



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia Dispatches 23 April 2021

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

It is with deep sorrow that the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia announces the passing of Petty Officer First Class Richard McNair, Royal Canadian Navy (retired), Chief Information Officer of RUSI(NS) and Editor-in-Chief of *Dispatches*. Richard was a good man, always ready with a reminiscence or 'dit.' He was known to so many people and greatly loved for his cheer and friendliness. He will be sorely missed.

Further information will be communicated as appropriate when known.

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

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

Everyone is encouraged to submit 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 or other government department, the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Events:

To list an event in *Dispatches*, email RUSI(NS) by noon Thursday. RUSI(NS) events are by invitation only. If you are interested in attending and have not been invited, 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.

Note: Retirements and other factors led to the unavailability of the Distinguished Speaker (and alternatives) for April 2021.

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

New: 29 April, Thursday - Veterans Affairs Canada virtual panel "Remembrance in a digital age." Noon EDT. See box at end of *Dispatches*.

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>.

New: 19 May, Wednesday - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speakers Colonel David Moar, RCAF, Commander 4 Wing; and Colonel Travolis Simmons, USAF, Commander 3rd Wing. The topic of their presentations is "Arctic Air Operations: Canada and United States Agile Fighter Employment in Defence of North America." To register, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com by close of business Sunday, 16 May. As the subject line for your registration email, put: RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speakers 19 May 2021 Registration. Zoom joining instructions will be emailed to registrants by end Monday, 17 May.

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.

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

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

New: The Royal United Services Institute Victoria (Australia) Occasional Volume 5, Issue 5, 19 April 2021.

New: Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association "On Watch" 21 April edition
https://send.successbyemail.com/prvw_message2.aspx?chno=f625ee79-9e99-446c-ba17-f54f274ac197.

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 RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations 15 Apr tweeted: CAF on the land (CTF 150 HQ), sea (HMCS Calgary), and in the air (CP-140). Together with our @CMF_Bahrain allies, the #CAF is committed to denying terrorist & criminal groups the use of the high seas to finance their activities via smuggling of illicit goods. #OpARTEMIS RUSI(NS) retweeted: Operation ARTEMIS: @CanadianForces actions with Combined Task Force 150 partners (<https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-150-maritime-security/>) to disrupt criminal & terrorist organizations & their activities by restricting their freedom of maneuver in Middle Eastern waters #OpARTEMIS <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-artemis.html>



Federal Fleet @federalfleet Apr 15 tweeted: FFS, operator of Canada's leading combat support ship, m/v Asterix, announced today that 52 of its civilian crew have received the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Operational Service Medal with Expedition (OSM-EXP) for their support during Operation PROJECTION in 2019. RUSI(NS) retweeted: Bravo, crew of Motor Vessel ASTERIX (replenishment oiler leased to @RoyalCanNavy) awarded Operational Service Medal with Expedition <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/medals-decorations/details/127> "provided direct support on a full-time basis to operations conducted in...a theatre or served under dangerous circumstances"



Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations 17 Apr tweeted: #DYK since 1986, more than 2k CAF members have deployed on #OpCALUMET and served in the Multinational Force & Observers? By doing so, they have actively contributed to the most successful and long-lasting peacekeeping mission in the Middle East. RUSI(NS) retweeted: Operation CALUMET = CAN support to Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), independent peacekeeping operation in Sinai Peninsula <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-calumet.html> @CanadianForces provides leadership/expertise in logistics, engineering, training. Military Police provide policing&security



Exercise ARCTIC GUARDIAN 2021: multi-national virtual staff talk discussions about collision, rescue operation & spill containment <https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/arctic-reps-practise-response-to-maritime-emergency/> Good foundation to develop/ensure capability to respond to disaster in #Arctic. Next, detailed planning & practical exercises (Arctic reps practise response to maritime emergency)

More at:

"Arctic Guardian exercise 2021 underway to test joint emergency marine response"

<https://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2021/04/12/arctic-guardian-exercise-2021-underway-to-test-joint-emergency-marine-response/>

and

Canadian Coast Guard takes part in international Arctic exercise

<https://www.rcinet.ca/en/2021/04/13/canadian-coast-guard-takes-part-in-international-arctic-exercise/>

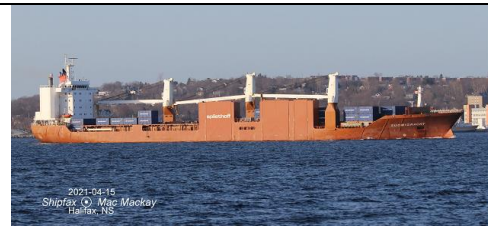


Posted on Facebook Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia with comments:

Suomigracht

<http://shipfax.blogspot.com/2021/04/suomigracht.html>

Interesting vessels, these 'combination carriers.' They have a heavy lift capability and "are also configured for awkwardly shaped cargoes such as yachts and other small craft..." (think landing craft, patrol boats and maybe even ship-to-shore lighters). Side loading doors with elevators which lead to the holds and allow loading by forklift. 1134 TEU and three large cranes (120, 90 and 55 tonnes capacity). Military and emergency planners should be eyeing these ships. These ships look to make excellent logistics vessels, whether for moving forces overseas (hey, Canada) or for humanitarian assistance/disaster response missions (especially in places where ports are unavailable). One can only hope that there are arrangements in place for these ships to be 'taken up from trade.'

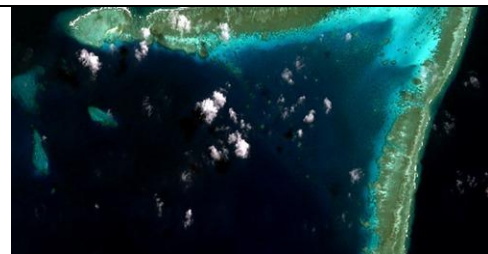


It'd be great to have a ship like this operated as part of some sort of Canadian government fleet (we've had that before). Could act as a training vessel and to do routine supply runs (avoid another GTS KATIE incident) in between operational employments. Such a 'whole-of-government/comprehensive approach' might necessitate a collaborative arrangement between Canadian government marine departments which the Osbaldestron report of the early 1990s tried to achieve.

The Whitsun Reef Incident and the Law of the Sea

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/whitsun-reef-incident-and-law-sea>

Law of the Sea is increasingly a necessary topic for professional naval education and for discussion amongst commanders and staff planners. It has always been a topic but used not to get the attention it should,



maybe because in past decades naval training was focused on warfighting. The 'wars' are different now, and happening now. Legal affairs ('lawfare') is up there with anti-submarine warfare, anti-air, etc.

Oxygen diverted for Covid fight, work at industries come to a grinding halt

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/oxygen-diverted-for-covid-fight-work-at-industries-come-to-grinding-halt-7277053/>



To what, if any, the supply of oxygen due to COVID has an effect on shipbreaking in Canada is not evident in most media. The Indian story does highlight the impact logistics in one area can have on industry and activities in another, apparently unrelated, area. This writer remembers staff checks during planning for submarine search and rescue exercises which led to an appreciation of what oxygen supply, both stockpiled and production availability, might have on operating hyperbaric chambers during a mass submariner casualty event. And during pandemic planning in the early 2000s, the appreciation of the significance of the supply of chemicals to keep curling rinks operating to serve as mass morgues.

How Organized is China's Maritime Militia?

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/how-organized-is-china-s-maritime-militia>



The Chinese Maritime Militia, "an armed mass organization composed of civilians retaining their regular jobs, a component of China's armed forces, and an auxiliary and reserve force" of the People's Liberation Army." In studying (whether as a naval student or as a student of another maritime department) China as a competitor and adversary at sea, China's Maritime Militia needs to be included in the correlation of forces.

Northern expedition: China's Arctic activities and ambitions

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/northern-expedition-chinas-arctic-activities-and-ambitions/>



In reading the twelve findings of this report (https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FP_20210412_china_arctic.pdf), one

comes away with the assessment that China, Janus-like, very much uses science to advance its strategic position to its advantage. Whether one calls it hybrid warfare, gray zone warfare, or whatever, one has to appreciate that an apparently innocuous scientific initiative on the part of China most probably has geo-strategic and military aspects to it.

From a colleague: I feel, quite strongly, that a series of Canadian governments have not understood the national policy significance, even for Canadian sovereignty, of ocean science, especially in this era of climate change. Whereas other countries, including China, certainly do. As the report states, Chinese science in the Arctic is "motivated by a drive for the 'right to speak,' for cultivating China's 'identity' as an Arctic state, and for securing resources and strategic access."

Ocean science is an area where our country needs to work together much more effectively to stay influential at the international level. Yet we seem to be restricting science (e.g., by neglecting research vessel capacity) and often sidelining science as somehow being 'esoteric.' It's noticeable that practicing researchers are absent or in an extreme minority on boards of some major ocean-related initiatives that have cropped up over the past decade. It's unclear why this is and where these organizations get their scientific advice about the state of the world and about future priorities.

I'm also struck how more and more major scientific discoveries about the Arctic Ocean and our other ocean spaces, such as the Northwest Atlantic, including threats to coastal ecosystems, fisheries and other climate change issues, are being published by scientists from other nations without Canadian involvement. There are exceptions, but Canada's scientific contributions, even about 'our' part of the world ocean, are becoming less visible internationally. I sense this is now a very real problem.

There are some credible initiatives to turn this around, but we will have to encourage different sectors to collaborate more effectively to ensure Canada has a continuing 'right to speak' in order to guide and inform international policy that affects even our own waters.

One example of this can be working together to improve access to the ocean for Canadian researchers. See: "An intro to Modular Ocean Research Infrastructure (MORI)"

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U78YVefWknE>).

HMCS Calgary strengthens interoperability with Japan and Australia

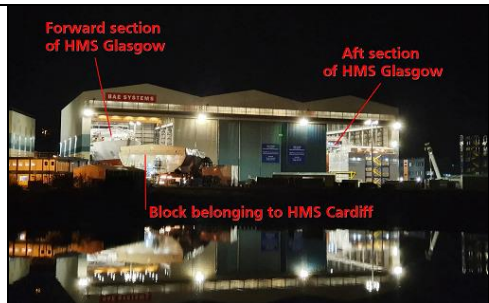
<http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/news-operations/news-view.page?doc=hmcs-calgary-strengthens-interoperability-with-japan-and-australia/kmjsv64a>



Cooperative deployment (CODEP), a short multinational exercise involving electronic warfare, maneuver, helicopter and communications drills, with a replenishment-at-sea (RAS) and a photo exercise (PHOTEX). Reads a lot like a traditional passing exercise (PASSEX). Certainly not the normal way one understands the word deployment (a long, home port-to-home port sailing). But CODEP as a term may be useful for international relations purposes, might even be a term from a foreign navy. Language reflects the needs of the times.

Glimpse of first new Type 26 Frigate in build in Glasgow

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/glimpse-of-first-new-type-26-frigate-in-build-in-glasgow/>



A good communications technique in the article by UK Defence Journal. Probably all shipyards publish progress and

roll-out pictures of vessels under construction. Fine for mariners and 'shipfans,' but aspects of pictures can be lost on the general public. To counter that, UKFJ annotated shipbuilding pictures with arrows and text.

A tweeter also demonstrated a good technique (see:

<https://twitter.com/JosephPrice6/status/1368145191324938240>), using a ship graphic to relate a build section (block, mega-module, etc., in Canadian shipbuilding language) in a picture to the overall ship.

Would be good to see use of these techniques as Canadian shipbuilding projects progress. There is a lot of public interest in the projects.

Nuclear error — Did Australia's subs selection miss the boat?

<https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/maritime-antisub/7896-nuclear-error-did-australia-s-subs-selection-miss-the-boat>

Considerations on nuclear versus diesel for powering submarines. Considerations for Canadians what with geo-strategic similarities between Australia and Canada, and what with the requirement to replace the Canadian Victoria-class submarines in the coming years. There is a need for a public discussion about the evolution of the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS 2.0?), what ship builds will be part of the NSS, and what builds (crewed and drone) will become our next Canadian Submarine Force.



\$1.8M contract to dismantle former navy ship challenged by rival bidder

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/1-8-million-contract-to-dismantle-cormorant-challenged-by-rival-bidder-1.5971948>

Ship breaking is part of the 'life cycle' of vessels, including those of the government such as warships and coast guard ships. The disposal of vessels, including once they are no longer government responsibility, needs to be carefully monitored by government authorities.

Ship breaking has long been a topic of interest to RUSI(NS). See, for example: "Breaking Up Former Canadian Warships" (<https://rusi-ns.ca/breaking-up-former-canadian-warships/>) and "Ships Stop Here – A Beginning, Not an End" (<https://rusi-ns.ca/ships-stop-here-a-beginning-not-an-end/>).



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

China 'not afraid of falling behind' on military technology, analyst says

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3129672/china-not-afraid-falling-behind-military-technology-analyst>

Federal Budget 2021: Money promised for military sex misconduct fight, NORAD upgrades

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/money-promised-for-military-sex-misconduct-fight-norad-upgrades-1.5393592>



Federal budget resurrects 'economic harm' warning as fighter jet contract nears

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/fighter-jets-boeing-warning-1.5994031>



Other Sources:

#Arctic

How Polar Security and Space Security are Linked—and Why the US Coast Guard Should Bridge the Gap

<https://mwi.usma.edu/how-polar-security-and-space-security-are-linked-and-why-the-us-coast-guard-should-bridge-the-gap/>

An Off-the-Shelf Guide to Extended Continental Shelves and the Arctic

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/shelf-guide-extended-continental-shelves-and-arctic>

#China

What the Whitsun Reef incident tells us about China's future operations at sea

<https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2021/04/whitsun-reef-incident-china>

#defence policy

Military implications in latest federal budget

<https://defence.frontline.online/blogs/624-Ken-Pole/16349-Military-implications-in-latest-federal-budget>

#defence procurement

Canadian Surface Combatants and the statement of requirements fiasco

<https://www.hilltimes.com/2021/04/19/canadian-surface-combatants-and-the-statement-of-requirements-fiasco/292967>

If unable to access the article, email RUSI(NS) for a copy.

#drones

Report to Congress on Army Optionally Manned Fighting Vehicle Program

<https://news.usni.org/2021/04/20/report-to-congress-on-army-optionally-manned-fighting-vehicle-program>

#lawfare

The Whitsun Reef Incident and the Law of the Sea

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/whitsun-reef-incident-and-law-sea>

#legal

No Legal Objection, Per Se

<http://warontherocks.com/2021/04/no-legal-objection-per-se/>

#logistics

Gallipoli. It's all about logistics.

lessons: <https://wavelroom.com/2021/04/16/gallipoli-its-all-about-logistics/>

#maritime security

Chinese Maritime Militia Disperses Amid Political Standoff With the Philippines and the United States <https://www.lawfareblog.com/water-wars-chinese-maritime-militia-disperses-amid-political-standoff-philippines-and-united-states>

#professional military education

Bring Back Education for Seapower

<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2021/april/bring-back-education-seapower>

#Russia

Russian Assessments and Applications of the Correlation of Forces and Means

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4235.html

#seapower

Sea Power: A Personal Theory of Power

<https://cimsec.org/sea-power-personal-theory-power/>

American Sea Power at a Crossroads: A Plan to Restore the US Navy's Maritime Advantage

<https://www.hudson.org/research/16406-american-sea-power-at-a-crossroads-a-plan-to-restore-the-us-navy-s-maritime-advantage>

#strategy

Incomplete strategy and niche contributions — Australia leaves Afghanistan after 20 years

<https://theconversation.com/incomplete-strategy-and-niche-contributions-australia-leaves-afghanistan-after-20-years-159045>

Britain's New Strategic Outlook: The View from Washington

<http://warontherocks.com/2021/04/britains-new-strategic-outlook-the-view-from-washington/>

#warfare

Competition and Decision in the Gray Zone

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/4/20/competition-and-decision-in-the-gray-zone-a-new-national-security-strategy>

Hybrid War and What to Do About It

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/4/21/hybrid-war-and-what-to-do-about-it>

Not just for SOF anymore: Envisioning Irregular Warfare as a Joint Force Priority

<https://mwi.usma.edu/not-just-for-sof-anymore-envisioning-irregular-warfare-as-a-joint-force-priority/>

Other:

Research Notice:

Women's Perception of the Canadian Armed Forces as an Obstacle to Female Retention

We would like to invite you to participate in our research project called “Women’s perception of the Canadian Armed Forces as an obstacle to female retention” led by Dr. Isabelle Caron from the School of Public Administration at Dalhousie and her colleagues Dr. Stéfanie Von Hlatky from Queen’s University and Dr. Stéphane Roussel from École nationale d’administration publique (ENAP). This project focuses on women’s retention in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). More specifically, it aims to understand the relationship between women’s perception of the CAF culture and their decision to leave the organization.

Please find attached a detailed description of the research project. (*Editor: available on request to RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com*)

Should you have any questions or are interested in participating in this research project, please contact Dr. Isabelle Caron at isabelle.caron@dal.ca.

Best regards,
Isabelle Caron, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Public Administration
Dalhousie University

Security Affairs Committee Notes

CAF Leadership and Government Stewardship

It was a disturbing conversation in regard to the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) this past meeting. The question of how people are selected for higher command within the CAF was raised. Certainly, it seemed like the moral compass of many of our senior leaders is now in question. These folks were selected, supposedly put through a rigorous selection process and also vetted for past incidents. It seems that there are significant flaws in the process. This being said, there also seems to be a lack of tolerance for ‘youthful stupidity’ that everyone I know of, military or civilian, has as a cringe moment in their lives sometime. If we expect perfection in anyone’s character, then we are in for disappointment. How many folks are perfect? The actual answer is no one. So in our desire for perfection do we destroy the good? Before we slam anyone or reject them, let us make sure what we have to replace them with is perfect in that they have never taken a chance and therefore is actually a mediocrity. This is not to condone a criminal act at any time, but maybe we should be looking at people in a way that takes account of their flaws as well as their official performance, and to accept the flaws when appropriate. The members of the CAF deserve good leaders who can lead when the going gets tough. I suspect we will need leaders capable of adaptability and flexibility and who at the same time will use history and tradition in a positive way and eliminate those parts that no longer are applicable to today’s environment. The best way to avoid embarrassment is to accept errors when they happen and try to sort out the issue with cooperation of all parties. The CAF is a national institution that has generally performed well in everything it has been asked to do in recent years. What the CAF is not is a political football. As an institution it can be hurt badly by political grandstanding or comments that do not reflect reality. Our service personnel deserve much better than they currently receiving from our masters. Let us lance the boil of our issues and let the CAF concentrate on its

ultimate mission - the defence of Canada

Inside Russia And Environs

It was announced in world media that Alexei Navalny's health condition is deteriorating quickly. As of Sunday, April 18, 2021 he is on day 18 of his hunger strike. Doctors state that he is now suffering from kidney failure and potentially other life-threatening issues. Keep in mind, Mr Navalny was still suffering from the after-effects of his Novichok poisoning that has been directly connected to the Putin regime. His pre-incarceration symptoms included loss of feeling in his legs and severe back issues as a result of his exposure to the chemical agent. Prison authorities are stating that this is not true and that he remains healthy, although there is talk of forced feeding. The regime remains relatively quiet on this issue at the moment, but it is suspected they would only cry crocodile tears if Navalny was to die. The regime is cracking down on opposition but if one looks at blogs and other social media efforts from Russia, things do not seem to be going the entirely the way the regime would like as Putin's popularity rating steadily decreases. On Monday, Alexei Navalny was admitted to the prison hospital. This was likely to further isolate him from his followers as the prison is actually a prisoner TB facility. The opposition is calling for mass demonstrations on Wednesday evening just after President Putin gives the Russian 'State of the Union' address. This duelling narrative will be an event to watch. Demonstration season is just around the corner.

Russia continues its build up its forces on the Ukrainian borders and coast. The current figure from open sources is 56 Battalion Tactical Groups, each being an all arms (recce, armour, artillery and infantry based on motorised or mechanised forces) grouping of around 1000 personnel give or take a few hundred, each maybe slightly different in composition. These are likely to fall under the command of the three Armies currently in Southern Military District believed to be the 8th, 58th and 49th Armies, but that again is from open sources and therefore not entirely reliable. Russia also has access to the Black Sea Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla as well as units available from the Mediterranean Flotilla and units from other fleets. Two airborne divisions from the airborne forces, the 7th and 76th, are likely in the Crimea. The command relationship with Belarussian forces on Ukraine's northern border is unknown and there is little information as to their size. Today, fifteen units of the Caspian Flotilla are moving through the Russian canal systems to the Sea of Azov, and four units of the Baltic Fleet are reported to be moving to reinforce the Black Sea Fleet. A sizeable number of these vessels are assumed to be amphibious transports. Two Baltic Fleet amphibious vessels entered the Bosphorus on Sunday, 18 April 2021. Posturing or not, it is hard to tell. As an aside, two British warships, a destroyer and a frigate, will break off from the UK Carrier Strike Group currently exercising in the Mediterranean and will enter the Black Sea in support of Ukraine.

On The Diplomatic Scene

The Czech Republic has expelled 18 Russian diplomats who the Czech authorities are calling spies as well as accusing Russia of sabotage at a Czech ammunition depot in 2014. This is on top of President Biden's expelling ten Russian diplomats from the US this week. Further sanctions are likely pending from the US and EU and other Western nations based on Russia's ongoing aggressive activities. The UK supported the Czech's actions publicly on Sunday.

Latest polls by the Levada Institute show a continuing decline in Russian adventurism around the world as their economy and consequently their livelihoods are impacted by Putin's actions. There is growing concern that this does little for actual Russian prestige and definitely hampers the growth of the Russian economy. Government corruption is considered a major issue as well.

Today, Wednesday, 21 April 2021, President Putin will be speaking to the Russian Federation. It is expected that he will be talking about the actions he is taking against perceived actions that the Russian Government find offensive. He is also expected to include his views on what constitutes the Russian Government's 'red lines' in the Ukraine and other areas. It is expected that he is going to continue the

19th century concept of spheres of influence as opposed to the right of any sovereign country to determine its own path in internal and international affairs.

Speaking of the UK, the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced a key visit to India in late April, around the 25th. Topics that are already known are: defence and security, the Indo-Pacific including Britain's new return to East of Suez, Chinese aggression, climate change and the pandemic. Indian media seems very hopeful that this will be a complete realignment with Britain and will also be a game changer for India. India is discussing building at least one Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier to bring the Indian Navy up to three carrier battle groups. India's growing relationship with Western powers is a positive event in view of China's ongoing aggression - this is a major change for India. Russia has been less friendly towards India and further moving towards an increased relationship with China instead of India. Keep in mind, most Russians do not trust China and that the Putin regime's move towards a more China-focused policy may not be popular with many Russians.

China And The Far East

Turning to China, Xi Jinping has accepted President Biden's invitation to a 38-country climate summit. Secretary Kerry had visited China last week to discuss cooperation on climate change. China is responsible for over 50% of the world's greenhouse gases. It is currently building hundreds of coal fired plants in third world countries all the while discussing climate action. It is this dual track that China takes on a regular basis, saying one thing then doing the exact opposite in other places- not only in regard to climate change but also in economic terms, international relations, legal issues calling out other countries while conducting deplorable actions against international court decisions.

The Communist Chinese Party (CCP) continues to remove opposition wherever they find it, whether an entrepreneur such as Jack Ma or a Hong Kong media owner who supported the democracy movement, and to arrest other democracy advocates. China has also introduced a new program of propaganda and misinformation on Xinxiang Province or as it is properly known occupied East Turkistan which was an independent country from 1944 to 1950 until invaded and occupied by the Peoples' Liberation Army. Tibet's culture has also been attacked over time and many cultural traditions have been eliminated or carefully monitored. Even the Dalai Lama's replacement will be a CCP appointment. The CCP is trying to replace its minorities with "happy traditional singers and dancers" showing the beneficence of the CCP.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has chosen to provide an opportunity for a totalitarian state to showcase itself thus displaying the same horrific absence of morality and ethical behavior. I wonder if the IOC knew about the Nazi concentration camps before 1936. The current IOC has proven time after time that their ability to make decisions seems more predicated on the amount of money involved as opposed to any altruistic drive. The Winter Olympics should be moved from China. It is the only moral, ethical and sensible decision.

The Chinese Maritime Militia did disperse from Whitsun Reef they did leave some structures there and are remaining in the area although not specifically on the reef itself. President Duterte has stated that if Chinese try to drill for oil, he would have Philippine forces open fire, something that will add to the general instability of the area. With the Philippine President it is not always easy to tell when he is posturing or whether he means it. Who would have thought that executing 'drug dealers in their thousands' would occur? In a China-Philippine confrontation, where would the West or even local allies stand if the Philippines start the conflict? The potential of knock-on effect would be vastly increased and virtually become uncontrollable.

Summary

There is a lot going on near the Ukraine and in the Middle East. Africa also has a number of issues such as the ongoing battle in the Sahel and the death during a frontline visit of the Chadian President while visiting troops. Seeing Ottawa baffle while the world burns is not encouraging. The

NORAD modernization is coming far too late and I fear we will have to pay the piper in a short while. We will need statesmen of a level unseen in generations to get out of this period. I fear they do not exist.

The Passing Of Richard McNair

The last point is to recognize the passing of a good friend and comrade, PO1 Richard McNair, RCN (ret'd), who I got to know within RUSI(NS). Richard passed away on April 20th. I had the pleasure of many telephone calls, lunches, Celtic Corner meetings, presentations and social events. We had mutual friends whom we knew from other organizations and he had many stories. He was a naval gunner by trade when gun turrets were still manned. He was our Chief Information Officer for our Institute and the actual publisher of *Dispatches*. We are lucky to have known him and are poorer for his loss. I sincerely hope that he is now sailing on fair weather and following seas.

Veterans Affairs Canada virtual panel – Remembrance in a digital age

Remembering the brave Canadians who have put their lives on the line defending peace and freedom is as important as ever. Yet how we commemorate our Veterans' service and sacrifice is changing. While monuments and ceremonies will always have their place, we have to evolve our commemorative activities to embrace more digital tools and spaces if we want to truly engage with Canadians.

Join us at 12:00 PM ET on 29 April 2021 for a one-hour virtual panel discussion on the future of commemoration in Canada. This time we will be talking about remembrance in the digital age.

Panelists will be:

- Captain Kirk Sullivan from [@CAFinUS](#);
- Carolyn Patton from the [Vimy Foundation](#) and;
- Caroline Dromaguet from the [Canadian War Museum](#)

The discussion will be moderated by Anthony Wilson-Smith from [Historica Canada](#).

To register, please email us at vac.education-education.acc@veterans.gc.ca and include the following:

- Language preference for the session (English, French or bilingual)
- Any questions you have for the panelists

This session is not specifically aimed at students, but if you feel this subject would be a good fit for your classroom please sign up by April 23 to take part. Note: These themes could be too advanced for elementary-aged children.

If you are not able to watch the live event, the session will also be available for later viewing on our [website \(https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/commemorative-events/virtual-panels\)](https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/commemorative-events/virtual-panels). Please share this message with anyone you think would appreciate the opportunity to see this interesting discussion.

Thank you,
The Veterans Affairs Canada Learning Team