



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

2 July 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.

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).

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.

New: 7 July, Wednesday - US Army Combined Arms Center presentation "Wargaming & the Military Decision Making Process." 1900-2100 ADT. Free. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargaming-the-military-decision-making-process-tickets-153881338225>. "For most Army and Marine officers the terms wargame and wargaming refer specifically to a process used to analyze and refine operational plans. This talk covers that process, known as Course of Action (CoA) Analysis, which in turn will give insight into what a US Army and Marine Corps officer thinks of when the term wargame comes up. We will also discuss how this fits into the larger Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) that the Army and Marine Corps respectively use to develop unit operation orders (OPORDS) for execution. Having this understanding will help offset potential miscommunication when working with members of the Army and USMC."

New: 21 July, Wednesday – Distinguished Speaker Brigadier General Shawn R. Satterfield, Commander, US Special Operations Command North (SOCNORTH), on "Arctic Special Operations." To register, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com by close of business Sunday, 18 Jul. As the subject line for your registration email, put: RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speakers 21 July 2021 Registration. Zoom joining instructions will be emailed to registrants by end Monday, 19 July.

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.

RUSI(NS) Presentation “Canadian Joint Warfare Centre – Wargaming” by Scott Roach, 23 June 2021

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

New: See also: Connections North 2021 videos

<https://paxsims.wordpress.com/2021/05/31/connections-north-2021-videos/>

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/

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>

New: Royal Alberta United Services Institute *News* July-September 2021

<https://www.rausi.ca/news/publications?idU=4>

New: Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches* Junly 2021

<https://rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/76-hot-weekend-hot-off-the-press?userid=306-QqXJ7Ylxfzfd0M&tmpl=raw>

New: Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*, July 2021 Edition.

New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Occasional* Volume 6, Issue 7, 28 June 2021.

New: Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch* 30 June edition

https://send.successbyemail.com/prvw_message2.aspx?chno=b3817116-6af4-4abe-8c89-1ba98394b3c5

New: Company of Master Mariners of Canada NL Division *The Deck Log*, April-June 2021

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

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

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

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

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.

Sandy McClearn @sandymccllearn tweeted 26 Jun:
@HMCSHarryDeWolf now has her barber pole painted on the funnel! Presumably in preparation for her commissioning later today. #barberpolebrigade @RUSI_NS @RLitwiller
RUSI(NS) retweeted: RUSI(NS) Information Note "The Navy's Barber Pole" <https://rusi-ns.ca/barber-pole/>
Red&white stripes on funnel or mast indicate ship is part of Canadian Fleet Atlantic. Not carried by ships of Canadian Fleet Pacific



The Naval Association of Canada @navalasn 29 Jun tweeted and RUSI(NS) rewteeted: VAdm(Retd) Mark Norman and LGen(Retd) Andrew Leslie argue that it is time for Canada to focus on the Indo-Pacific Region, and suggest upping Canada's naval and maritime air presence. We might need more SSK, AOR and MPA capability to realize their vision. <http://ow.ly/rcME50Fkp7V>
(Time to Turn Our Focus on the Indo-Pacific Region)



David Pugliese @davidpugliese 24 Jun tweeted: Never too late....Public Health Agency launches intelligence team to prepare for future pandemics | CBC News (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/phac-intelligence-pandemic-covid-1.6077639>)
RUSI(NS) retweeted: "... root of the pandemic is a deficit of solidarity and sharing — of the data, information, resources, technology and tools that every nation needs to keep its people safe" #COVID19 #medicalIntelligence



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

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

Black Sea Incident Shows Russia's Determination to Claim Waters Illegally

<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2021/06/black-sea-incident-shows-russias-determination-claim-waters-illegally/174959/>



Demonstrating the utility of naval forces, even a single ship, for purposes of diplomatic relations/maneuvering and of grand strategy.

American Strategic Sealift in Peer-to-Peer Conflicts: A Historical Retrospective, Pt. 1

<https://cimsec.org/american-strategic-sealift-in-peer-to-peer-conflicts-a-historical-retrospective-pt-1/>



"If the United States finds itself engaged in peer-to-peer competition and conflict, as it has in the past during the First World War, the Second World War, and during the Cold War, it will find itself in a position that it has not been in for over a century; of a nation lacking a dedicated sealift force and a merchant marine only a fraction of a percent necessary to carry its own commerce."

An analysis of the state of strategic sealift available to Canada may well find parallels to the state of the US. Whilst the two powers vary greatly, geographically they face much the same challenge of getting people and material (albeit greatly less in Canada's case) from here to there (presuming 'there' is not 'here,' the desired geo-strategic situation for Canada). Certainly such an analysis would make for interesting reading and reflection.

From a colleague: This was a great article for the need of a merchant navy in war time. It's about time our respective countries, Canada and the USA, took some action to remedy this tragic situation. I remember sailing along the US coast in the Second World War in spring of 1942 and counting 14 ships sunk by U-boats in one day, with part of their hulls above the surface.

On Tweetership: The Pitfalls Awaiting Military Leaders on Social Media and How to Avoid Them

<https://mwi.usma.edu/on-tweetership-the-pitfalls-awaiting-military-leaders-on-social-media-and-how-to-avoid-them/>



Institutions, particularly military, and individuals of those institutions, particularly when they are holding positions of authority, should share stories and add to the public discourse in a reasoned, non-emotional manner. Whilst there is value in simply sharing stories that may be of interest to others, better yet is to comment and add some value (the why others should expend the time to read and think about what you are sharing).

If we have the opportunity with social media to be public reporters, we need take lessons from main stream reporters (as distinct from opinion columnists, not implying the latter don't have standards) and consider carefully the veracity of a story, what is the utility of sharing the story, and who are the desired audience.

From a colleague: Worth considering in this debate – and often ignored in it – is the question of which specific platform military leaders want to involve themselves with. Each platform has its own style and tenor, and some will be better fit for both the positioning wanted and the people using them.

Making dollars and sense of replacing the CF-18

<https://skiesmag.com/news/making-dollars-sense-replacing-canada-cf-18/>

"... we can no longer afford the Lockheed Martin F-35 ..."

"... there are only two choices that provide a minimum risk to the Canadian taxpayer, and would generate solid fiscal support to Canadian aerospace for decades to come: the Boeing Block III Super Hornet and the Saab Gripen E."

See also: Two reasons Britain could slow its purchase of the F-35

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2021/06/23/two-reasons-britain-could-slow-its-purchase-of-the-f-35/>



Military campaign to influence public opinion continued after defence chief shut it down

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/psychological-warfare-influence-campaign-canadian-armed-forces-1.6079084>

Propaganda is defined in TERMIUM Plus® ("The Government of Canada's terminology and linguistic data bank" <https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html>) and in the NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (a basic glossary for the Canadian Armed Forces CAF) as "Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view." Being political, propaganda would not be used by the CAF in a domestic situation (except possibly when part of Canada is simulating a foreign country). So use of the term in this and other articles has to be taken as a choice by the reporter and possibly media misleading.



U.S. Navy Needs Abundant Quantities of Unmanned Vessels

<https://www.afcea.org/content/us-navy-needs-abundant-quantities-unmanned-vessels>

"But really, we want to have these unmanned systems be easy to use and have them all over the place. It just makes more sense to me to have a lot of relatively simple, adequate, reliable, attributable, if not expendable, unmanned systems that sailors can work with



every day that are relatively simple and cheap to maintain. Really, make them easy to operate and integrate, and make a ton of them."

Hear, hear. Same for Canada.

Harassing Ships and Spoofing Radios, Russia is Telling a Story — That Occupied Crimea is Russian

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2021/07/01/harassing-ships-and-spoofing-radios-russia-is-telling-a-story-that-occupied-crimea-is-russian/?sh=770b343e414b>

The utility of warships for diplomatic signaling.



When Does a 'Cyber Attack' Demand Retaliation? NATO Broadens Its View

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2021/06/when-does-cyber-attack-demand-retaliation-nato-broadens-its-view/175028/>

"... allies now recognize that 'the impact of significant malicious cumulative cyber activities might, in certain circumstances, be considered as amounting to an armed attack.'"

"... NATO is finally inching away from cyberattacks as the metric of choice, and will hopefully move toward the more relevant unit of cumulative cyber activities – or in other words adversarial cyber campaigns."

What is Canada's position? Canada is part of NATO, so the position that cumulative cyber activities may constitute an attack should apply to this country. Have there been a Canadian government statement to that effect?

Oh, yeah, we've been under cyber activities, foreign state and non-state sponsored, for quite some time...



Gradually and Then Suddenly: Explaining the Navy's Strategic Bankruptcy






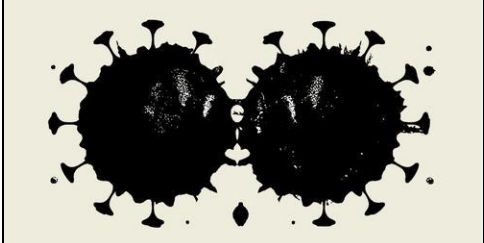
<https://warontherocks.com/2021/06/gradually-and-then-suddenly-explaining-the-navys-strategic-bankruptcy/>

Maybe the lack of consensus, lack of a shared vision, between near-, mid- and long-term strategists is much a US problem, as compared to Canada, the US has many more funds and options for developing their forces (and many in the US tend to equate strategy with budgets). But what the article talks about is worth consideration by Canadian strategists. And how are Canadian national military strategy and our forces developed? Especially if our foreign and national security policies are so under-understood at this time?



Posted on Facebook Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia:

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

<p>Canadian Forces pilots not warned about autopilot before deadly Cyclone crash in 2020</p> <p>https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/canadian-forces-pilots-deadly-cyclone-crash-report-1.6080877</p>	
<p>RCAF turns to foreign pilots to help with shortage as commercial aviators stay away</p> <p>https://www.baytoday.ca/national-news/rcaf-turns-to-foreign-pilots-to-help-with-shortage-as-commercial-aviators-stay-away-3763131</p>	
<p>Red Cross Calls for More Limits on Autonomous Weapons</p> <p>https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2021/05/red-cross-calls-limits-autonomous-weapons/174018/</p>	
<p>Russia Is Accelerating Its Own Link-Everything Network</p> <p>https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2021/05/russia-accelerating-its-own-link-everything-network/174242/</p>	
<p>The Impact of the Post-Arms Control Context and Great Power Competition in the Arctic</p> <p>https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/impact-post-arms-control-context-great-power-competition-arctic/</p>	
<p>We're Not Ready for Another Pandemic</p> <p>https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/06/are-we-ready-another-pandemic/619285/</p>	

The Challenge of Educating the Military on Cyber Strategy

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/06/the-challenge-of-educating-the-military-on-cyber-strategy/>



Great Power Competition Requires Theater Deterrence

<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2021/july/great-power-competition-requires-theater-deterrence>



Other Sources:

#armour

Australia's new tanks are overkill and overweight

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australias-new-tanks-are-overkill-and-overweight/>

#cyber strategy

The Challenge of Educating the Military on Cyber Strategy

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/06/the-challenge-of-educating-the-military-on-cyber-strategy/>

#information operations

Inside a Chinese Propaganda Campaign

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/06/22/technology/xinjiang-uyghurs-china-propaganda.html>

If you are unable to access this article, a copy is available by emailing RUSI(NS).

#intelligence

View of Behind the Enigma: The Authorized History of GCHQ, Britain's Secret Cyber-Intelligence Agency

book review: <https://jmss.org/article/view/72868/54979>

Several Canadian aspects mentioned (e.g., CSE).

#legal

What Does the Law of the Sea Say About the HMS Defender Incident?

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/what-does-the-law-of-the-sea-say-about-the-hms-defender-incident>

#profession of arms

From Prussia with Love: The Origins of the Modern Profession of Arms

<https://mwi.usma.edu/from-prussia-with-love-the-origins-of-the-modern-profession-of-arms/>

Radio, Airplanes, and World Wars: Next Steps for the Profession Of Arms

<https://mwi.usma.edu/radio-airplanes-and-world-wars-next-steps-for-the-profession-of-arms/>

The Profession of Arms During the Nuclear Age, the Cold War, and the End of History

<https://mwi.usma.edu/the-profession-of-arms-during-the-nuclear-age-the-cold-war-and-the-end-of-history/>

An Evolving Twentieth-Century Profession: Technology after World War II

<https://mwi.usma.edu/an-evolving-twentieth-century-profession-technology-after-world-war-ii/>

#Royal Canadian Navy

HMCS Harry DeWolf First Ship Commissioned from National Shipbuilding Contract

<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20210626004>

Interesting to note the NS government approach to the occasion.

#sealift

For a Greener, More Lethal Force, Look to Strategic Sealift Recapitalization

<https://cimsec.org/for-a-greener-more-lethal-force-look-to-strategic-sealift-recapitalization/>

#wargaming

Use Wargaming to Sharpen the Tactical Edge

<https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/wargaming-room/tactical-edge/>

Agile Gaming

video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HP19cckCK-8>

"A method centered on simple, rapid-turnaround games aimed at improving understanding."

Other:



To all members of the Canadian Armed Forces:

The recent golf game that occurred with the former CDS, the former VCDS, and the Commander RCN was poor judgment. We must recognize the harm that this has done to victims and survivors, our institution, and our efforts to change our culture. The former VCDS resigned as a result of his role in this event and now I am left to make a decision on the future of the Commander RCN. There is no set process, procedure, or guidance for making this determination. There is also no perfect answer and I accept that not all will agree regardless of the decision.

I have taken a very deliberate approach and sought a wide array of perspectives, from such sources as sailors and other CAF members, victims/survivors, legal and conflict of interest experts, external stakeholders, academics, and senior public servants. I have considered the complex interplay of procedural fairness, proportionality, operational impact, and moral authority. As expected, there is no clear consensus, with the exception that we can turn this into a learning opportunity.

For all, and especially senior leaders, there are some errors in judgment from which there is no recovery, but for other missteps or mistakes there must be. I have to believe that people can learn and grow, regardless of their generation, if we are to become better as an institution and as individuals.

We have been asking ourselves how such an otherwise well-respected, well-trained, and experienced leader can make such a blunder. It comes down to the blind spots that many of us possess, of not intuitively understanding the impact of our actions, however well-intentioned we think they are, on victims.

To his credit, VAdm Baines sincerely and readily admitted his error in judgment and publically apologized. He has reached out to many stakeholders to seek their views on his way ahead. Knowing his moral authority has diminished, he is determined to regain the trust and confidence of all through humility and showing us how to learn, reconcile error, and become a better leader.

I will give him this possibility to redeem himself and show us how to learn, grow, and help the healing process. I know it's his intent to face the sailors of the RCN, hear them to better understand what other tangible actions he needs to take, and then share his insights with the CAF and citizens.

We need to be strong enough to embrace this painful misstep as a powerful opportunity to make us better. Mistakes will be made, opinions and approaches will differ, but collectively we must all work to ensure a safe and respectful work environment for all. We need a more inclusive and empathetic CAF, one that better reflects Canada and what our country stands for, a CAF that will emerge stronger and ever ready to answer the call.

Lieutenant-General Wayne Eyre
Acting Chief of the Defence Staff

Message from the Commander Royal Canadian Navy June 29, 2021

As you all know, I recently played golf with Lieutenant-General Rouleau and General (retired) Vance. In making this decision, I thought only of my personal relationships and failed to think about it as a senior Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) leader, as the Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), or from the perspective of those who have experienced sexual misconduct. I failed to recognize how this choice would affect victims, result in further erosion of trust, and affect the credibility of our institution. This was made worse under the current circumstances as many would find it profoundly distressing that those I lead would not be at the forefront of my mind. For this I deeply apologize.

Over the last while, many individuals have generously shared with me the effects of my actions and how it evoked feelings of disappointment and anger, frustration and confusion, and resigned disappointment. This deepened my understanding of the impact of my actions. I profoundly regret that I was the cause of this harm.

For those of you that wonder about how I could have had such a blind spot, I may be tempted to give you an explanation, but the fact is that I made a profound mistake and hurt many people along the way. No explanation can justify that. As an institutional leader who needed to safeguard all members of the team, I failed to consider that this would signal that they are not being listened to and not being heard.

In addition to continuing to learn, I intend to apply these lessons to promote inclusive leadership within the RCN and CAF. I will work to make this moment an inflection point in addressing root causes and healing hurt accumulated over many years. I want it to be safe to speak up and address the institutional and systemic factors that have permitted sexual misconduct to persist. I will work diligently to better support victims and create a safe and positive work environment for everyone within the RCN and CAF.

Before all this occurred, I was a passionate advocate for change within our organization. This has not changed, although recent events have humbled me and helped me to understand in a deeper manner our biases and problems related to the management of misconduct. My commitment to change and a safe, respectful workplace endures. I am recommitted to fighting to ensure that voices can be raised, listened to, and that change is manifested in such a way that we can all be proud to serve and an inspiration to others.

Our operational effectiveness depends on the necessity to learn, adapt, and evolve. My actions have been a set-back, and I am grateful that I will have the opportunity to atone for my mistake. To the members of the RCN, I look forward to getting the chance to meet with you personally in the days ahead so that I can hear directly from you, and respond to your challenging questions and legitimate concerns as they arise.

Vice-Admiral Craig Baines
Commander Royal Canadian Navy

Farewell July 4 Message from U.S. Consul General Kevin D. Skillin

Good day,

I hope this e-mail finds you, your family, and your colleagues well.

As you receive this email, my family and I will enjoy one last trip through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as we make our way to the U.S. border.

While I could not say farewell to all of you in person, I leave you with a video message on our Facebook page. Please take a moment to watch

at <https://www.facebook.com/usconsulatehalifax/videos/586253739028657>

In the video, I reflect fondly on my three-year tenure as U.S. Consul General to Atlantic Canada. Although COVID-19 impacted the last half of my assignment here, I leave knowing brighter days lie ahead for Atlantic Canada.

While a few days early, I do want to wish you a Happy July 4th on behalf of my family and the entire staff of the U.S. Consulate General. I wish you all good health and a safe, happy summer.

Warmest regards,

Kevin, Becky, and Anna Skillin

Follow the U.S. Consulate General in Halifax on Twitter [@usconshalifax](https://twitter.com/usconshalifax) and Facebook [@usconsulatehalifax](https://www.facebook.com/usconsulatehalifax)

* * * * *



RUSI(NS) has much enjoyed a close and warm relationship with Kevin, his family and the staff of the U.S. Consulate General Halifax. We wish Kevin and his family all the best in his future appointments and travels, and we look forward to working as closely with his successor as we have with him.

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

It is appalling, the vote by Canadian Senators on the Communist Chinese Party's (CCP) "cultural genocide" and the unbelievably naive reasoning to justify it. The Canadian Cabinet also voted against this. With this reasoning, they would have justified Nazi concentration camps. Mind you, the Canadian Parliament of the 1930s also created legislation to prevent Jews from coming to Canada whilst fleeing what was to become the Holocaust. There is no difference between Nazi Germany and the CCP when it comes to mass murder and cultural genocide. The Government is wrong and the House of Commons is correct.

As Australia has found out and as our own security services have reported, the CCP has and is continuing to conduct operations within Canada. Australia and New Zealand have both found that they have been infiltrated by CCP operatives; operations seek to influence Canadians. Canada needs to examine how and even why we continue to allow Confucius Institutes, funding of Chinese language media by the CCP, and research projects all of which are used against Canada. China under the CCP is not a partner but an adversary - we better wake up and take off the rose coloured glasses. The CCP has killed millions, they continue to conduct genocidal acts and continue to attack all its neighbours by making unfounded territorial demands and, as Canada knows, conducts hostage diplomacy, financial warfare and influence operations against us.

Russia

Russia has decided to make vaccination compulsory because of the lack of takeup by the general public, mainly due to a lack of trust in the current Putin regime. This is having mixed results, needless to say. Russia's lack of success is worrying for the regime. It has taken measures to try to keep the appearance of popularity of Putin's main supporting party, United Russia. Putin was leader of the party until his elevation to the role of President, thus giving him plausible deniability to incompetent actions or unpopular moves by the actions of the party in the Duma. An example would be the "reform" of Russia's pension system which was highly unpopular amongst his key supporters, the older generation. Overall this has allowed Putin to retain his personal popularity when the United Russia Party now polls in around 25%, give or take a point or two.

This past week has been mainly occupied with the Russian reaction to the passage of two NATO ships near Crimea on the right of innocent passage under UNCLOS. Russian media has been full of various video shots from a variety of sources including aircraft, drones, and shots from a patrol ship showing both HMS *Defender* and HNMLS *Evertsen* on 28 and 29 June 2021. Russia's reaction was over the top. Putin was also asked about this on his carefully orchestrated "open question period" on national media. Saying that sinking the British destroyer would not cause a Third World War because NATO knows it would lose. It is an assumption not a fact in both the result of a sinking of a NATO warship on innocent passage and that NATO would lose a conflict with an anemic country with a diminishing economy already beset with major technical and maintenance issues within most of its armed forces. Russia is playing with one note, its nuclear forces. Would they actually pull that trigger for an innocent passage allowed by law of the sea?

In a related issue, a briefcase with classified material was left at a bus stop and handed over to the BBC which seems to indicate that perhaps this was not as innocent a passage as the UK has stated. The documents, amongst fifty pages found behind the bus stop, discussed whether the Russians would react to a movement of a UK destroyer using an identified shipping lane to sail to a Georgian port by the quickest way possible as well as alternate ideas. Russia has attempted to portray this as a deliberate act to test Russian resolve in defending its illegal occupation of the Crimea. The Russian ownership of Crimea is not recognized by the UN.

Russia and its junior partner Belarus continue to crackdown on dissidents throughout the "union" of the two countries. Belarus was already in poor shape prior to its latest actions. Now international sanctions have virtually shut down most of the economy except for Russian financial support.

Belarus

Belarus has warned that the sanctions implemented by the European Union will have no effect and that the Lukashenko regime will take action as a result. Lukashenko has no friends except Putin's Russia and there are some doubts how much the Russian public really supports the "last dictatorship in Europe." This being said, Putin has offered financial support for the regime, but more importantly for consideration is how much the regime is dependent on Russia. Its entire economy is impacted by not only the EU but also sanctions from other countries such as the US and the UK. What may be feared by many Belarusian opposition leaders is that Putin will create no alternative except for the two nations to officially "join" in one union. It may be that Belarus is to become an entity of the past and will be swallowed whole by the kleptocracy that is Russia.

Armenia

Armenia has had an election that saw the re-election of Nikol Pashinyan as the President. He is not Putin's man and in fact represents a Western looking government. This is not anti-Russia but rather it looks to other opportunities. In the last war over Nagorno Karabakh, Armenia lost quite badly as it was not sponsored or supported by its main supporter, Putin's Russia. Azerbaijan on the other hand had a great deal of support from Turkey, including drones and other equipment types. Armenia lost badly and Pashinyan took the blame, essentially. Russia, though, also lost as many people looked to Christian Russia against the Muslim Turks. Instead, Russia took up the duties of a "peacekeeper" between the two parties, becoming neutral as opposed to a supporter. It has not gone over well and Moscow's candidate lost to someone who was blamed for the loss. Russia has spent considerable efforts to try to unite the former states within the old Soviet Union but somehow they have managed to make themselves unpopular to both sides.

Iran

Israeli US and UK forces have attacked Iranian supported force positions within Syria and Iraq. It was the first time that the new UK carrier conducted operational missions using the F-35B from both the UK and USMC. There are no indications these were successful. It should be noted that it put US, UK and Russian forces in close proximity as well.

The fallout from the last election is continuing. The election was judged to be unfair and eliminated most moderate candidates leaving only hardliners. Only 34% of the population turned out to vote. Generally the position of the new leadership is that they want the nuclear deal to be renewed but basically said no to virtually anything else such as a limit on missile development.

China

23 July 2021, is the 100th anniversary of one of the most brutal and repugnant regimes in human history, responsible for the death of tens of millions of people by their own admission. The idea of celebrating a regime that can only generously be called criminal is less than attractive. Its vaunted economic progress has not been universal; somewhere between 600 and 800 million people still live in poverty. The CCP declaring poverty over does not make it so and growth has been unequal.

The CCP has also offered violence to all of its neighbours, again hardly something to celebrate. This has led to countries like the Philippines and Vietnam to purchase US military equipment and look to the US for support against the CCP's unreasonable and illegal territorial demands.

The vaccine diplomacy of the CCP has also turned out badly as their vaccines have turned out to be marginally effective and apparently none of the four vaccines are unable to defend against the variants of Covid 19. The CCP has also been opaque in their own reporting of actual incidents of the disease. No one except perhaps the CCP leadership actually knows how many persons have been infected by the disease.

It would be remiss not to mention the CCP's ongoing crackdown on freedom within Hong Kong (HK). The loss this week of the final independent paper on alleged national security crimes and subsequent seizure of assets is the real story of CCP lies. HK as the world knew it is gone forever. Canada has over 300k citizens trapped in the arms of a CCP more than willing to use them as hostages. Canada remains semi-comatose to the issue as many in the Global Affairs Canada still cling to the notion that China under the CCP is a friend and a major potential partner. This China is a criminal empire, there is nothing that one can reliably count on in any dealings. The CCP has shown willingness to do what most of the world considers reprehensible.

In Canada there are apologists better known within CCP circles as useful idiots that have ignored reality. The CCP's action in Xinjiang against Uyghurs is the very definition of cultural genocide. We should not be deterred by the CCP's comments regarding our treatment Indigenous people which at least we are taking action to correct. One even said we shouldn't label them as genocidal, it will do no good. On the contrary, standing by our friends against a criminal gang is the only responsible action. Our lack of action and lack of spine puts all Canadians at risk, decisive action within our means in concert with allies is the only answer.