



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

11 February 2022

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. Email to RUSINSDispatches@gmail.com. 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).

Help Wanted

RUSI(NS) is seeking temporary editors for *Dispatches* and our social media accounts for the first three weeks of April. If you can help, please contact RUSI(NS). Training will be available in the time ahead of the three week period.

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.

16 February, Wednesday - Distinguished Speaker Col Meaghan Setter, RCAF, “RCAF Strategy: Air and Space in Formation.” 1300-1500. Via Zoom. To register, email RUSI(NS) by close-of-business Sunday, 13 February. As the subject line for your registration email, put: RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker 16 February 2022 Registration. In addition to your name, include whether you are a RUSI(NS) member, otherwise please provide your organization (association, company or unit). Participation is limited and later registrants may have to be put on a waiting list. If after registering your availability changes and you are no longer able to attend, please advise RUSI(NS) as soon as possible so your spot can be re-assigned. Zoom instructions will be emailed to registrants by end Monday, 14 February. If you have not received them by end-of-day 14 February, please check your spam folder and, if necessary, email RUSI(NS).

22 February, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Off the Hex Map with the Center for Army Analysis." 1900-2100 EST. Via Zoom. "The Center for Army Analysis' Strategic Wargaming Division will discuss how they support Army Senior Leaders and senior leaders

across the Joint Force." To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/off-the-hex-map-with-the-center-for-army-analysis-tickets-237526477087>

16 March, Wednesday - save the date for the next RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker.

31 March, Thursday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation by Phil Bolger-Cortez, Wargame Director, Air University LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, on "Air Force Wargaming." 7-9pm ADT. Via Zoom. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/air-force-wargaming-tickets-241404436167>

5 April, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Strategic Wargaming - The US Army War College Approach." 7:00–9:00 pm ADT. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/strategic-wargaming-the-us-army-war-college-approach-tickets-187766283007>.

Publications:

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

New: RUSI(NS) Comments "Can We Stop a Rogue Vessel in the Arctic?" by Pierre Leblanc, 4 February 2022,

<https://rusi-ns.ca/rogue-vessel-arctic>

This Comments resulted from one of the questions during the RUSI(NS) and NORAD & USNORTHCOM Distinguished Speakers event 26 January 2022 "Arctic Maritime Security: US Coast Guard and Canadian Navy Operations."

New: RUSI(NS) Presentations "Arctic Maritime Security: US Coast Guard and Canadian Navy Operations" by CAPT Al McCabe USCG and Cdr Corey Gleason RCN, 29 Jan 22,

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

RUSI(NS) Paper "We Have No Air Defence For Our Army – Why?" by Murray Lee, 23 January 2022,

<https://rusi-ns.ca/air-defence/>

RUSI(NS) Comments "An Evil Trinity" by Tim Dunne, 19 January 2022

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

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 2 February edition

<https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/on-watch-current>

Edmonton United Services Institute President's *Enews*, February 2022

Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XL, Number 2, February 2022

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, February 2022

<https://rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/99-rausi-dispatches-february-2022>

Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*, February 2022

Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver and Vancouver Artillery Association Members *News*, 25 January 2022


New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 10, Issue 5, 7 February 2022

New: Vancouver Artillery Association and Royal United Services Institute Vancouver Members News Feb 8, 2022

New: Veterans Affairs Canada *Salute!*, February 2022

Tweeted by @RUSI_NS: 🇨🇦

RUSI(NS) tweets may also be viewed by clicking on the Twitter icon at <https://RUSI-NS.ca>. To have something tweeted or retweeted, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

<p>Commandement du personnel militaire @compersmil Feb 3 tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: 1/2 Une liste de grades militaires français inclusifs est maintenant accessible à tous les membres des #FAC. Nos militaires peuvent ainsi désormais choisir la version du grade qui, à leur avis, représente le mieux leur identité de genre. 2/2 La modernisation des grades en français est un exemple de l'engagement pris par les #FAC à l'égard de l'inclusivité et de la diversité des genres. Consultez la liste complète des grades ici : https://canada.ca/fr/ministere-defense-nationale/feuille-derable/defense/2022/02/fac-modernisent-grades-militaires-francais.html (Les Forces armées canadiennes modernisent les grades militaires en français)</p>	 <table border="1"><thead><tr><th colspan="2">Les Forces armées canadiennes modernisent les grades militaires en français</th></tr><tr><th>GRADE MASCULIN</th><th>GRADE FÉMININ</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>le caporal l'aviateur</td><td>la caporale l'aviatrice</td></tr><tr><td>le bombardier</td><td>la bombardière</td></tr><tr><td>le lieutenant de vaisseau</td><td>la lieutenant de vaisseau</td></tr><tr><td>le lieutenant-général un officier</td><td>la lieutenant-générale une officière</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Canada.ca/Defense Canada</p>	Les Forces armées canadiennes modernisent les grades militaires en français		GRADE MASCULIN	GRADE FÉMININ	le caporal l'aviateur	la caporale l'aviatrice	le bombardier	la bombardière	le lieutenant de vaisseau	la lieutenant de vaisseau	le lieutenant-général un officier	la lieutenant-générale une officière
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<p>RUSI(NS) Comments "Can We Stop a Rogue Vessel in the Arctic?" https://rusi-ns.ca/rogue-vessel-arctic/ #Arctic #MarineSecurity</p>													
<p>دكٔ ڤٔدٔ ٢٢٤٤٤٤ @tattuinee 10 Feb tweeted: @Boeing to Offer the P-8A Poseidon for Canada's Multi-Mission Aircraft Project https://boeing.mediaroom.com/news-releases-statements?item=130994 RUSI(NS) retweeted: Canadian Multi-Mission Aircraft project http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/defence-capabilities-blueprint/project-details.asp?id=975 to equip @RCAF_ARC with long-range Command, Control, Comms & Computers (C4) & Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR) & Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) a/c with extended capabilities to replace CP-140 Aurora H/T Tim Choi: Canadian Multi-Mission Aircraft (CMAA) Project Request for Information (RFI)</p>													

<https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-22-00985218>

Tod Strickland @Todstrick 10 Feb tweeted: This will be a must read. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8607543/canadian-forces-sexual-misconduct-new-ethos/>
RUSI(NS) retweeted: #CAF "@CanadianForces publishing new ethos in wake of sexual misconduct crisis: 'Trusted to Serve'"



Public Safety Canada @Safety_Canada 10 Feb tweeted: The #GoC has approved a Request For Federal Assistance from #Ontario for @CanadianForces Rangers support to the Eabametoong First Nation, as they deal with a #Covid19 outbreak.

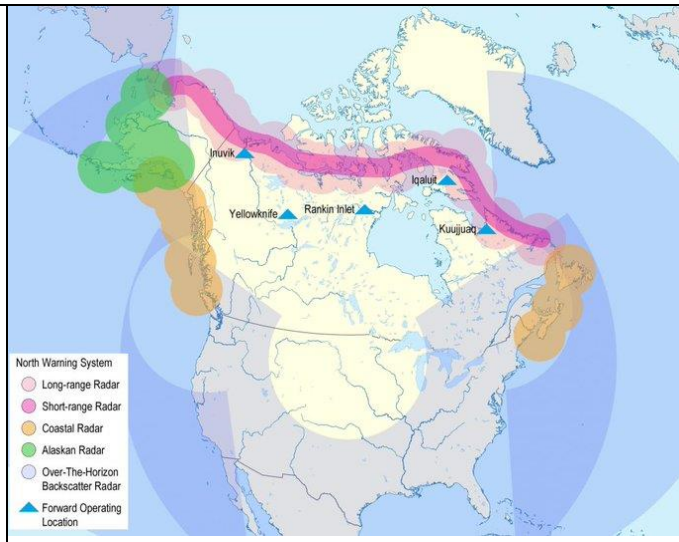
RUSI(NS) retweeted: Operation LASER #OpLASER "is @CanadianForces (#CAF) response to a worldwide pandemic situation." <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/laser.html>



Andrea Charron @AndreaCharron 4 Feb tweeted: With all the news (protests, Eastern Europe, North Korean nukes) this important announcement may have been missed. #Nasittuq- Inuit majority-owned corp -won the NWS maintenance contract!

<https://canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2022/01/government-of-canada-awards-in-service-support-contract-for-north-warning-system.html> This is great news. We need the NWS to last a long, long time

RUSI(NS) had retweeted about this last week: Government of Canada awards in-service support contract for North Warning System. *Nice graphic.*



Mercedes Stephenson @MercedesGlobal tweeted 10 Feb: PSA: You are not "ordained" as a police officer. That's a Minister. The religious kind. There's no thing where you can unilaterally declare yourself or anyone else to be a peace officer in Canada. Here is a list of potential peace officers in Canada: <https://criminal-code.ca/criminal-code-of-canada-section-2-definition-of-peace-officer/index.html>

Whilst reporter Stephenson tweeted for event reporting/commenting purposes, her link is worth an eye opening (educational) read. Includes (amongst some not-so-obvious listings): "(g) officers and non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces who are (i) appointed for the purposes of section 156 of the National Defence Act, or (ii) employed on duties that the Governor in Council, in regulations made under the National Defence Act for the purposes of this paragraph, has prescribed to be of such a kind as to necessitate that the officers and non-commissioned members performing them have the powers of peace officers;"

Posted on Facebook Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia:

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

Canada weighs bigger commitment for NATO's eastern flank, including Baltics

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-anand-carries-full-basket-of-military-issues-back-to-ottawa/>



Pentagon says Russia planning an elaborate pretext to invade Ukraine

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/02/03/Pentagon-Russia-Ukraine-invasion-pretext/8001643920945/

"We believe that Russia would produce a very graphic propaganda video, which would include corpses and actors that would be depicting mourners and images of destroyed locations, as well as military equipment at the hands of Ukraine or the West, even to the point where some of this equipment would be made to look like it was Western-supplied ..."



'False-flag' information operation.

At some point there may be also be produced 'deep fakes' (computer produced false videos).

Russia Will Not Stop at Ukraine

<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russia-will-not-stop-ukraine>



Inuit voices to be heard at IMO on critical shipping issues

<https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/op-ed-inuit-voices-to-be-heard-at-imo-on-critical-shipping-issues/#.Yf01Sc3nduI.twitter>

The Inuit Circumpolar Council to "... provide a report to the IMO, illustrating how Inuit knowledge and visions have informed decision-making regarding global shipping and guide how Arctic shipping will evolve."



It would be good to see greater Inuit engagement in the operation of Arctic shipping, especially as part of the shipping companies themselves. The Canadian Coast Guard Arctic Region has done very well with engaging with the Northern peoples, even now to the extent of recruiting Indigenous deckhands (<https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1701681>). Recently the

Assistant Commissioner for the CCG Arctic Region briefed RUSI(NS) and guests on the region; see: "Canadian Coast Guard Arctic Region – Implementation and Successes" (https://rusi-ns.ca/ccg_arctic_region/).

Unmanned containership uses drone to handle heaving line

<https://www.marinelog.com/technology/unmanned-containership-uses-drone-to-handle-heaving-line/>

Not only a "port-to-port unmanned containership sea trial" using autonomous navigation and a "route formulated by the autonomous collision avoidance routing system," but even autonomous berthing including an aerial drone carrying the heaving line ashore.



One can be sure that multiple navies are trialling using small aerial drones to carry light loads between ships underway. Whether navies are prepared to try autonomous berthing is a question. Maybe for auxiliaries - most navies need more auxiliaries, so anything that makes crewing and operating them easier would likely be welcome.

Moscow Needs Beijing in the Arctic but Worries About China's Expanding Role

<https://jamestown.org/program/moscow-needs-beijing-in-the-arctic-but-worries-about-chinas-expanding-role/>

Western sanctions ... "create tensions between Moscow and Beijing because the Russian side does not want to see its current dominance in the High North challenged, let alone supplanted, by Beijing's rise."



Canada needs to be concerned about China's expansion into the Arctic.

Combat drones: We are in a new era of warfare - here's why

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60047328>

It will be interesting to see what lessons come out of the crisis with Ukraine. Drones are already in use there.



How Dependent Is Europe On Natural Gas And Who Are Its Main Suppliers

<https://gcaptain.com/how-dependent-europe-natural-gas-who-are-its-main-suppliers/>

With deference to the old saying "Amateurs talk tactics, professionals discuss logistics," may I propose: "Tacticians count troops, operators study logistics, strategists assess economics."



If you really want to know the abilities of state to undertake conflict, look at their finances and economics.

When fake news travels fast, everyone should become fact-checkers

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2022-02-05/opinion-andrew-kleske-when-fake-news-travels-fast-news-consumers-should-check-their-facts>

There's a public information war going on (many wars, with many different actors, really), including in Canada. And not just by states, though of great concern is state use of misinformation, disinformation and all the other elements to sow dissent and confusion amongst people of other states. Everyone, not just members of defence and security services, has a responsibility to fact check. There are lots of tools out there that can help people (in addition to just a great sense of skepticism), for example: "Think 'Sheep' before you share to avoid getting tricked by online misinformation" (<https://firstdraftnews.org/articles/think-sheep-before-you-share-to-avoid-getting-tricked-by-online-misinformation/>).



Europe Won't Make Up for Shortfalls of Russian Gas Easily

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30304/europe-s-gas-supplies-could-be-a-casualty-of-ukraine-russia-war>

"... Russia is clearly willing to weaponize its energy resources as a bargaining chip to intimidate the EU and NATO members for more concessions ..."

'Weaponizing energy.' A take away from this is that states need to include energy systems (production, transmission, distribution) in their defence and security assessment. Often they do, as 'vital infrastructure,' but to what extent are non-infrastructure aspects (requirements, consumption, priorities, alternatives) considered as part of the assessments and plans?



Ukraine's Old School Answers to Russia's Modern Electronic Warfare Weapons

<https://coffeordie.com/ukraine-russia-electronic-warfare/>

Old systems, not as vulnerable to modern electronic warfare, and new command-and-control (provide intent, trust subordinates). Well, maybe not so new. But we seem to be forgetting in these days of seeking an all seeing eye on the battlefield that sometimes something gets in your eye and you just have to let matters play out.



Canada, Denmark, reaffirm vital Arctic security ties

<https://thewatch-magazine.com/2022/02/07/canada-denmark-reaffirm-vital-arctic-security-ties/>

"The defense ministers of Canada and Denmark have reaffirmed their cooperation on Arctic issues as the region's strategic importance continues to grow."

The Arctic is a good place to work with the Indigenous peoples and with friendly states in the region. Tough place to try to do it on one's own.



Other Sources:

#government

Parliament: An Overview

https://learn.parl.ca/sites/Learn/default/en_CA/ParliamentaryPrimer

This got publicized very recently on social media. Really too general, as it lacks explanations of the committees at various levels and what they do (especially with ones with defence, security and safety concerns).

#information operations

Countering Disinformation in the United States

<https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=863779>

Lessons for Canada?

#intelligence

To Brief, Or Not to Brief: UK Intelligence and Public Disclosure

<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/brief-or-not-brief-uk-intelligence-and-public-disclosure>

#justice

Government of Canada introduces legislation to improve the operation of the criminal justice system and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-justice/news/2022/02/government-of-canada-introduces-legislation-to-improve-the-operation-of-the-criminal-justice-system-and-address-the-impacts-of-the-covid-19-pandemic.html>

Better use of technology.

#maritime law

Is it Time to Amend the Law of the Sea?

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/is-it-time-to-amend-the-law-of-the-sea>

#policing

How police have become more tolerant of civil disobedience in Canada — for good or bad

<https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/how-police-have-become-more-tolerant-of-civil-disobedience-in-canada-for-good-or-bad>

#space

A China-US war in space: The after-action report

<https://thebulletin.org/premium/2022-01/a-china-us-war-in-space-the-after-action-report/>

Wargamed!

The Sino-Russian military nexus in outer space: strategic implications?

<https://defenceindepth.co/2022/02/10/the-sino-russian-military-nexus-in-outer-space-strategic-implications/>

#Ukraine-Russia crisis

Gators in Motion: Demystifying Recent Russian Amphibious Activity

<https://cimsec.org/demystifying-recent-russian-amphibious-activity/>

Other:

U.S. Army Combined Arms Center publication *Enduring Success - Consolidation of Gains in Large-Scale Combat Operations*

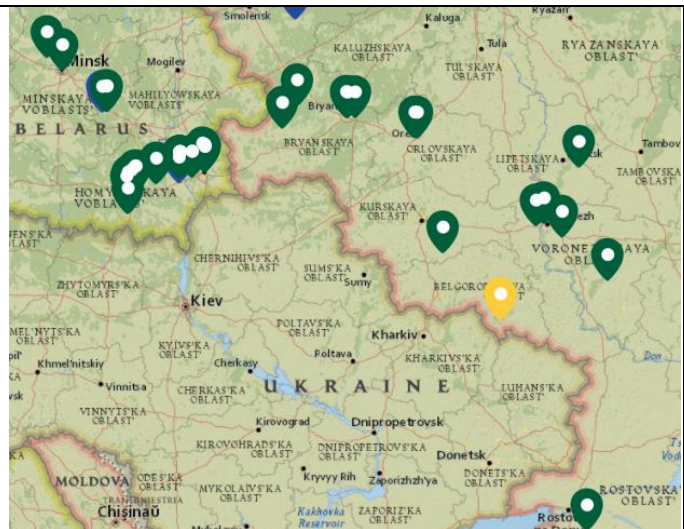
<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/LSCO/Enduring-Success.pdf>

Open Source Intelligence

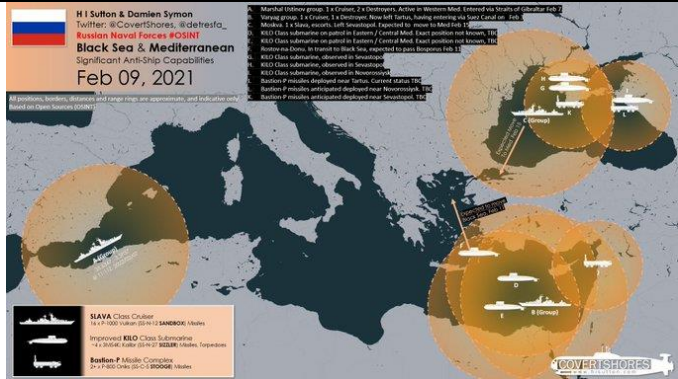
The public OSINT community has come a long way, enabled by and making good use of information technology. The next three posts are good examples of OSINT reporting of the Ukraine-Russia crisis. A lot of imagery is also available.

Centre for Information Resilience
@Cen4infoRes 9 Feb tweeted: A lot of footage is being posted online of Russian military movements along the Ukrainian border. We're working with the #OSINT community to document, verify & map this information. You can find our map of verified movements here:

<http://maphub.net/Cen4infoRes/russian-ukraine-monitor>



H I Sutton @CovertShores 9 Feb tweeted:
 UPDATED #Russia Navy tracker for
 Mediterranean and black Sea HERE
<http://hisutton.com/Russia-Med-BS-2022-02-09.html> Range rings closer to maximum
 reported ranges, plus some updates on
 positions. Naturally once shared, masses of
 help came in. Thanks!



Liveuamap @Liveuamap 9 Feb tweeted:
 Russia closing wide areas of Black Sea and
 almost whole Azov Sea for missile exercises.
 NOTAMs issued
<https://liveuamap.com/en/2022/9-february-russia-closing-wide-areas-of-black-sea-and-almost>
 via @AlexKhrebet



Another classic pre-war positioning move...

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

There is little doubt that there needs to be a thorough review of actions or inaction during the pandemic which should be conducted by a non-partisan body as soon as possible post pandemic. What was done well and what could have been better, and what was disastrously wrong and how we might learn from this event in order to be better prepared in future for a similar situation that involves the very life of our democracy within a constitutional monarchy. Somehow, the politics has to be removed.

The US

The US moved 3000 troops into and around Europe with 2000+ arriving in Poland this past Monday. More than a thousand also moved to join other US troops already in Romania in order to shore up NATO's South Eastern flank.

This week will see up to three carrier battle groups in the Mediterranean including one each US, French and Italian. This the first time since the Cold War that NATO also has command of a US CSG (carrier strike group). US Air Force assets have also been busy and deploying to other locations within Europe.

President Biden continues to work with allies in order ensure solidarity within NATO and Europe including meeting the German Chancellor this past weekend so that US and NATO responses are seamless in their answer to Russia. The French president is met with Russian President Putin earlier in the week and with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy midweek. President Macron has suggested the only way forward is the Minsk 2 Accord but suggested further discussions under the Normandy Format.

President Zelenskyy has been less than enthusiastic about the Minsk Accords and has refused in past to sign them. How this will work out is another issue and challenge to peace in the area. NATO and most of Europe including non-EU states want a strong independent sovereign Ukraine, not Russia's throwback idea of spheres of influence. President Zelenskyy very pointedly answered the question from a reporter on this subject in Russian to firmly make a point to the master of the Kremlin. It is unlikely that the Minsk Accord will form any part of a future solution despite President Macron's hopes.

Russia and Allies

This week saw the shuttle diplomacy of several key Western leaders including Chancellor Shultz of Germany, President Macron of France, President Duda of Poland and Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, not to mention numerous telephone calls between leaders. Their main aim is to try to get President Putin to deescalate the overall conflict. President Macron thought he might be able to make a deal on the continuation of the Normandy Format which led to the Minsk 2 Accords. All this effort is to placate someone who will not be placated and that is President Putin.

It appears now that his demands are not where he wishes to be but rather to ensure Russia has removed the US and its influence from all of Europe with Russia creating a massive sphere of influence. He has written on how unnatural it is for the Euro-Atlantic alliance/connection as opposed to a Russian-led Euro-Asian connection. The key is Russia's relationship to Europe which President Putin thinks he should lead. In relation to President Macron's visit and negotiation, President Putin's remarks were crude (implying rape of Ukraine at one point) and lacked any finesse as to how he thought. President Macron went on to Kiev, essentially stating that President Putin was willing to talk and deescalate the situation based on the Minsk 2 Accord. Ukraine has never accepted the Accord and has not signed it. President Zelenskyy was less than happy about this turn of events. When President Zelenskyy was asked specifically about it, he replied in Russian, in order to ensure that the master of the Kremlin knew exactly where Ukraine and Ukrainians stood. President Putin immediately stated that de-escalation was not agreed to whatsoever and he would continue Russia's relentless build up. It is suspected that President Macron's efforts though a great try will fall flat as neither side will be actually willing to budge. The bottom line is that the Minsk Accord is not viable to even start with, but time will tell.

Russia is continuing its buildup, bringing in troops from the Far East and Central military districts. One estimate from an Indian open source suggested that 160k Russian troops were now available, plus whatever Belarus can afford to send. At this point, President Putin has not asked the CSTO organization for support. It is suggested by the Indian and other sources that Russia will have 120 battalion tactical teams available for action and that this will be sufficient to conduct a major invasion of Ukraine. These battalion tactical teams are situated all around Ukraine including Transnistria, Belarus, Crimea, Russia and the rebel held Donbass - some of these are not able to be reinforced. While this is an interesting idea or thought, there is little to help understand the command-and-control measures to conduct this size operation nor the level of logistic support necessary to wage a major campaign while entering a hostile environment in which the enemy will be all around with weapons suitable for a major insurgency and with major friends with very deep pockets. While it is very easy to attack an objective it is quite something else to hold onto such an objective in the long term. Russia does not have the necessary resources to deal with this challenge. Russia under Putin has poisoned the well and his desire for a union between Russia and Ukraine will likely fall flat.

The Russian Navy is positioning its fleet prior to any conflict, which is a good move, because they will not be able to move them if conflict does occur. No Russian vessel will last long on the high seas and each of their fleets will be confined to local coastal areas. Russian submarines are also at sea, but they are

down to 62 operational submarines plus the five owned by GUBI, the naval intelligence service. These latter vessels may be used to disrupt Atlantic and Pacific undersea cables and it would take time for these to be repaired or re-laid. It sounds bad.

What is really bad is increasing dissatisfaction of the Russian people with Putin's incompetence in dealing with the Covid virus which have now reached over 13m cases and nearly 350k official deaths. Second, many Russians are tired of Putin's unnecessary wars and conflicts which have created a steady stream of funerals. Third, it has reinvigorated opposition including from unexpected sources. A petition has been signed by a large number of well-known intellectuals but more seriously, also a further presentation against conflict by the Association of Russian Retired and Reserve Officers, not a group known for being known for peace, love and understanding to quote an old tune of Booker T and the MGs. While it is not likely to end the Putin regime, nor is it likely that it will stop President Putin and his regime from their current actions. It shows that folks are aware and are not happy with the current situation including those who may be called up for service. Longer term is a different story, and Putin is well aware that his position in history will not be seen favourably.

Russia is weak in every sense of the word except for its military in some areas. Any hostile action will have major impacts on the Russian economy. It is also clear that China is less than enthusiastic about an unnecessary action by the Putin regime. Chinese support will likely depend on Putin's actions and the reaction of the West. Either way, China could end up losing because of Putin no matter what actually happens.

China

China is hosting the Beijing Winter Olympic games this year. It is an indicator that this Olympics is the least watched one in history of the Olympics. Many nations are unofficially boycotting as only six heads of state attended the opening ceremonies. Most do not blame the Chinese government so much as people are blaming the International Olympic Committee for their "tin ear" to public disquiet over the selection of Beijing as a host city. These games are the first games that used artificial snow throughout the venue. This is on top of Beijing's critical water shortage. Athletes are also concerned for Beijing's anti-Covid efforts which are typical of the Communist Chinese Party's China as over the top. Judging has been a concern for various technical reasons which have led to some interesting outcomes as a result. The bottom line is that it is a "black eye" for China and not the showcase that would have hoped for this year.

China's economy continues to melt down as it is becoming very clear that China's debt is a lot larger than officially noted due to the unbridled debt of city and provincial governments. One estimate is that these local governments now owe 8.2T as of 2019; it is thought to be much higher now. This debt seems to be more hidden and is a result of a relatively unknown debt vehicle called Local Government Financial Vehicles. It allows local governments to borrow money to fund large projects. This would include transportation systems, buildings, community recreation facilities, airports, etc. By using these vehicles, provincial and city leaders can send optimistic growth reports to the Party, however, like some large projects, not all are appropriate and become "white elephants" or simply go unused without providing real value to the larger community. It is also a vehicle that is misused, and corruption tends to be rampant. Xi is allegedly trying to sort this out by way of his anti-corruption campaign but, his efforts tend to hit competition and political enemies rather than are an honest attempt at actual prevention of corruption.

China is focused on the Olympics and there is anecdotal evidence that Xi has asked Putin not to do anything embarrassing until after the Olympics are through on or about 20 February. The anecdote does not state whether this would include the Para-Olympic Games, but one can hope it does. The

downside is that the Russian army knows the ground will be less ideal for the movement of heavy vehicles in March and this too will weigh heavily on Putin's mind so betting on an actual move is not good either way.

China under the CCP will be scrutinized closely especially if Russia does attack. It may find itself in an awkward situation which may further erode confidence in the Chinese economy particularly if the Russian effort becomes a severe quagmire. One key question is whether Chinese support to Russia would result in China being sanctioned as well. It is conceivable that this will be the case, further cutting China off from various technical capabilities and financial tools. This will not go well either way. China is already being considered for more US sanctions; a strong move to support Putin would almost certainly result in further actions.

Africa

West Africa including Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau has been beset by series of military coups. Two of these countries have sought Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group to help in efforts to eliminate Islamist insurgents. The Wagner Group has been used by a series of countries to help bolster similar efforts across the continent. This is causing serious concern amongst local democratic governments in West Africa as these countries no longer fulfill the efforts to lead to effective democratic institutions. It may also increase support for Islamist movements as they would be seen as less corrupt. Time will tell, but some counter-measures are needed from African democratic states in the near future.

Veterans Awareness and Media Consumption Survey

Dear Stakeholders,

We need your help reaching Veterans who do not receive VAC benefits and services. We are surveying Veterans, CAF members, former RCMP members, family members and caregivers on how they learn about and access our programs and services. Their feedback will help us better serve the Veteran community and reach more Veterans.

We kindly ask that you share the below message with your network:

VAC wants your opinion!

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is surveying the Veteran community to find out how you learn about and access VAC programs and services. They're looking for Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, former RCMP members, family members and caregivers. Even if you have never contacted VAC or do not currently receive VAC benefits and services, they want to hear from you.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. It is being conducted on behalf of VAC by the independent Canadian research firm, EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Please visit the [EKOS Research website](#) for more information and to participate.

Participation is voluntary and your responses and personal information are confidential in accordance with the [Privacy Act](#). Your responses, whether by phone or online, are anonymous; they are not kept or shared with VAC, and will not have any impact on the benefits or services you receive or may receive in the future.

If you would like to share this survey with your followers on social media, feel free to use the following message:

Veterans Affairs Canada wants to know how it can better communicate with the Veteran community. Tell them how you like to receive information and what you know about their services, by taking part in the survey below.

If someone you know served in the Canadian Armed Forces or RCMP, Veterans Affairs Canada want to hear from them. www.ekos.com/veteransurvey

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Team

Veterans Affairs Canada

vac.engagement.acc@veterans.gc.ca