



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

16 April 2021

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:

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

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.

Retirements and other factors have led to the unavailability of the Distinguished Speaker (and alternatives) for April 2021. Options are under consideration, and plans will be announced later.

Amended: 21 April, Wednesday - Navy League of Canada Virtual Speaker Rear-Admiral Brian Santarpia, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic, will provide an update on current initiatives, operations and the future fleet. **1330 EDT**. Via MS Teams. Spaces are limited. To register, email rsvp@navyleague.ca.

22 April, Thursday - US Naval Institute "The American Sea Power Project" virtual event to "reinvigorate thinking about the role of sea power in U.S. national security." 10 am EDT. To register, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com and a link will be emailed back. Also see: The American Sea Power Project (<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2021/january/american-sea-power-project>).

23 April, Friday - USNORTHCOM and Arctic eTalks Team event with Janne Kuusela, Defense Policy Director and Deputy Director General at the Defense Policy Department of the Ministry of Defense of Finland. 8 am Alaska time. To register: https://alaska.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5_Y0s952QqiwsV8-IvQshA.

New: 4 May, Tuesday - Evenings @ Government House "Canada's Role in the D-Day Invasion of 1944." 7-8 pm. Government House, 1451 Barrington Street. To register: <https://lt.gov.ns.ca/news-events/evenings-government-house/2021-05-04/canada%E2%80%99s-role-d-day-invasion-1944>.

Recent Publications:

Except where otherwise indicated, publications are available on request to RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

RUSI(NS) Paper "Why Pilot Training Production for the RCAF is Failing and Why are Pilot Losses Mounting" by Murray Lee, 31 March 20210
<https://rusi-ns.ca/pilottraining/>

RUSI(NS) Presentation "Marine Security Operations Centre - East" by Cora Pictou, 17 March 2021
<https://rusi-ns.ca/marine-security-operations-centre-east/>

US Northern Command's The Watch, Issue 3, Great Power Competition
<https://thewatch-magazine.com/v3-eng/>.

The Newsletter of the Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island, Volume 54, 2nd Quarter 2021.

The Edmonton United Services Institute President's Enews April 2021.

The Military Institute of Windsor Communiqué Volume XXXIX Number 4 April 2021.

The United Services Institute of Nanaimo and North Island Newsletter Vol 29, No 04, April 2021.

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association "On Watch" 7 April edition
https://send.successbyemail.com/prvw_message2.aspx?chno=1ccf9809-d538-4e55-84ad-e12a6fd38cb6.
Includes links to articles "Seaspan Shipyards starts construction of Canada's most modern science research ship," "\$1.8M contract to dismantle former navy ship challenged by rival bidder" and "Saanich-based robotics company charting new course for ocean exploration with autonomous boats."

The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) Newsletter Volume 20, Issue 1, March 2021.

New: The Royal United Services Institute Victoria (Australia) Occasional Volume 5, Issue 4, 12 April 2021.

New: Naval Association of Canada Ottawa Branch Presentation "The Davie Strategic Journey: Generation 2040" by Mr James Davies, President Chantier Davie Shipbuilding, 12 Apr 21.

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.

CDA Institute @CDAInstitute 10 Apr tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: "We must be adaptive and change quickly. If we stifle good ideas, it will have a negative impact on the organization. We're trying to be leading edge and provide a voice for everybody."

(RCAF Commander LGen Meinzinger on Space Capabilities, Innovation in the RCAF, and Pandemic-Era Readiness <https://cdainstitute.ca/a-discussion-with-rcaf-commander-lgen-al-meinzinger/>)



Seb H @sebh1981 11 Apr tweeted: A Mexeflote with power units and all disassembled in Gibraltar. Phot via; @86Cump RUSI(NS) retweeted: Navamar

(<https://navamar.com/index.php/french/a-propos/annonces/224-forces-armees-canadiennes>) to build five powered barges (CAN🇨🇦 version of mexeflote) as ship-to-shore connectors for @RoyalCanNavy <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2019/09/providing-the-royal-canadian-navy-with-greater-flexibility-for-ashore-operations.html> Looking fwd to seeing barges assembled & in use



MGen Derek Macaulay, Acting CCA / CAC par intérim @Army_Comd_Armees 12 Apr tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Not just "lumberjack commandos", the return of Assault Pioneers add agility, speed, and flexibility to units on the ground. To learn more, listen to the @CanadianArmy Podcast here: <http://apple.co/3ci3Av6>



Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations 14 Apr tweeted: Don't mess with us. After securing the vessel carrying 250 kilos of cocaine and 100lbs of marijuana, @HMCS_NCSMSask conducts a demolition of the vessel which is now a hazard to navigation, while deployed on #OpCARIBBE in the Pacific Ocean March 24, 2021. RUSI(NS) retweeted: Good to see @RoyalCanNavy demolish vessels used for crime. Any effort to bring such vessels into port too much for far-deployed Kingston-class patrol ships. #RCNavy Ship Demolition Party has capability. Must have been some interesting legal determinations before 'fuze was lit!'



French Navy @MarineNationale patrol vessel FULMAR, based FRA St-Pierre & Miquelon islands between Nova Scotia & Newfoundland, enters CAN🇨🇦 & USA internal waters to participate in search & rescue #SAR exercise. Multi-national collaboration at its best
<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/operations/le-deploiement-du-patrouilleur-fulmar-de-saint-pierre-et-miquelon-jusqu-au-lac-ontario>



Posted on Facebook Royal United Services Institute NS with comments:

U.S. Marine Corps successfully tests new cargo drones

<https://defence-blog.com/news/u-s-marine-corps-successfully-tests-new-cargo-drones.html>



A lot of potential in having 'log drones,' even ones that can only fly 60 pounds of cargo. Drones are just not a resource for combat (e.g., recce) and combat support (e.g., artillery spotting), but could have good use for combat service support. Can anti-air systems reach well into an opponent's airspace and take out their logistics drones?

Always a smart move to involve actual users early in the evaluation of a capability.

Canada calls out China, climate change as growing concerns in Arctic

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/frozen-pathways/2021/04/12/canada-calls-out-china-climate-change-as-growing-concerns-in-arctic/>



"But the country's ambitious military plans for the Arctic remain limited by the difficult logistics of building installations and resupplying forces in the vast and harsh northern region."

Going North, and staying North, our North, means a whole-of-society approach, particularly in developing infrastructure and logistics.

Heavily-armed frigate sails Norwegian Sea to "ensure safety of Russian fishermen"

<https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2021/04/heavily-armed-frigate-sails-norwegian-sea-ensure-safety-russian-fishermen>



Tasks related to the fisheries have long been part of the constabulary role of navies. There were decades recently when the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) carried out fisheries patrols. Whether they do so now hasn't routinely made the open press. What with growing international concerns about IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing, and a use by at least China of 'fishing fleets' for territorial and resource expansionist purposes, we could well see more coordination between navies and government departments responsible for fisheries. The RCN and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) collaborate across the defence, security and safety spectrum. Planners, analysts and interested others should consider the two services accordingly.

India to get apex body for maritime challenges

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-to-get-apex-body-for-maritime-challenges/articleshow/82057894.cms>



India to "have an apex federal body (a National Maritime Commission) to handle all maritime affairs, from the coastline to the high seas, and ensure cohesive policy-making and effective coordination among the multiple authorities dealing with such issues in the country."

Probably not an exact model for Canada, but there is something to be said for a high-level governance system for coordination between Canada's maritime departments, something other than the committee system in place now.

A petition has been started in the UK to name the Type 83, the next class of Royal Navy destroyers, the Duke of Edinburgh-class.

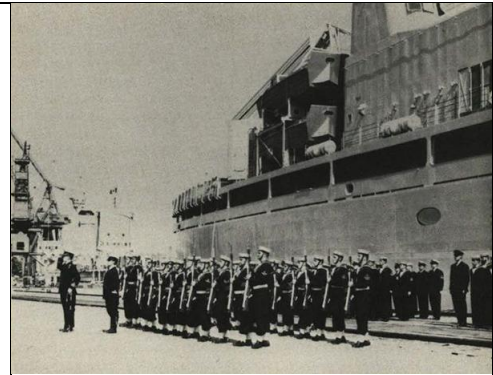
"Dr Alexander Clarke @AC_NavalHistory 14 Apr tweeted: So #Bilgepumps is starting a petition, to make the Type 83s the Duke of Edinburgh Class...in memory of #PrincePhilip if you would like to sign it, please click below
<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/582964/sponsors/new?token=FguXUI6HGqX8qKePZPM!>"



Naming warships and other government ships has traditionally been a government decision. Some attempts to solicit names from the public have had unintended results (viz the UK's Boaty McBoatface for what ultimately became the research ship SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH). Other solicitations, like ferries in Halifax, have been more controlled and quite successful. Starting a petition is an interesting approach. There has been some public commentary about naming the ships to be built under the Canadian Surface Combatant project (e.g., after provinces, First Nations) but as the ships will be premier representatives of the country, those names are very likely to be decided at the highest levels of government and announced at an appropriate messaging time.

Military reminded core business is to use 'lethal violence' to defend Australia's values and sovereignty

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-14/military-reminded-lethal-violence-defend-australian-values/100066796>



Entertainment during a warship commissioning ceremony in Australia has led to quite the brouhaha down there. There has been strong political and social reaction to the performance and media reporting of a troupe of dancers hired to entertain the audience prior to the main ceremony. However one assesses the situation, one lesson to take away by naval ceremony planners and public affairs staff anywhere is about over doing what is meant to be a simple and dignified event. A warship commissioning ceremony does not need to be dressed up, certainly with currently popular activities. There is good tradition inherent in a commissioning ceremony, enough for the sailors involved. Keep the message focused - a warship is being taken into active service with the Navy.

And I can write, as one who has planned a commissioning ceremony, there are enough challenges as it is without bright ideas in the interest of some other messaging being foisted upon the event.

Over the coming years Canada will hold a number of commissioning ceremonies, starting with that for HMCS HARRY DEWOLF. These will be opportunities to remind all what naval service is, and what it is in a century plus mature Navy. The events do not need to be dressed up.

The Royal Canadian Navy is preparing for upcoming commissioning ceremonies and has published "Launching and Commissioning of HMC Ships" (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/military-identity-system/customs-traditions-manual/launching-hmcs.html>).

More reporting at: "Why Australia is in hysterics over a 'navy twerking' dance" (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-56754868>).

A later tweet noted that whoever hired the dancers thought they were hiring an indigenous dance troupe. Just underscores how things can go wrong when complicating planning.

American Vulnerabilities in an Age of Great Power Competition: The Case for Understanding Domestic Extremism through an Irregular Warfare Lens

<https://mwi.usma.edu/american-vulnerabilities-in-an-age-of-great-power-competition-the-case-for-understanding-domestic-extremism-through-an-irregular-warfare-lens/>



Hmm, to "examine our domestic affairs in the same manner and with the same objectives as conflicts abroad" has interesting and potentially concerning implications,

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.

RUSI
Weekly Update
THINK TANK OF THE YEAR

<https://mailchi.mp/rusi.org/weekly-9-april-2021?e=813c0cd331>



Space Force to Absorb USAF Command to Run Launches, Research

<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2021/04/space-force-unveils-latest-command-shuffle/173239/>



Defence minister denies withholding funds for security conference over Taiwan award

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/SOMNIA-1.5984974>



Russia's Arctic activity to increase with fresh strategy and more capability tests

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/frozen-pathways/2021/04/11/russias-arctic-activity-to-increase-with-fresh-strategy-and-more-capability-tests/>



South Korea unveils prototype of homegrown KF-X fighter jet

<https://www.defensenews.com/industry/techwatch/2021/04/09/south-korea-unveils-prototype-of-homegrown-kf-x-fighter-jet/>



South China Sea: Can PLA learn from US Navy tactics with mini-carrier strike group?

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3129257/south-china-sea-can-pla-learn-us-navy-tactics-mini-carrier>



Taiwan reports largest incursion yet by Chinese air force

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN2BZ1L1>



Beijing has a navy it doesn't even admit exists, experts say. And it's swarming parts of the South China Sea

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/12/china/china-maritime-militia-explainer-intl-hnk-ml-dst/index.html>



Russian military buildup in the Arctic has northern NATO members uneasy

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/frozen-pathways/2021/04/12/russian-military-buildup-in-the-arctic-has-northern-nato-members-uneasy>



Dur-e-Aden: Addressing the Growing Threat of Right-Wing Extremism in Canada

<https://cdainstitute.ca/dur-e-aden-addressing-the-growing-threat-of-right-wing-extremism-in-canada/>



Taiwan launches new amphibious vessel with anti-ship missiles

<https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2021/04/13/taiwan-launches-new-amphibious-vessel-with-anti-ship-missiles/>



Italian military chief envisions the Tempest fighter zapping missiles

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2021/04/13/italian-military-chief-envisions-the-tempest-fighter-zapping-missiles/>



Beijing shows it's 'not taking its foot off the gas' with latest incursion into Taiwan airspace

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3129398/beijing-shows-its-not-taking-its-foot-gas-latest-incursion>



China's military to hold live-fire drills off Taiwan as US delegation visits the island

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3129534/chinas-military-hold-live-fire-drills-taiwan-us-delegation>



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

#Arctic

You cannot claim any more: 'Russia seeks bigger piece of Arctic

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/russia-arctic-ocean-canada-united-nations-continental-shelf-1.5983289>

#command and control

Report to Congress on Command and Control

<https://news.usni.org/2021/04/13/report-to-congress-on-command-and-control>

Defense Primer: What Is Command and Control?

[https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/20613912/defense-primer-what-is-command-and-control-april-8-2021.pdf#command and control](https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/20613912/defense-primer-what-is-command-and-control-april-8-2021.pdf#command%20and%20control)

#communications

Professional commentary in the public domain: advice from an occasional Naval dissident

<https://wavellroom.com/2019/07/03/professional-commentary-in-the-public-domain-advice-from-an-occasional-naval-dissident/>

"Think it possible you may be mistaken." (Oliver Cromwell's letter to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 3 Aug 1650)

RAdm James Goldrick RAN (ret'd) is always worth reading.

#COVID-19

COVID-19 Spring Posture Directive - What's new for the Defence Team

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2021/04/covid-19-spring-posture-directive.html>

#defence policy

A Post Mortem of a Disintegrated Review

<https://www.rusi.org/commentary/post-mortem-disintegrated-review>

The Good, Bad and Ugly – The British Army and the Integrated Review

<https://wavellroom.com/2021/04/09/good-bad-and-ugly-the-british-army-and-the-integrated-review>

#espionage

CSIS says 2020 was a banner year for espionage operations targeting Canada

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/nsicop-espionage-pandemic-1.5983612>

#future casting

ODNI Releases Global Trends Report, Forecasting Challenges Over Next Two Decades

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/odni-releases-global-trends-report-forecasting-challenges-over-next-two-decades>

ODNI = (US) Director of National Intelligence

US spies peer into the future - and it doesn't look good

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56683852>

and the report "Global Trends 2040":

https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/20612091/globaltrends_2040.pdf

#intelligence

Bulk Collection of Signals Intelligence - Technical Options

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/19414/bulk-collection-of-signals-intelligence-technical-options>

From Maps to Models - Augmenting the Nation's Geospatial Intelligence Capabilities

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23650/from-maps-to-models-augmenting-the-nations-geospatial-intelligence-capabilities>

Future U.S. Workforce for Geospatial Intelligence

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18265/future-us-workforce-for-geospatial-intelligence>

#land warfare

Making the Soldier Decisive on Future Battlefields

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18321/making-the-soldier-decisive-on-future-battlefields>

#medical

Army Medical Research and Development Infrastructure Planning

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25921/army-medical-research-and-development-infrastructure-planning-proceedings-of-a>

#naval warfare

Responding to Capability Surprise - A Strategy for U.S. Naval Forces

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/14672/responding-to-capability-surprise-a-strategy-for-us-naval-forces>

#Royal Canadian Navy

Your Navy Today - March 2021

<http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/news-ynt/2021/03-your-navy-today.page>

Other:

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

The Afghan Era

One has to wonder whether we are living in 'interesting times' as in the old Chinese curse. We have pestilence, war, famine and death treading the earth. It is the last chapter of the New Testament and the book of Revelations, Chapter 6 for those who would look it up. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse of old brought before us today with all the fun and charm it always has had.

The Aftermath of 9/11

I will start with something more personal, as I have done three tours of Afghanistan. It is in regard to the announcement by the US and subsequently the NATO decision to withdraw from Afghanistan by 11 September 2021. When we started down this particular path after 9/11, we also understood that this was a very long-term effort that could take between 70 and 90 years or three generations, bare minimum. Here we are in 2021 doing another withdrawal and leaving millions of people without the support that they need before the institutions are in place that would provide a measure of stability for the country. It is an unfortunate characteristic of liberal democracies not to have the necessary staying power to affect change in countries. It takes manpower, money resources and knowledge. We certainly paid out lots of money and resources. We paid in blood, but we never put in the knowledge nor bothered to acquire it. We still have one year of knowledge 20 times over, but we still do not have that knowledge.

I was a senior staff officer who was examining a rather nasty development. Our allied friends came up with a plan that essentially pushed aside the Afghans in favour of an allied enforced program that was a direct insult to the Afghan Government and authorities and would have caused them to lose face in front of their own people. I objected and asked why it was necessary to go so fast and at such a very real cost to the Afghans? The answer was because their national leader said so. My answer was equally blunt: it will not work, and you will have not only not stopped the problem but WILL make it worse and I explained in detail why. I understand that it is difficult for some people to understand, but the West is often seen as self-serving and, at worst, the enemy. We in the West have to understand that we must help change of mindset within host country populations. We hid in our forward operating bases and other major facilities rather than meeting the people. We did not understand their problems and needs. The “need for speed” will always be wrong in nation/peace building. People who are there for a year do not understand the nuance of the supported country and therefore will always make major errors. This is an unfortunate truth. This aforementioned incident involved an ally, but Canada is no better in some respects. That is another commentary for another time when we analyse all that has taken place.

A Canadian Overview of Espionage

CSIS announced this week that this past pandemic year has been a bumper year for foreign espionage including Chinese, Iranian and Russian efforts, much of it oriented towards industrial espionage. Canada is naïve at best and horribly incompetent at worst when it comes to security and intelligence issues. Canada is facing a vastly different world and it is not adapting well. We have spent an enormous effort on oversight of our own security and intelligence organizations but haven’t studied what we are actually facing and what do our organizations need to meet the actual threat. Most of our political leaders, in all parties, are too intent on bribing the population with their own tax dollars rather than having a serious discussion about very real threats to our country and what we need to at least get enough resources to truly understand the threats we face. This is especially true of the cyber security threat but not exclusively so; these threats have cost billions of dollars to our economy. We need to wake up quickly and ensure we have the right resources with the right mandate and tools to be effective. In order to do this, we might consider reviewing the mandates of all our security and intelligence organizations.

Intelligence Re-Structuring

Most Canadians have no idea that most Canadian government departments have some form of intelligence branch, mainly dealing with open-source material or information received from their personnel in other countries. These include Canadian Border Services, Customs and Excise, Health Canada, Agriculture Canada, Environment Canada, the Canadian Communication Security Agency, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian military intelligence. Some provinces also have small intelligence cells to evaluate threats to various activities. We could get the RCMP out of community policing and orient them towards national threats such as: cyber crime, financial crime, cross border crime, espionage and technical issues which go beyond provincial police capabilities. The RCMP is too small and not adequately trained to meet these new threats. It follows that the provinces develop a provincial police forces to carry out the community policing currently carried out by the RCMP. The Maritimes or Atlantic provinces might consider a joint police force. Newfoundland still has the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary which might be a good model for the others to follow. The bottom line is our federal police have to deal with national problems. Another subject for another day but it has to be investigated within our minimal resources.

A Suggested Future Role for the Privy Council.

Another issue is where would this information be finally collected and assessed? Currently, it is assessed in the Privy Council Office which is task oriented for manning; it is run by the civil service by the Chief of the Privy Council. It is not designed to bring intelligence together nor does it have the

expertise to do overall analysis and assessment. We need to consider a single agency that is purpose built to bring all of the resources to one spot. A fusion centre. It also must contain professional intelligence personnel to create the nexus for all agencies to bring material together to this centre and be answerable to Parliament for its actions and products. Having our intelligence services in a single architecture is vital for our overall safety and long-term security of our country - but answerable to our elected officials.

The CF Harassment Issue

One last Canadian issue is the cancelling of the Parliamentary Committee's effort to investigate sexual harassment in the military. The military needs to get this sorted out as quickly as possible even if it hurts a lot. The cancellation maybe politically expedient but it is very wrong in the long run. Canada will need its military shortly. It cannot be mired in matters that go to its very foundations. Cutting out the tumor is vital in the long term - cancelling investigations is not a way forward or in the long-term interests for anyone.

Iran and Israel

Now some international overviews. Israel and Iran are trading punches at sea and apparently now in cyber-space against Iran's nuclear program. Up to twelve Iranian vessels have been damaged by suspected Israeli attacks mainly against tankers or ships that are used to transport weaponry to Iranian clients like Hezbollah and Hamas. Israel has had at least one ship damaged, as well as the UAE, in an apparent tit-for-tat retaliation by Iran. This week saw three attacks on the Natanz nuclear research centre, destroying a large part of major building. Israel is suspected to have carried out other attacks including on individuals and facilities by a variety of methods.

Israel does not trust the diplomatic agreement of the countries involved nor does not trust Iran or its acolytes. Both Hamas and Hezbollah could rain missiles on Israel in a sustained way, with one estimate stating that Hezbollah has more than 100,000 missiles and rockets available. Israel is a suspected nuclear armed state although they have never actually confirmed this at any time. Iran has declared that they will now enhance their nuclear fuel to 60% purity. 90% is necessary for bomb production. The issue is that the ability to get to 90% uses the same capability to get to 60%. According to CNN, other aspects of nuclear weapons' development by Iran is still limited. Israel does not feel the same way and will do virtually anything apparently to stop the further development. There is a serious potential for disaster here in the medium term. I am reminded of the torch light parade at Masada where members of the Israeli tank corps take their final oaths to the country on graduation: "Masada will not fall again." It is something to consider when looking at this situation.

Ukraine and Russia

Now to my Russian friends who are now massing on the Ukraine border in relatively large numbers, by one estimate around 80,000 troops including Belarussians. It appears a second Airborne Forces division has arrived in Crimea which may already include the 7th and 76th divisions, both currently undergoing re-organization into a three regiment formation vice two regiments that were constituted in 2008. These two divisions are usually spearhead type units. The 7th was a large part of the 'little green men.' All last week there was great comment on the 28 battalion tactical groups moving from three other military districts, including the far east. While this looks alarming, it probably isn't, as the ground forces are still largely conscripts and are probably just the best units readily available. One should also note the lack of coherent formation size headquarters. They are also unlikely to have trained together as formations. This is not to say they couldn't do damage, but it would be highly risky to use them in any other way except as a display of force.

Belarus is supposedly supporting this effort along Ukraine's northern border, a highly risky effort given Lukashenko's lack of support within the country. Having security forces tied up at the Ukraine border leaves a limited ability to support police forces especially as demonstrations are due to ramp up

this spring. Could this whole process and show of force go sideways in an unnecessary conflict...absolutely. No one would mean it but the result would be the same. Margaret McMillan's book "The War that Ended the Peace" is an excellent example of this unintentional situation.

Ukraine has started to see some other support as well. The NATO Training Mission, which includes Canadian troops, is continuing. More importantly, this week saw the President of Turkey offer support to President Zelensky. Keep in mind that Russia's main client state Armenia just lost a war to Turkish-supported Azerbaijan. Turkey and Russia are confronting each other in Syria and Libya as well. Having the NATO country with the second largest armed forces sitting on the Russian border and offering support to Ukraine cannot be comforting especially since Turkey is doing a presentable job in the confrontations. This is not a great situation, to say the least, as there is much historical bad blood between Russia and Turkey along with two leaders who are egotistical enough not to back down.

Alexei Navalny is carrying out a hunger strike since last week. Russian prison authorities are threatening to force feed him. Several members of his opposition organization have been arrested but more leaders continue to appear. It is like a game of 'wack a mole' with no end in sight. The battle of wills continues.

Finally, China

China continues its rogue ways by having its Maritime Militia in the form of 220 fishing vessels occupy a reef in Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone. As per normal, the Communist Chinese Party (CCP) maintains that it is their historical sovereign territory as per their 'Nine-Dash Line' in the South China Sea which was deemed to be illegal by the International Courts. The CCP has ignored the findings of the courts and has continued to operate illegally throughout the South China Sea. The Philippines called on friendly nations for assistance and used naval and air assets to make their point. The Chinese fleet dispersed but some 60+ vessels remain in the area.

The CCP's Peoples' Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) made another large incursion into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). This time as many as 25 aircraft of various sorts took part in the incursion. It is part of China's increased pressure on Taiwan. The CCP's Peoples' Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) also moved their carrier task force based on the *Liaoning* plus supporting escorts to the east of Taiwan, showing how they could cut off Taiwan from reinforcements. The US counter-moved a carrier strike group in relatively close proximity to make the point that the CCP PLAN task force would likely not be able to actually do the task for any length of time. Wednesday, US officials visited Taiwan in spite of the CCP activities, just to make the point.

The CCP also has continued its further crackdown on Hong Kong (HK) democracy protesters and opposition. It is clear now that the CCP has no intention whatsoever of honouring the Sino-British Agreement of 1984. A further re-organization of the courts is also expected to move them closer to mainland Chinese courts. The CCP continues to try to kill the 'golden goose' that is HK.

Nothing like a lot of nuclear armed countries at odds to make feel comfortable...NOT. Enough bad news for now.

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