



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

25 June 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 news of interest, including posts 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.

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.

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Events:

To list an event in *Dispatches*, email RUSI(NS) by noon Thursday. RUSI(NS) events are by invitation. 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.

Save the Date: 21 July, Wednesday – (TBC) Distinguished Speaker event, planned topic to be "Arctic Special Operations."

Advance reading: USNORTHCOM and Special Operations Command North discuss the future of SOF for Homeland Defense

<https://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/Article/2622975/usnorthcom-and-special-operations-command-north-discuss-the-future-of-sof-for-h/>

Note: There will be no Distinguished Speaker event in August.

Recent Publications:

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

New: RUSI(NS) Presentation "Canadian Joint Warfare Centre – Wargaming" by Scott Roach, 23 June 2021

<https://rusi-ns.ca/wargaming/>

New: RUSI(NS) Information Note "Commissioning Canadian Navy Ships," 23 June 2021

<https://rusi-ns.ca/commissioning/>

RUSI(NS) Paper "The Princess Louise Fusiliers Diversity Soldier Experience Program" by Second Lieutenant Ahmed Elkar and Captain Michael Gray, 5 June 2021

<https://rusi-ns.ca/dsep/>

RUSI(NS) Presentation "The Canadian Army at an Inflection Point – Delivering Excellence Today and into the Future" by Brigadier-General J.J. Major, 2 June 2021

https://rusi-ns.ca/canadian_army/

New: The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Occasional* Volume 6, Issue 6, 22 June 2021.

New: The Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué* Volume XXXIX Number 7 July - August 2021.

Naval Association of Canada, Ottawa Branch, presentation by Andrew Miller, Irving Shipbuilding, "Delivering the AOPS" on HMCS *Harry DeWolf* at-sea trials, 14 June 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivefPUQIOTA>

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch* 16 June edition

https://send.successbyemail.com/prvw_message2.aspx?chno=21ed1542-93bf-4cf9-a347-bb9f927a4a67

The Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*, Volume 54, 3rd Quarter 2021.

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches* June 2021

<https://rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/74-security-issues-in-the-arctic-region-part-ii?userid=306-QqXJ7Y1xfzfd0M&tmpl=raw>

Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt* June 2021 Edition.

The United Services Institute of Nanaimo and North Island *Newsletter* Vol 29 No 06 June 2021.

Company of Master Mariners of Canada Maritimes Division Newsletter *The Foghorn* June 2021

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.

3 new tactical, transportable, long-range air surveillance & aerospace control radars to be procured for @RCAF_ARC <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/news/2021/06/government-of-canada-awards-contracts-for-new-tactical-control-radars.html> Replace TFS-70 radars <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/defence-capabilities-blueprint/project-details.asp?id=1711> #AirPower is more than just aircraft #RCAF



#RCAF Aeromedical Biocontainment Evacuation System (ABES) is "an aeromedical evacuation device that happens to do biocontainment" <https://skiesmag.com/news/rcaf-biocontainment-system-helping-transport-manitoba-covid-patients/> @RCAF_ARC envisions use "for any mission that we are going to fly a patient on a" CC177 or CC130 #COVID19 #OpLASER (RCAF biocontainment system helping transport Manitoba #COVID patients)



Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations tweeted 20 Jun: A Cdn Army Combat Diver is training a new generation of Guyana Defence Force divers! WO Joseph George is collaborating with the US Special Forces Divers team to train the GDF's divers, focusing on planning & executing dive missions in a multinational environment #Tradewinds21
 RUSI(NS) retweeted: Exercise #TRADEWINDS - train to: stop organized crime & other threats that affect people across borders, humanitarian assistance & disaster relief #HADR, respond quickly to all events, strengthen partnerships including civil-military



Irving Shipbuilding @IrvingShipbuild 22 Jun tweeted: We are FOUR days out from HMCS Harry DeWolf's commissioning. Join us for a trip down memory lane as we highlight the build process of @HMCSHarryDeWolf. 9 months following first steel, the keel for HMCS Harry DeWolf was laid! @RoyalCanNavy #ShipsForCanada
 RUSI(NS) Information Note "Commissioning Canadian Navy Ships" <https://rusi-ns.ca/commissioning/>



Canadian Armed Forces Operations @CFOperations 22 Jun tweeted: On June 16th, 10 more CAF members were sent to Kashechewan First Nation to augment the 14 Canadian Rangers that have been actively supporting #COVID19 relief efforts since June 1st. Together they're distributing humanitarian aid and building temporary shelters. #OpLASER
 RUSI(NS) retweeted: Operation LASER #OpLASER = @CanadianForces response to worldwide pandemic situation <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/laser.html> Objectives: save lives; assist federal, provincial, territorial & regional partners; maintain #CAF readiness, effectiveness & resilience #CanadianRangers



Legion Magazine @Legion_Magazine 23 Jun tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Royal Canadian Navy hopes to have three of its four submarines at sea by year's end: (Canadian navy aims to have 3 submarines at sea by end of 2021

<https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/canadian-navy-aims-to-have-3-submarines-at-sea-by-end-of-2021-1.5482360>)



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Royal Navy's Antarctic survey ship Protector ready for deployment

<https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/naval-news/naval-news-archive/2021/june/10324-royal-navy-s-antarctic-survey-ship-protector-ready-for-deployment.html>



"HMS Protector's crew includes to a team of permanent divers, who undertake exploratory surveys and ensure that environmental guidelines are being upheld."

Royal Canadian Navy ships (really, most large naval ships) have divers embarked. Likely PROTECTOR's divers are more advanced, ice-qualified, than the Ship's Divers in our frigates and small patrol vessels. Whether the Harry DeWolf-class Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessels (AOPV) will have special divers as part of their ship's company is not known. Certainly the AOPV have the accommodation and storage to embark extra divers to undertake surveys and scientific research in our North.

"... new permanent storage facility, which allows the ship to carry more supplies for herself and other agencies and organizations who live and work around the frozen continent ..." "The training reached its climax with a complex salvage, disaster relief and collision and grounding exercise – it's entirely possible Protector may need to rescue a stranded or stricken vessel/crew."

These sentences speak to some of the tasks that multi-role vessels like our AOPV could undertake. The Harry DeWolf-class have the capability to carry cargo material and fuel (and even vehicles) for Arctic and Northern service support. And whilst all combatants such as frigates are ready to undertake emergency (collision, grounding) and disaster relief tasks (salvage is a specialized task in which frigates have very limited capability), the AOPV is designed better for these. A balanced navy should have, and with the AOPV the Royal Canadian Navy is now getting, vessels more designed as multi-role.

'The Army has a transparency problem' — Inside the Army's failure to communicate

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-public-affairs-transparency-failure/>

The article is US but lessons can be taken by other militaries, including Canada's. In public information/media operations, speed and agility (getting ahead of the story) are as important as they are for other defence, security and safety activities.



Competitors Vie for Army Arctic Vehicle Contract

<https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2021/6/18/c-competitors-vie-for-army-arctic-vehicle-contract>

"Summer poses significant challenges for many wheeled vehicles, while the most challenging period is the spring thaw when ground movement becomes impossible across considerable swaths of territory ..."

Some people tend to think that it is the ice and snow of the Arctic and North that are the challenges for cross-country mobility. But really conditions are much more varied. Still very challenging, though.

The BV 206 Tracked Carrier (<http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/equipment/vehicles/bv-206-tracked-carrier.page>) provides an Arctic capability to the Canadian Army. Other vehicles have been trialed; see: "Extreme expedition: testing prototype vehicles in Canada's Arctic" (<https://www.canada.ca/en/defence-research-development/news/articles/extreme-expedition-testing-prototype-vehicles-canadas-arctic.html>).



Death Without Deterrence, or Why Tripwire Forces Are Not Enough

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/06/death-without-deterrence-or-why-tripwire-forces-are-not-enough/>

"In peacetime, policymakers should deploy abroad troop contingents that, by the virtue of their front-line deployment, are guaranteed to fight and are large enough to shift the local balance of power and complicate attacker war plans by themselves."

Canadian forces in Latvia as part of a NATO 'enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group' are not there to be a trip-wire 'bump in the road' if Russia decides to roll troops over that country. The Canadians are there to make the Russians think twice about whether Latvia and the other Baltic states can be taken quickly and without serious consequence. That means the Canadians have to be battle ready, training with Latvian and other troops that are part of the battle group. And it means Canada and NATO need to have serious forces to move quickly into the Baltics if fighting breaks out there. The strategic lift of those forces needs to be planned, resourced (ships! airlifters!) and exercised.



China Policy and the Five Eyes

<https://rusi.org/commentary/china-policy-and-five-eyes>

"The Chinese assertion that the (Five Eyes) grouping acts as a decision-making body for foreign policy toward China – a so-called anti-China coalition – is an affront to the self-determination of each member state. An intelligence sharing arrangement is of great value to the members in informing their foreign policy decisions, but it should not be misinterpreted as directing them."



US Will Try Using Lasers to Send Data From Space to Drones

<https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2021/06/pentagon-will-try-using-lasers-send-data-space-drones/174810/>

Tests of communication by optical links (lasers) to aerial drones. Laser comms has long been the stuff of science-fiction stories (e.g., between space ships). Cool to see reality catching up. If such a very high bandwidth, low latency and low probability of jam communication network succeeds, it'll open up a fascinating new aspect to communications and to communications warfare.



Positions of Two NATO Ships Were Falsified Near Russian Black Sea Naval Base

<https://news.usni.org/2021/06/21/positions-of-two-nato-ships-were-falsified-near-russian-black-sea-naval-base>

The practice of deception can be challenging, especially in these information and sensor rich times. What appears to one sensor can be quite different to another. Deception needs to be carefully planned by people well versed in it. It needs to be carefully integrated into plans and activities and not something just 'tacked on.' Most of all, deception is a significant force multiplier and must be a routine part of Canadian military doctrine and practice.



Across the Expanse: The Sealift Dilemma in a War Against China

<https://cimsec.org/across-the-expanse-the-sealift-dilemma-in-a-war-against-china/>

Sealift is a Canadian problem, too. Part of the overall maritime logistics issue.

For in-depth reading of the issue, albeit US, see:

Sustaining the Fight: Resilient Maritime Logistics for a New Era

<https://csbaonline.org/research/publications/sustaining-the-fight-resilient-maritime-logistics-for-a-new-era>



Disinformation, Annexation, & Deterrence: Why the CCP Is More Likely to Subvert Taiwan Than Invade

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/disinformation-annexation-deterrence-why-ccp-more-likely-subvert-taiwan-invade-0>

The way of warfare now and in the future.

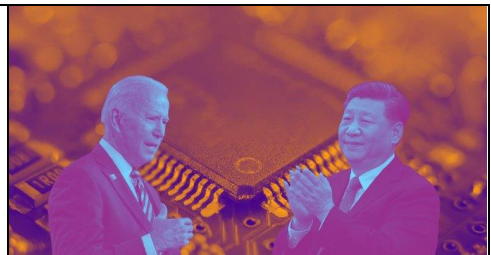


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The Global Semiconductor Shortage, International Security, & U.S – China Tech Competition

<https://cdainstitute.ca/the-global-semiconductor-shortage-international-security-u-s-china-tech-competition/>



‘This May Not Be The Big One’: Army Scientists Warn of Deadlier Pandemics to Come

<https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2021/06/may-not-be-big-one-army-scientists-warn-deadlier-pandemics-come/174853/>



This enormous drone gun can pluck UAVs right out of the sky

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2021/06/22/this-enormous-drone-gun-can-pluck-uavs-right-out-of-the-sky/>



Other Sources:

#Arctic

Documents on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security

<https://arts.ucalgary.ca/centre-military-security-strategic-studies/research/publications/documents-canadian-arctic-sovereignty-and>

#Canadian Armed Forces

The Canadian Armed Forces Primary Reserves and Aid to the Civil Power

<https://jmss.org/article/view/69657>

#child soldiers

Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict

https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Children-Armed-Conflict_Report-Summary-2020.pdf

#China

Military Political Work at the CCP's Centennial

<https://jamestown.org/program/military-political-work-at-the-ccps-centennial/>

Term alert! "The phrase "military political work" (军队政治工作, *jundui zhengzhi gongzuo*) is an overarching term that describes all the efforts and activities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) aimed at managing human capital and influencing the civilian environment in order to achieve the political and military objectives accorded to it by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Military political work focuses on the human dimensions of the PLA as an institution, the human dimensions of warfare, and civil-military relations in the People's Republic of China (PRC)."

#cyber operations #legal

"Cyber disruption," ransomware, and critical infrastructure: A new US understanding of "attack"?

<https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2021/06/18/cyber-disruption-ransomware-and-critical-infrastructure-a-new-us-understanding-of-attack/>

#information operations

We Ignore the Human Domain at Our Own Peril

<https://mwi.usma.edu/we-ignore-the-human-domain-at-our-own-peril/>

#intelligence

Introducing Social Media Intelligence (SOMINT) into the Operational Environment

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5383978fe4b0d3b0eccc0f74/t/554d0790e4b020ab2ee3f1db/1431111568312/SOMINT_DHGeo_WP_2015.pdf

#legal

Britain's U-turn on torture – how defence figures defended human rights

Lessons in consequential advocacy and government: <https://defenceindepth.co/2021/06/22/britains-u-turn-on-torture-how-defence-figures-defended-human/>

The Overseas Operations Bill "provides stronger legal protections for service personnel and veterans facing the threat of repeated investigations and potential prosecution."

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/overseas-operations-bill-completes-passage-in-parliament>)

#NATO

A Renaissance for Strategy? The NATO Summit 2021

<https://rusi.org/commentary/renaissance-strategy-nato-summit-2021>

#Russia

Russia's Posture in the Mediterranean: Implications for NATO and Europe

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/06/08/russia-s-posture-in-mediterranean-implications-for-nato-and-europe-pub-84670>

#piracy

Marine Piracy: A Continuing Challenge

<https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004380271/BP000079.xml>

Part of the operating environment of navies. Part of one of the legs of the Booth Triangle.

#planning

Developing a Combatant Command Campaign Plan: Lessons Learned at US Central Command

<https://mwi.usma.edu/developing-a-combatant-command-campaign-plan-lessons-learned-at-us-central-command/>

US but does highlight the complexity of high level planning.

#policing

Improving police transparency in Canada

<https://journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/206/527>

#reading

The Navy Needs Deep Readers, Not Reading Lists

<https://cimsec.org/the-navy-needs-deep-readers-not-reading-lists/>

#shipping

The Lloyd's List Podcast: Shipping has an image problem

<https://lloydslist.maritimeintelligence.informa.com/LL1137226/The-Lloyds-List-Podcast-Shipping-has-an-image-problem>

Autonomous Ships and Safety at Sea

<https://thedigitalship.com/news/electronics-navigation/item/7365-one-sea-white-paper-sets-agenda-for-autonomous-ship-safety-regulation>

Organization Of Maritime Transport

<https://www.goodloading.com/en/blog/containers/organization-of-maritime-transport/>

Recapitalizing Strategic Sealift Should Be DoD's Number One Modernization Priority

<https://cimsec.org/recapitalizing-strategic-sealift-should-be-dods-number-one-modernization-priority/>

Obsolescence, Chokepoints, and the Maritime Militia: Facing Primary Threats to U.S. Sealift

<https://cimsec.org/obsolescence-chokepoints-and-the-maritime-militia-facing-primary-threats-to-u-s-sealift/>

#strategy

Is 'Art of War' relevant to maritime strategy?

<https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/is-art-of-war-relevant-to-maritime-strategy>

The WEIRD World Wars

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/6/22/the-weird-world-wars>

#tactics

Tactics in an Era of Great Power Competition

<https://mwi.usma.edu/tactics-in-an-era-of-great-power-competition/>

#training

The Vampire Fallacy: Virtual Reality vs Needs Based Strategies

<https://wavellroom.com/2021/06/17/virtual-reality-strategy-military/>

#warfare

Tempo, Cohesion, and Risk: Towards a Theory of Multi Domain Warfare

<https://wvrellroom.com/2021/06/18/tempo-cohesion-and-risk-towards-a-theory-of-multi-domain-warfare/>

Tempo, Cohesion, and Risk: Towards a Theory of Multi Domain Warfare

<https://wvrellroom.com/2021/06/18/tempo-cohesion-and-risk-towards-a-theory-of-multi-domain-warfare/>

Hybrid warfare: Australia's (not so) new normal

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/hybrid-warfare-australias-not-so-new-normal/>

Book Review - The Hall of Mirrors: War and Warfare in the Twentieth Century

<https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/land-power-forum/book-review-hall-mirrors-war-and-warfare-twentieth-century>

Other:

Veterans Affairs Canada survey on the future of remembrance in Canada

https://letstalkveterans.ca/commemoration-2/survey_tools/your-perspective1212111

"Your suggestions and ideas will help shape the future of remembrance in Canada and how we will implement our 10-year Strategic plan for commemoration."

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

It is troubling that so much legislation is being sprung on Parliament at the last second including some that require a bit more oversight to ensure unintended consequences are looked at before being passed. It is not to say the legislation is wrong but the speed and last minute attempts to pass this are troubling and show a lack of planning and preparation. Many of these acts will have generational effects and need more than a cursory review and debate. The devil is always in the details and the second, third and fourth order of effects should be examined first. There is some reason to believe that the Senate may cause these items to be delayed and possibly to die on the agenda before a possible election this fall.

The ongoing issues of sexual misconduct are taking on a whole new dynamic. We now have a general officer suing the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and Public Health Minister for his removal. MGen Danny Fortin has stated in his suit that there was undue political interference and has asked for reinstatement or to be assigned an appropriate position. MGen Fortin has not been able to defend himself from an accuser from over 30 years ago or even the actual circumstances. It could get ugly.

It has also been alleged that the Defence Minister's Office has interfered with the circumstances and actions surrounding accusations and events around senior officers, again troubling. One only has to remember the actions that led to Vice-Admiral Norman receiving a large cash settlement because of interference.

There seems to be an unfortunate pattern here that has directly affected the Canadian Armed Forces in a highly negative way - a lot of these situations are alleged and not properly investigated before the individual is in fact found guilty by media. Their careers are ruined no matter what the findings and they will be forever haunted by the accusations. Each one of these individuals has been successful and has received the education and experience to occupy their position and this takes decades. In a matter of a few months literally hundreds of years' worth of experience has been lost at a time when the world's situation continues to deteriorate rather quickly. Is this the time to remove people based on unproven allegations or should we wait a bit first to see if they are real and requiring charges? It is not as if we have dozens of folks stacked up and waiting.

Putin-Biden Meeting

The Biden-Putin Summit went well although many pundits stated that they thought President Biden had blundered by giving President Putin an opportunity to be on the world stage as an equal. It was the recognition he wanted. I am not sure that is true at all despite the comments. President Biden is perhaps the best equipped President in years; he has experience in virtually all facets of government and foreign policy. He orchestrated the program from start to finish and seems to understand the other guy's ego and actions. It really did two things for the US. First, it got the return of ambassadors and with further talks on countering the recent tit-for-tat actions against diplomatic personnel. Second, it allowed the respective 'red lines' to be declared and implied consequences especially in regard to cyber-security issues. I especially liked the comment alleged from President Biden that simply said we have a strong cyber capability as well. Subtle but clear. Clarity and communication is never a bad thing, and this summit did this work. I do not believe President Biden really cares about image, just the outcome.

Israel

Israel has a new coalition government based on eight political parties that are as diverse as one can get. They seemed to be more united in removing Benjamin Netanyahu than actually governing. One is a pro-hardline Palestinian party coupled with a hard right wing party of Naftali Bennett. It does not look like a long term effort but it could be a surprisingly effective if they listen to one another. The other issue is that the former Prime Minister is now able to be charged and tried for various crimes. May be that is the real answer for their cooperation but not a long term solution.

Iran

Iran had an 'election' on 18 June 2021 and the Chief of the Judiciary was elected as the new President. He is Ebrahim Raisi, also thought to be a possible successor to Ayatollah Khamenei, the current head of the Guardian Council and the de facto leader of the country. The election only had a 34% turnout; one of the lowest since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. He is well known as a 'hanging judge' due to the large number of people executed post the Iran Iraq war of the 1980s. He is not for the faint of heart. The real problem is that all potential moderate (by Iranian standards) were eliminated so it became more of a coronation rather than an election. Still the regime has to worry about the longer term as so many avoided even bothering to vote. It effects the legitimacy of the regime. The economy is in tatters due to US sanctions but also more importantly rampant corruption especially in regard to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, essentially a government within the government.

President-elect Raisi has been forthright in recent press conferences. He will not meet with President Biden, he will negotiate the nuclear deal with the West in order to remove sanctions, he will not allow the ballistic missile capability to be negotiated and he will fight corruption and improve the economy. The press were mainly from 'tame' media so no difficult questions.

The other piece is the shutdown of their only nuclear reactor last week. Details are sketchy, but Israel is once again being blamed. As much as I dislike the idea of Iran ever acquiring the 'bomb,' playing with nuclear fuel and nuclear facilities is not a good idea for anyone. One hopes that level heads will prevail.

Russia

As mentioned, the Biden-Putin Summit was widely portrayed in Russia as a major success for Mr Putin. He made the news almost hourly with each news update. It has generally played well to his base but not to an increasing number of Russian citizens. The current government is generally judged as highly corrupt. The crackdown on opposition organizations is pervasive and ongoing and it is widely accepted that the United Russia Party will once again be 'voted' into the Duma with a wide majority despite their low rating being somewhat under 27% of the popular polls. The way to 'cure' this is to eliminate any opposition so that Russia will continue towards a one party state again. What does United Russia stand for in the public's mind? Corruption? At least the Communist party has the Great Patriotic War and the opposition, a position against corruption but United Russia stands for nothing that is widely accepted, except rubber stamping corrupt practices.

The Government of Russia is promoting its 'green oil' campaign drilled in the pristine Arctic against local indigenous people. The Russian government realizes that it will be years before 'green' options will be available to the world and therefore will turn on the taps.

Russia seems to be losing the pandemic as well as many folks are not getting vaccinated. Most do not trust the information from the regime and certainly do not want the Sputnik V version. The pandemic is therefore growing. Russia is also thought to be under reporting infections throughout by at least two to three times. It is officially the sixth worst in the world. The public knows this as well as they have sufficient access to information from outside Russia to know that the regime has been less than honest.

Belarus

The EU the US, UK and Canada have all placed further sanctions on Belarus and its leadership. In the case of the EU, 86 different entities and individuals have been sanctioned. These sanctions are likely to affect all major industries in Belarus including their airline, financial institutions, potash, oil and industrial goods, basically the entire economy. Belarus is buffered from reality by Russia but at some point the Putin regime will extract a 'pound of flesh' and it will not be well received by Belarusians.

The KGB and security forces are generally considered corrupt and are not well liked by the citizenry of Belarus. They are well paid by comparison and contain a criminal element. They know that they will live or die with Lukashenko. A new democratic government will not be so accommodating, so it is a case of the devil you know versus the devil you do not know. Lukashenko will likely retain their loyalty until he doesn't.

Armenia

Nikol Pashinyan has been re-elected as Prime Minister of Armenia, which was not expected as many blamed him for the loss against Azerbaijan. The conflict is still ongoing at a low level. PM Pashinyan is not Moscow's choice but is widely seen as too pro-Western. Russia was thought by many to be less than supportive during the war while Turkey has made major headway in Azerbaijan. Turkey is not neutral in Armenians' minds due to Turkey's de facto genocide against Christian Armenians in 1915. Like so many conflicts in the area, this is not over as yet.

China

Where to start with China? It is now generally accepted that China is now the biggest threat to the West, and ways to counter China's Belt and Road project's influence is being considered by the major economies. China has responded in its own ham-fisted way using its usual 'wolf warriors' such as the former Ambassador to Canada, Lu Shaye, to attack the G7 communique. There is much more on this as members of the EU, as an example, are moving towards greater trade with China and its products' It will not be an easy task to find a middle ground.

The Communist Chinese Party (CCP) is turning 100 years old this year. There was some belief that President Xi might launch an attack on Taiwan as a way to celebrate this achievement although that was never really possible given the US position and those of other nations in the area. Mind you, they did send 28 combat air craft towards Taiwan in the last seven days partly as a response to the G7 and NATO communiqués. It does bring up the fact that the CCP's rise has always been at the expense of its neighbours. It has been violent and relentless, whether in its invasion of Tibet and East Turkistan, its ongoing low level violence in the South China Seas, its seizure this year of Nepalese and Bhutanese territory, attacks in Ladakh in India and its ongoing use of financial attacks on non-complying countries such as Canada and Australia as well as 'hostage diplomacy' as we have seen in Canada with the Garrets and the Two Michaels. The CCP is a malevolent entity in all respects. Western businesses are still trying to achieve a breakthrough into the Chinese economy and market. They will throw more money after bad and they will lose it. China under the CCP is not a friend, it is at best an adversary. It is incapable of truly competing except by their under-handed rules within China.

The CCP is eliminating the last of the free press in Hong Kong (HK) by arresting the staff of Apple Daily on National Security violations and seizing their assets. The paper is now essentially insolvent and will fail shortly. The Legco is declaring that it has created a more stable HK but at the same time is eliminating what makes HK one of the greatest cities in the world for finance. The CCP is unable to handle the dynamics of modern capitalism, by ensuring the dead hand of the CCP stops innovation and free access to ideas.

Demonstrations are occurring across China on an educational proposal to merge private degree granting colleges with vocational schools. This is seen as a direct problem for Chinese students who see this as a way of lowering the value of their degrees. It has not gone over well and is ongoing not helped by overzealous police. This is not going away.

Lastly, (although there is much more) the French partner of a nuclear power plant in Guangdong Province have seen the buildup of inert gases at a much higher pressure than acceptable. The CCP has stated that there is no safety issue, but the French have asked for US help on this matter despite the CCP's assurance. Local CCP officials are notorious for being less than honest. In some cases they simply lowered the standard allowing for increased levels of gas. The CCP has a long history of opacity and dishonesty especially as it relates to safety issues as we have seen with their spacecraft and their irresponsible actions in regard to boosters re-entering the atmosphere in recent weeks. There are many other examples such as the large number of dam failures and environmental damage issues. The CCP hides its faults, but a major incident at a nuclear plant is another level again. The CCP plays fast and loose with safety all the time, it simply doesn't get the scrutiny it requires to correct these issues.