not realizing the CCP doesn't care for the niceties.

It is worth the read.

Navy, Marines Will Need Recapitalized Sealift, Logistics Capabilities to Succeed in Pacific Operations

<https://news.usni.org/2020/12/02/navy-marines-will-need-recapitalized-sealift-logistics-capabilities-to-succeed-in-pacific-operations>



"... that would allow the Navy to buy used sealift vessels instead of investing in new sealift vessels, to increase the number of used vessels that we can buy."

Canada has proved the utility of buying an auxiliary (MV ASTERIX, converted and serving as a replenishment oiler). Would the Royal Canadian Navy benefit from buying and converting more ships? Not just another oiler (though having OBELIX converted and serve in the RCN would be welcome by many) but other auxiliaries, including a sealift ship. As of now, Canada is dependent on contracting civil vessels to move military material to and from overseas locations - that can lead to issues, as was demonstrated with the KATIE incident. A range of auxiliary types, patrol vessels, drone control ships, harbour service tenders, etc., could be obtained from the civil sector for cheaper prices and built to satisfactory standards.

Damen cuts first steel on Royal Netherlands Navy's Combat Support Ship

https://www.damen.com/en/news/2020/12/damen_cuts_first_steel_on_royal_netherlands_navys_combat_support_ship



The release didn't do a great job explaining the significance of the support capability, that having such a ship in company allows for extended, long distance (essentially, 'blue water') deployments by combatants. The term 'combat support ship' is very general (and 'combat support' means something else to the army - they would have said 'combat service support'). From another description (<https://www.naval-technology.com/projects/hnlms-den-helder-combat-support-ship/>), it appears Den Helder's type is replenishment oiler (AOR). (Karel Doorman, mentioned in the release, differs by having sealift and sea basing capabilities, but that difference is not highlighted - <https://www.naval-technology.com/projects/karel-doorman-joint-logistic-support-ship/>.)

The Canadian Joint Support Ship project ships will likely be typed as replenishment oilers (AOR), with a main role of supporting combatants (e.g., frigates) on blue-water operations.

Inside Canada's Chinese-language media: 'Beijing has become the mainstream,' says ex-Sing Tao editor

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/inside-canada-s-chinese-language-media-beijing-has-become-the-mainstream-says-ex-sing-tao-editor/ar-BB1bAR7c?ocid=msedgntp>








The article "Inside Canada's Chinese-language media: 'Beijing has become the mainstream,' says ex-Sing Tao editor" by Tom Blackwell on 3 December 2020 covers a major point discussed within previous RUSI(NS) articles. There are estimates that up to 80 % of the Chinese language press is more or less directly controlled by the United Front, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) propaganda arm which also sponsors the Confucius Institutes found in Canadian universities. The influence of the CCP in Canada is growing within the Chinese diaspora of 1.8 million folks. This includes making threats against Canadian citizens who have been vocal against the CCP.

The article is an eye opener for anyone outside the Chinese Canadian community, but a frightful reality for those inside with threats not only to individuals but also to their wider family in China or Hong Kong. It is good that Canada now seems to be opening its eyes to this very real threat through the House of Commons Canada Chinese Relations Committee. The current Canadian government seems to be trying to downplay the threat to Canada in recent times. Their main excuse is that it may affect the outcomes for the two Michaels, but this is not an excuse for the weak virtually non-existent answer to Beijing's actions against Canadian citizens inside our country.

It is a great article using the intimate knowledge of a man who has lived the experience first hand.

Posted on Facebook Royal United Services Institute NS: RUSI(NS) postings may be viewed by clicking on the icon at <https://RUSI-NS.ca>. To have something posted or commented, email the CIO by noon Thursday.

 <h1>Focus</h1> <p>MONTHLY UPDATE FROM THE ROYAL UNITED SERVICES INSTITUTE</p> <p>https://mailchi.mp/rusi.org/highlights-from-rusi-in-november2020-170458?e=a539211a30</p>	
<p>MLI's Voice on Huawei and Chinese Aggression is Being Heard in Parliament</p> <p>https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/mlis-voice-huawei-heard-parliament/?mc_cid=9acf9dba11&mc_eid=a8426c0175</p>	
<p>Canadian Rangers deployed to COVID-19 response in Sask. First Nation</p> <p>https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/canadian-rangers-deployed-to-covid-19-response-in-sask-first-nation-1.5208738</p>	
<p>Military Dog, Treated by Army Docs, Receives Top UK Honors for Performance Under Fire</p> <p>https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/11/26/military-dog-treated-army-docs-receives-top-uk-honors-performance-under-fire.html</p>	

Cutting edge radar system for new frigates never used on warships, must be adapted

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/SOMNIA-1.5822606>



Germany joins nascent European push to shoot down hypersonic missiles

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2020/11/30/germany-joins-nascent-european-push-to-shoot-down-hypersonic-missiles/>



Canadian defense minister talks fighter competition and geopolitics

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/the-americas/2020/11/30/canadian-defense-minister-talks-fighter-competition-and-geopolitics/>



Canada to spend more than \$350 million for C-17 aircraft equipment, U.S. government announces

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/canada-to-spend-more-than-350-million-for-c-17-aircraft-equipment-u-s-government-announces>



China's Monster Fishing Fleet

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/30/china-beijing-fishing-africa-north-korea-south-china-sea/>



Russian military receives Terminator vehicles for testing

https://www.defensenews.com/land/2020/12/02/russian-military-receives-terminator-vehicles-for-testing/?fbclid=IwAR0zujNGlFR4dqXCVP0NAjxSOwI_0vDttdK21_FJLMzaWJ2PwPILmSv6BFc



Other Sources: Recommendations for ‘themes’ (e.g., #drones) to list in this section are welcome.

#aircraft procurement

Gambling Responsibly and the UK Tempest Programme: Experiences, Risks and Opportunities
<https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/gambling-responsibly-and-uk-tempest-programme>

#artificial intelligence

Modern Conflict and Artificial Intelligence
<https://www.cigionline.org/modern-conflict-and-artificial-intelligence>

#conflict

Invisible in War: An Insight on Conflict and the Conservation of Wildlife
<http://www.strifeblog.org/2020/11/25/invisible-at-the-intersection-of-war-insight-on-conflict-and-conservation/>

#COVID 19

Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation>

Navigating the ‘infodemic’: how people in six countries access and rate news and information about coronavirus

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/infodemic-how-people-six-countries-access-and-rate-news-and-information-about-coronavirus>

The UK COVID-19 news and information project

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/UK-COVID-19-news-and-information-project>

with report:

Communications in the coronavirus crisis: lessons for the second wave

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/communications-coronavirus-crisis-lessons-second-wave>

#defence policy

Cash Before Strategy: Defence in the Integrated Review

<https://tippingpoint2020s.com/2020/11/30/cash-before-strategy-defence-in-the-integrated-review/>

Global Britain in a post-Covid-19 World

<https://wavellroom.com/2020/12/02/global-britain-in-a-post-covid-19-world/>

A comparison.

#economic warfare #finwar

Money and Influence: The Economic Aspects of Great Power Competition

<https://mwi.usma.edu/money-and-influence-the-economic-aspects-of-great-power-competition>

#intelligence

US and UK Intelligence and Security Relationship: The Way Forward – Together

<https://rusi.org/commentary/us-and-uk-intelligence-and-security-relationship-way-forward-%E2%80%93-together>

#lawfare

Russian Military Latest: Another Russia-US naval confrontation

<https://defenceindepth.co/2020/11/27/russian-military-latest-another-russia-us-naval-confrontation/>

#medical

The Role of Medical Systems in Homeland Defense

<https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/healthcare/the-role-of-medical-systems-in-homeland-defense/>

#NATO

NATO must focus more on challenge of rising China, report to say

<https://www.reuters.com/article/nato-diplomacy-future/nato-must-focus-more-on-challenge-of-rising-china-report-idUSKBN28A1T0?il=0>

#naval warfare

Persistent Engagement and Strategic Raiding: Leveraging the UK's Future Carrier Strike Capability to Effect

<https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/persistent-engagement-and-strategic-raiding-leveraging-uk-future>

#nav war

We Need a Backup for GPS. Actually, We Need Several of Them

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/12/we-need-backup-gps-actually-we-need-several-them/170391/>

#reading

A Year in #Reviewing

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2020/11/30/a-year-in-reviewing>

#Russia

Report to Congress on Russian Military Intelligence

<https://news.usni.org/2020/11/27/report-to-congress-on-russian-military-intelligence>

#strategy

A Brief Guide To Maritime Strategy

book review: <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2020/9/30/reviewing-a-brief-guide-to-maritime-strategy>

Bad Idea: "Great Power Competition" Terminology

<https://defense360.csis.org/bad-idea-great-power-competition-terminology/>

#warfare

Preparing for Greyzone Threats to the Energy Sector

<https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/preparing-greyzone-threats-energy-sector>

#war

Three Levels of War

<https://www.cc.gatech.edu/~tpilsch/INTA4803TP/Articles/Three%20Levels%20of%20War=CADRE-excerpt.pdf>

Other:

MI9: A History of the **Secret Service** for Escape and Evasion in World War Two
MI9 is not a well known organization (we've watched so many MI5 and MI6 films). So this book is a bit of an eye catcher (<https://www.amazon.ca/MI9-History-Secret-Service-Evasion/dp/0300233205>). A RUSI UK event announcement has a little more (<https://rusi.org/event/mi9-history-secret-service-escape-and-evasion-world-war-two>)

Trident, the newspaper of Maritime Forces Atlantic, Volume 54, Issue 24, November 30, 2020
<https://tridentnewspaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-11-30-24.pdf>

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

The biggest news of this past while is the increased likelihood of a COVID-19 vaccine being available this month to at least some folks in this world. The Canadian government has ordered relatively vast quantities of various vaccines from multiple sources which may become available in the first quarter of next year to Canadian citizens. There have been concerns raised about the Canadian government's initial efforts which dealt with an agreement with a Chinese firm that is part of a military medical research facility. Canada allowed use of Canadian material with the agreement that Canada would also receive samples of the virus for ongoing research. China refused to comply with its part of the agreement. This apparently was the main effort, other alternatives were not viewed with the same importance until after this issue became clear. It should be noted that this is open source and there is no clear picture available to the Canadian public. What is very clear is that there is a very real need to investigate what actually happened, especially in view of Canada's current relationship with the Communist Chinese Party (CCP). Was this agreement made with the view to gain favour with the CCP for Canada's position? (This author separates the CCP from the Chinese people as the CCP is not actually a real representative of the views of the people of China.)

Speaking of the CCP, they published a doctored photo of an Australian soldier holding a knife to the throat of an Afghan child this week. This was based on Australia's very public admission that Australian soldiers committed unauthorised killings of up to 39 civilians during their time in Afghanistan. The CCP took aim at Australia once again with articles in party mouth pieces. The Australians were rightly indignant. Keep in mind that Australia investigated wrong doing and has made it public and is taking action against the personnel involved. The CCP never investigates and certainly never apologizes for it gruesome history. When Australia asked for an apology this was the response from the CCP Embassy in Australia: [Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Remarks \(china-embassy.org\)](#). It is breathtaking in its hypocrisy.

China however is taking a severe beating by Mother Nature with continued extensive flooding and damage to agricultural resources. China as a country is unable to feed itself and needs to import vast quantities of food material. Massive failure of crops as a result of flooding is likely. It is already known that China is having other countries purchase food stuffs from third countries then reimporting from those countries as China has major issues with most of the food producing countries in the world.

Three key activists were convicted this week in Hong Kong. They will be imprisoned for 10 to 12 months. Other folks are also being arrested based on their past participation and comments in the pro-democracy movement. Like most authoritarian regimes, China uses the randomness of arrests to intimidate the population. It is a tried and true method of all tyrannies around the world. Just look at Putin's Russia, Mainland China, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. It is the idea that even minor infractions no matter how small can be used on anyone.

This brings us to the next point on China. Many Western countries investors are continuing to invest in China. It is interesting that Asian sources are not very big on China as an investment. Its debts make Canada's debt look insignificant, coupled with a banking system that is viewed as corrupt and weak. Investor protections have allegedly improved but there is little to prove China has actually improved investor protections. Time will tell who is correct on this matter.

Russia continues to be interesting. Most of its international activities have been going astray, so to speak, and Russian influence lessened overall. Libya continues to fester but the UN sponsored government seems to winning the negotiations post-conflict. Russia supported the other side.

Nagorno-Karabakh also continues its poisonous ways with the Azeris now occupying lands previously held by Armenia. Russia loses because it is viewed as having betrayed the Armenians, which also causes other countries in military alliances to question Russia's reliability even on its own borders. Although several Armenian government ministers have resigned, the current Armenian government continues, although crippled. It is not likely to survive long term. It is widely viewed that Mr Putin did not like the current government as not being pro-Russian enough and was looking for a way to remove the Government of Armenia and replace it with someone more to the Kremlin's liking. Risky process - it will be interesting to see how this plays out in the longer term. One should not be too optimistic.

The other funny point about this conflict is that Turkey is considered a "peacekeeper" in the region. Turkey, the country that slaughtered a million Armenians in 1915 and supported the Azeris in this latest conflict. One has to wonder what people think peacekeepers are for given the gruesome nature of Turkish history in relation to Armenia. Amazingly, Azerbaijan has asked for France to be removed from possible peacekeeping operations. If this is modern peacekeeping, then one has to wonder whether it is worth doing at all. Time will tell.

Belarus has seen some strange and interesting things this past week. The opposition to Lukashenko has dispersed demonstrations to different neighbourhoods instead of the centre of the city, forcing security forces to run around trying to catch demonstrators that are literally all over the city. Only 124 people were caught and arrested this past Sunday. The week also saw that Lukashenko say he will step down once the new constitution is written. What this actually means in reality is another question. Demonstrations will be continuing until he does in fact step down.

Ukraine also occupies a good portion of the effective part of the Russian Armed Forces' attention. And now Moldova has formally asked Russia to remove its forces from Transnistria on the Moldova/Ukraine border. Russia has refused to remove 1500 Russian troops and is effectively occupying the territory. The separatists are thought to be former Russian soldiers who were stationed in the region pre-Soviet breakup, and not Moldovans.

Russia also announced an agreement with Sudan to establish a naval base in that country. This is on top of five African bases announced earlier this year. Russia, despite having a GDP smaller than Canada, continues to have delusions of grandeur as a world power. Keep in mind they only just announced that they are now capable of producing turbines for their new warships. Ukraine was the previous supplier. One has to wonder about the actual capability of Russia given they are no longer capable of producing some very basic things that are necessary for a truly modern military power. There is no doubt they have specialty areas such as air defence missiles, but they also have major gaps such as lack of phased array radar.

Russia's efforts against COVID-19 continue to fail and that Putin's lack of action has caused an ongoing drop in his popularity coupled with a diminishing economy based on old technology and industry. Keep in mind that Russia continues to support unpopular regimes and that they still are losing influence due to the rise of both Turkey and Iran. Use of mercenaries of the Wagner group is not fooling anyone anymore. How much longer will the Russian people put up with these failing adventures that cost large amounts of money and resources? Alex Navalny's popularity continues to rise in Russia as he continues to expose major corruption in the Putin regime. Although he is not allowed to run himself, his influence is growing, and the failed assassination attempt has only added to his popularity or notoriety, depending where one sits in politics.

Ethiopia makes for a surprise in its battle with Tigray Province. The Ethiopian army took the Tigrayan capital Mekelle this week, however, the separatist movement vows to continue its efforts. They even apparently fired long range rockets into Eritrea's capital in order to cause that country to enter the conflict. Thus far Eritrea has kept its powder dry, but there is has the potential for further disruptions and conflict in the area.

There is much more happening in the world that Western media continue to ignore. I sometimes wonder whether Canadian citizens are going to receive many unpleasant shocks in the near future despite the Biden election to the presidency of the United States. As mentioned before, time will tell.