



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

4 March 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.

8 March, Tuesday - DND Stakeholder Engagement Office Eastern Canada webinar "From one generation to the next, the place of Women in the combat role." 1200-1330 Eastern. See detail at end of *Dispatches*. To register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qJPfbqZiQMS4v11It5OETQ.

16 March, Wednesday - Distinguished Speaker Jan-Andrej Skopalik, Regional Manager, National Aerial Surveillance Program, Transport Canada Atlantic Region, "Surveillance of Sea Surface Activities in Atlantic Canada." 1300-1500. Via Zoom. To register, email RUSI(NS) by close-of-business Sunday, 13 March. As the subject line for your registration email, put: RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker 16 March 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 March. If you have not received them by end-of-day 14 March, please check your spam folder and, if necessary, email RUSI(NS).

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) Information Note “Ship-to-Shore Connector Barges,” 28 February 2022, <https://rusi-ns.ca/ship-to-shore-connector/>

RUSI(NS) Presentation “RCAF Strategy: Air and Space in Formation” by Colonel Meghan Setter, 16 February 2022, <https://rusi-ns.ca/rcf-strategy/>

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>

RUSI(NS) Presentations “Arctic Maritime Security: US Coast Guard and Canadian Navy Operations” by Captain Al McCabe USCG and Commander Corey Gleason RCN, 29 January 2022, 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/

New: Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 2 March edition <https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/on-watch-current>

New: Company of Master Mariners of Canada Maritimes Division Foghorn, March 2022

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

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

New: Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, March 2022 <https://www.rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/109-rausi-dispatches-march-2022>

New: Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*, March 2022

New: Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver and Vancouver Artillery Association Members *News*, 1 March 2022

Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*, Volume 54, 1st Quarter 2022.



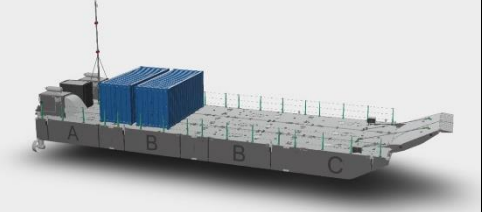

New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 10, Issue 8, 28 February 2022

Vancouver Artillery Association and Royal United Services Institute Vancouver Members News Feb 15, 2022

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>RUSI @RUSI_org 24 Feb tweted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: 'If anything, the lesson today is that despite the overwhelming build-up of intelligence and western warnings, #Putin has chosen the path to escalation' writes Dan Lomas in the latest #RUSICommentary. (Ukraine and Intelligence Prebuttal: A Quick Post-Mortem https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/ukraine-and-intelligence-prebuttal-quick-post-mortem)</p>	
<p>"NATO sending part of response force to shore up European allies threatened by invasion of Ukraine" https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/nato-ukraine-russia-invasion-1.6364411 CAN🇨🇦 'earmarked'(≠ deployed) 3400 @CanadianForces to #NATO Response Force https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49755.htm</p>	
<p>RUSI(NS) Information Note "Ship-to-Shore Connector Barges" https://rusi-ns.ca/ship-to-shore-connector/ 5 self-propelled modular barges being built by Navmar for @RoyalCanNavy will enhance #JSS project ships capability to transfer to & from shore, mission essential equipment, stores, & personnel</p>	
<p>David Pugliese @davidpugliese 28 Feb tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: My latest article....Delivery of new pistols for Canadian Army delayed until 2023 https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/delivery-of-new-pistols-for-canadian-army-delayed-until-2023 via @ottawacitizen</p>	

RUSI @RUSI_org 2 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: 'If less forceful measures fail to produce an effect, the Russian leadership may force themselves into believing that a bloody assault of Kyiv is their only option to secure Russia's aims' writes @LanceDavies11 in the latest #RUSICommentary.
(Russian Urban Warfare and the Assault on Kyiv
<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russian-urban-warfare-and-assault-kyiv>)



GC Newsroom @NewsroomGC Mar 1 tweeted: Government of Canada prohibits Russian ships and fishing vessels from entering Canadian ports and internal waters:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2022/03/government-of-canada-prohibits-russian-ships-and-fishing-vessels-from-entering-canadian-ports-and-internal-waters.html>
RUSI(NS) retweeted: Prohibition "...part of ongoing coordination efforts among G7 partners and like-minded countries to hold Russian leadership accountable for its escalating aggression." Special Economic Measures Act
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/s-14.5/index.html>
Powerful law for conflict times



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.

Canadian military's limits to be tested as fears of war with Russia mount

<https://www.cp24.com/news/canadian-military-s-limits-to-be-tested-as-fears-of-war-with-russia-mount-1.5793157>

The size and capabilities that we as the Canadian public, and the government we elect, choose to fund is what we are left with when it comes time to consider options available to Canada in a crisis. Indeed, the choices affect the number of missions in which our military can reasonably engage. Basic strategy - means and aspirations (ends) have to balance.



Canadian intelligence agency calls for ramped-up cyber defences after Russia invades Ukraine

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/cyber-russia-cse-1.6362878>



Bleak outlook for grain exports from Russia and Ukraine

<https://lloydslist.maritimeintelligence.informa.com/LL1139979/Bleak-outlook-for-grain-exports-from-Russia-and-Ukraine>



Warfare, certainly the bigger and longer conflicts, has an economic aspect (economic warfare, trade warfare, financial warfare/finwar). Some actions of economic warfare is deliberate by adversaries, some of it a wider ranging result of the conflict. In the economically connected world of today, it's a given that the (usually adverse) effects of a conflict will be felt far beyond its geographic bounds (bearing in mind that physical geography has less meaning in the cyber and information domains). Grain supply from the Ukraine was a consideration in previous major conflicts (thinking of decisions that led to the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia campaigns in the Great War). We may see grain supply become a global concern - already merchant vessels have been struck and sea areas off limits due to exclusionary declarations by adversaries or ship insurers - during this Russia-Ukraine war.

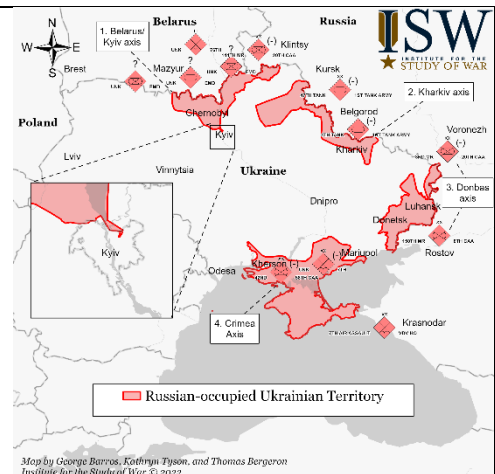
The study and understanding of economics and economic warfare is important for military personnel and civilians, whether strategists or planning staff.

See also: Black Sea Insurance Rates Soar As NATO Fails To Protect Commercial Shipping
<https://gcaptain.com/black-sea-insurance-rates-soar-as-nato-fails-to-protect-commercial-shipping/>

Ukraine Conflict Updates

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-update-9>

There are a range of maps in use by the media and military-interest sites to explain to (educate?) the general public the Ukraine-Russia war (aside: 'all maps all lies' because none can truly depict the complexity of reality; maps are but approximations). Most maps have shown Russian forces, particularly in their build-up phase before actually invading, as blobs on the borders, sometime circles with the size of the circles depending on the strength of each concentration of troops. Some maps attempt to differentiate between armour and infantry concentrations, maybe with the thought that the former represent main attack forces (though Russian non-tank organizations often include tank elements anyways). This article's map is interesting as it takes things further, representing Russian forces with the NATO symbol for hostile, the crossed belts of infantry and track of armour units placed inside diamond frames. Does that use indicate that the author (not a Ukrainian) of the article and map considers Russia to be an enemy? Would such public use by citizens be comfortable to their country?



There are four 'standard identity groups' in NATO symbology: unknown, friend, neutral and hostile. Whilst arguments can be made for and against use of friend and hostile in the ongoing war, what groups could be used if there was a conflict where both protagonists were considered friendly or unfriendly to our country? How would we depict their forces, officially and unofficially?

Use of hostile symbology by automated command information and combat control systems can be problematic as it may, with faulty programing, lead to inadvertent actions, even weapon engagements. Use publicly can be considered as an attempt to influence a reader's attitude.

Not to advocate more symbols for the NATO system, it is complex enough, but maybe there is room for some map symbology development to allow for better depictions of conflict between other countries.

The Ukraine crisis and the international law of armed conflict (LOAC): some Q & A

<https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2022/02/27/the-ukraine-crisis-and-the-international-law-of-armed-conflict-loac-some-q-a/>

Law of armed conflict has to be familiar to (preferably well known by) the fighters in the field, and to other states' authorities and general publics who are watching the war - especially when information technology makes it easy to watch.



Putin's Memory Laws Set the Stage for His War in Ukraine

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/putins-memory-laws-set-stage-his-war-ukraine>

"Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past."

- George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four

There are levels of information war going on. Not just during the Ukraine-Russia war. (And, regrettably, not just in Russia.)

See also: Who Controls the Past Controls the Future

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-does-that-quote-mean-archaeology-172300>

"... we still need to ask questions of anything we read: who is behind the information? Who is it that wishes us to be manipulated?"



Where Are Russia's Drones?

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2022/03/where-are-russias-drones/362612/>

"... perhaps we're just not seeing the drones."

Good question. But you'd think the Russians, what with all their expertise in using information and disinformation, would have been publicizing imagery of the effectiveness of their drones against Ukraine.





The Kyiv Independent
 @KyivIndependent 1 Mar tweeted
<https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1498574179188330501>):
 Russia's losses as of March 1,
 according to Ukraine's Defense
 Ministry.

Another round in the information war.
 At which Ukraine seems to be doing
 quite well.

Russia's losses as of Mar. 1

Source: Defense Ministry reported as of 9:00 EET, 01.03.2022

- | | |
|---|--|
|  5,710 troops |  24 MLRS |
|  29 planes |  2 boats |
|  29 helicopters |  305 cars |
|  198 tanks |  60 fuel tanks |
|  77 artillery pieces |  3 UAV |
|  846 armored
personnel carriers |  7 anti-aircraft
warfare |

THE
KYIV INDEPENDENT

War in Ukraine has implications for Arctic co-operation, climate change research

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/ukraine-war-implications-for-arctic-1.6363856>

"... we are seeing a development of a security co-operative
 regime between the Americans and northern Europeans.
 Canada seems to be completely absent from that."



Canada ignores Russia's militarized Arctic at our own risk

<https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/smol-canada-ignores-russias-militarized-arctic-at-our-own-risk>

"But should this (a potential maritime-based standoff in the
 Arctic region) happen in our current deplorable state of
 military preparedness, let's have the honesty and integrity to
 abstain from clinging to the absurd international "middle power"
 illusion many Canadians still hold."



Russia May Have Mined Ukrainian Waters Says NATO

<https://gcaptain.com/russia-may-have-mined-ukrainian-waters-says-nato/>

Just the threat of mines, even if the threat is implied, can seriously affect shipping insurance, seafarer contracts and the movement of commercial ships and therefore regional and global trade. The threat obviously also greatly affects naval ship movement considerations whether that of adversaries, leaning or neutrals.



With the threat in mind, interesting article prior to the ongoing war: Black Sea Fleet Minesweepers Train for Minelaying (<https://seawaves.com/?p=19095>).

UK Warlike Operations Area Committee agrees protections for seafarers

<https://shipmanagementinternational.com/uk-warlike.../>

The UK Warlike Operations Area Committee (WOAC) has declared a Warlike Operations Area in the Black Sea. Unknown to this poster whether there is something like a WOAC in Canada, but it is common for seafarers to have something in their contracts about entering high risk areas. Then the insurers who cover these policies usually refer to a guideline like: <https://www.lmalloyds.com/lma/jointwar>.



Shipping is being affected. A regional war will have global consequences on trade. The Ukraine-Russia war is not something 'over there.' Canadian authorities and companies will need, in many cases be forced by regulation or circumstance, to take action.

Ukraine's Drones Are Doing Serious Damage To Russia's Military

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/03/ukraines-drones-are-doing-serious-damage-to-russias-military/>

There will be a lot of drone use and counter-drone lessons coming out of the Ukraine-Russia war.



Other Sources:

#cyber operations

National Approaches to Ransomware Protection

<https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse297-EN.pdf>

There is no Cyber 'Shock and Awe': Plausible Threats in the Ukrainian Conflict

<https://warontherocks.com/2022/02/there-is-no-cyber-shock-and-awe-plausible-threats-in-the-ukrainian-conflict/>

With Russian hackers in mind, NATO takes hard look at cyber strategy

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2022/0202/With-Russian-hackers-in-mind-NATO-takes-hard-look-at-cyber-strategy>

Forget a Whole-Of-Government Cybersecurity Strategy—It’s Time for a Whole-of-Nation Approach

<https://mwi.usma.edu/forget-a-whole-of-government-cybersecurity-strategy-its-time-for-a-whole-of-nation-approach/>

#information operations

Social media fuels new type of ‘fog of war’ in Ukraine conflict

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/02/24/ukraine-russia-war-twitter-social-media/>

Information Warfare isn’t Russian – It’s American as Apple Pie

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/3/8/information-warfare-isnt-russian-its-american-as-apple-pie>

Flunking the New York Times Test: Making Sense of Russian “Covert” Action

<https://mwi.usma.edu/flunking-the-new-york-times-test-making-sense-of-russian-covert-action/>
Yes, IO/PA, not an intelligence article.

#intelligence

Intelligence Isn't Just for Commanders Anymore

<https://www.thecipherbrief.com/intelligence-isnt-just-for-commanders-anymore>

#information operations

Flunking the New York Times Test: Making Sense of Russian “Covert” Action

<https://mwi.usma.edu/flunking-the-new-york-times-test-making-sense-of-russian-covert-action/>

#land warfare

Rise of the Rocket Launcher: The end of the Armoured Division

<https://wvavellroom.com/2022/02/23/rise-of-the-rocket-launcher/>

#military justice

The Division of Authority Between the Special Trial Counsel and Commanders Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice: Planning Now for the Next Phase of Reform

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/division-authority-between-special-trial-counsel-and-commanders-under-uniform-code-military-justice>

US, but considering what the CAF os going through, worth reading and considering.

#urban warfare

Defending the City: An Overview of Defensive Tactics from the Modern History of Urban Warfare

<https://mwi.usma.edu/defending-the-city-an-overview-of-defensive-tactics-from-the-modern-history-of-urban-warfare/>

Thinking Kyiv. In the Second World War, taking a city was considered to cost a division of troops in casualties.

#warfare

Guerrillas, Revolutionaries, Insurgents, and Militias And Mafiosi: The Grim Threats of Irregular Strategy
<https://mwi.usma.edu/guerrillas-revolutionaries-insurgents-and-militias-and-mafiosi-the-grim-threats-of-irregular-strategy/>

#wargaming

What war games tell us about a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine
Available to RUSI(NS) members on request.

Battle Lab: Uses for (Professional) Wargaming
<https://www.armchairdragoons.com/articles/columns/battle-lab-uses-for-professional-wargaming/>

Other:

Veterans Affairs Canada Benefits Navigator
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/resources/benefits-navigator>

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

To start somewhat positive for a change, this week has been rather interesting as one might expect with a war that includes Russia and the very real threat of a nuclear war. Russia invaded Ukraine on 23 February 2022 but with less than adequate results. One aspect that was somewhat encouraging was the interviews with key ministers including Chrystia Freeland, Anita Anand and Melanie Joly. Especially Minister Joly in her interview with Christian Amanpour which showed a minister who knew her material, was forthright and confident in answering questions. It was refreshing to hear a Canadian Minister of Government speak well and actually answered questions. It is far cry what we normally see. It seems our ministers vastly outperform some of the sad displays of non-answers we often see in Parliament. So well done, Ministers, please keep it up, try to do the same in Parliament as well.

The pistol selection will not take place until 2023. We cannot seem to get even simple tasks complete even when we seem to be close to a war. Good thing this didn't happen in 1939 when we appeared to be facing another authoritarian regime.

The Arctic is now a potential theatre of conflict. Canada is woefully unprepared for the Arctic and come to think of it any other theatre either, as most of our equipment is no longer in use except as museum pieces. 40-year old fighters and thirty-year old ships coupled little understanding of security. We could do something like do a practice mobilization of reserves including the Supplementary Holding Reserve. Review the recruiting process to eliminate bottlenecks, start a recruiting effort to replace those 10k troops we are missing. Contact members with former service to rejoin. For scarce occupations, actually call up members of the Holding List. Revise terms of service for reservists and retired members to start scraping up folks just in cases. How about figuring out vital points and how they may be secured from physical and cyber threats. This is a good time to get the act together before it may be forced upon us even if to prepare contingencies for a post-nuclear strike on Canadian targets.

Mind you, having an exercise to deal with any major event is always a good idea, but we never have had to deal with an effort that may be required nation-wide.

It was good to hear that Ukrainians will be fast tracked for immigration here. It is a vast improvement over the neglect of our Afghan allies displayed this past summer which still appalls anyone with a conscience. One hopes that our actual team members get out safely. Actually, one hopes that all Afghans who wish to come to Canada get out, but one is still appalled by the lack of action. Still early days yet; it could still be a true screw up for Ukrainians as well.

China

China now has the dubious honour of having to balance a recent treaty with Russia against the very real anger of a united West/NATO/EU versus Russia and its very aggressive and one can say unnecessary actions against Ukraine. In the Security Council the motion to censure Russia was vetoed by Russia alone with China abstaining. China did say it was mainly the fault of the US and the West but in the end failed to support Russia. The Chinese Foreign Ministry also went out of its way to say that Russia was not an ally. Something about no honour amongst thieves is coming to mind here given China's action in Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Hong Kong, East Turkistan, Tibet and of course the South China Sea. Still the Indians point out the fact that the West hasn't made nearly the same effort about China's actions against virtually all its neighbours. India has have a point.

China has continued its efforts against Taiwan this week, entering Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone with at least eight fighters and one surveillance aircraft called the Y-8. This is part of China's ongoing efforts to gain information as well as causing a psychological effect upon Taiwan's citizens. Overall Taiwan seems to take this activity in stride, only reacting when specific actions are taken by Chinese aircraft.

Taiwan has continued to watch the ongoing effort of Ukraine in its conflict with Russia with more than a little interest. President Tsai-ing wen and her Vice President have both donated their annual salary to charities supporting Ukraine. Taiwan has set up an extensive network to help send assistance to Ukraine in its time of need. Taiwan has been congratulated and thanked for its efforts on behalf of Ukraine, in stark contrast to the Peoples' Republic of China.

The PRC has tried to keep a steady balance in comments about the Ukraine-Russia conflict in an effort to not antagonize Russia with whom it has just signed a major gas and oil agreement and the Western countries which have firmly stood up against Russia in a unified front. China has often contemplated annexing Taiwan by force. It is watching how Russia's efforts are conducted including the success and lack thereof in achieving its goals to annex Ukraine. So far, although China has stated that this is the West's fault, China did abstain rather than support its 'ally,' going so far as to say Russia is not our ally in recent days. Still the rise and unity of NATO and the EU and other countries such as Japan, South Korea, Australia on the issue of Russia's unprovoked attack must give China some pause for thought in regard to a hostile attack to annex Taiwan. China receives Russian gas through the Power of Siberia pipeline, which has been in service since 2021. The new agreement with Russia will see a second pipeline built by 2025 which should double Russia's sales to China, significantly thus supporting Russia's war effort. China currently receives about 13% of its gas from Russia and this should more than double the current sales. Russia may be able to make money and get a flow a cash through China CIPS system which deals in Yuan, thus eliminating the effect of being off the SWIFT system. Will China be sanctioned as well as a result of such a change that supports Russia against international sanctions? Time will tell.

While the Ukraine-Russia conflict was ongoing, a US department of Defence team showed up on short notice to Taiwan for discussions, which also was noted by the PRC. Japan has also recently asked the US to stop strategic ambiguity on Taiwan in favour of firm support to Taiwan in the event of an attack by the PRC. This will also be unwelcome news for Beijing.

Recently, a most unlikely subject has shaken the very roots of the Communist Chinese Party (CCP). A woman was found chained in a local village. She was the mother of eight children and was generally considered to be mentally unwell and thus chained. An initial investigation seemed to indicate that she was a victim of human trafficking and was purchased by the men of the village as essentially their sex slave. The story implicated senior village party officials and the local police as apparently her circumstances were well known. This eventually led to an investigation at the provincial level which also came up with a series of stories none of which seemed likely, but more people became implicated in not only this event but in large scale human trafficking. It also caught the attention of China's vast number of netizens and the story took off reaching the very highest levels of the CCP. It became clear that any investigation would involve a large-scale effort encompassing a large number of party members in the issue of ongoing human trafficking activity. It became more of a problem when Mrs Xi personally became involved as head of the women's rights organization, also insisting that a full-scale investigation take place. It also became clearer that any such investigation could lead to widespread dissatisfaction with the Party which could lead to overall national instability as it was thought human trafficking was widespread and supported by a large number of Party members including high ranking members who also profited from the sale of these women. This is an ongoing issue but one interesting aspect is the role of Xi Jinping's wife in this effort. One commentator suggested that she will use this event as a spring board to a higher political office in her own right. Time will tell, but one suspects that some will try to undermine any effort to thoroughly investigate this activity but if Madame Xi is involved this may prove to be more difficult especially in light of Xi's own efforts at anti-corruption within the country and the Party. One suspects some problems to develop.

Belarus

Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya, the Belarussian opposition leader/elected President, called on all Belarussians not to be complicit in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. She also mentioned that Belarus has been used as jumping off point for Russian forces attacking directly into northern Ukraine with the main target being Kyiv. She also called on the leaders of the Belarussian security forces not to join the Russian effort. Unfortunately, despite her impassioned speech, a large contingent of Belarussian forces have or are about to enter Ukraine in support of Russia.

On another note, Alexander Lukashenko was briefing senior staff on a map of Russia's operations with both the current but also future objectives being shown. It would be a major operational leak if true, however, there is always the possibility of Lukashenko being less than bright and thus 'gave away the store.'

Belarus is coming under the same sanctions regime as Russia as a result of their actions against Ukraine.

Russia

This particular topic has given a lot of difficulties mainly because of the vast quantity of information, imagery and unusual sources of the material, most of which has not been evaluated for authenticity. The other problem is this is a senseless action on the part of apparently a single man, who has become isolated from virtually the entire world and lives in a reality of his own making. I suspect like most

egotistical leaders, he is a person who does not take bad news well, so there is a tendency to 'lighten' the forecast a bit, in this case a whole lot. Russia's economy is in the pits already because of the sanctions of 2014. It also suffers from a lack of diversification and rampant corruption on the part of many that saps the life blood out of the country. Its GDP is a mere 1.7T, smaller than Canada's GDP. It is a world power by having nuclear weapons alone. So aside from gaining notoriety what does Russia get as a true gain? To be honest, little of this makes sense except in the mind of Mr Putin.

Russia made several demands which we have written about last week; they are now somewhat overcome by events caused by the attack by Russia on Ukraine early in the morning of 23 February 2022. The Army of 190k was sent towards four identified objectives: Kyiv, the capital as the main effort; Kharkiv, in the East; Mariupol, the last port on the Sea of Azov; and Kherson in the south. This effort was spread out and poorly coordinated and logistically difficult if not impossible with the number of troops available. Despite efforts it appears only Kherson has been taken at this point after six days and there is some doubt that this takeover is stable at this point. Ukraine has shattered the myth of Russian professionalism. The Russian Air Force has been unable to gain air superiority comprehensively and many Ukrainian air units continue to not only survive but take a steady toll of Russian aircraft of all types. Ukrainian drones provided by Turkey continue to take out major systems on a regular basis but theUCAV are small and their capacity limited so there is a limit.

At the present time, most Russian columns seem to be replenishing after the first confused effort. YouTube and other platforms had any number of videos of vehicles of all types out of fuel, bogged in the mud of farmers' fields, etc. One could only laugh as farmers simply hooked up tractors and hauled away various armoured vehicles, sometimes with the crews running after them. There are many pictures of burnt-out columns in places where they seem to be misplaced, such as a logistics unit entering Kyiv before the infantry and tanks with the normal expected results: destroyed column. One source placed the new operations to begin within 24 to 48 hrs after artillery, rockets and missile systems do their work within the cities. There is little doubt that these systems are being directed on civilian targets, especially major systems known for their precision hitting specific targets such as TV antenna or city halls. These types of targets were hit after Russian announcements for civilians to leave as soon as possible. It is expected that these forces near the target cities will move again with the view to envelop each target city. This being said, the numbers of troops are inadequate to accomplish this task without more troops. As mentioned, Kyiv is the main target and these forces will likely be augmented by Belarussian forces which might provide sufficient numbers. Belarussian troops are an unknown quality and there is always the problem of loyalty especially if Belarussian soldiers feel their own country may be at risk as well.

Ukrainian forces are being resupplied with significant numbers of weapons including anti-tank and air defence systems. There are even suggestions that up to 70+ aircraft will be given to the Ukrainian air force over the coming days which may provide a greater ability to gain air parity at least for short periods along with better air defence capacity to secure home airfields. Even a single major strike could have a major effect on the ground.

Russia has been hit with an ever-increasing number of sanctions that are truly global in nature. These sanctions appear to be hitting the average Russian in a significant way as they line up unsuccessfully to get money from their banks. The Russian stock exchanges have not been opened as it was felt a run of the exchanges would occur. They lost more than 30% of their value in a single day last week before being closed. This would likely continue if it opened.

The one fly in the ointment is China. As mentioned, Russia has a single pipeline going to China. It also could use China's relatively new CIPS system which would allow Russia to receive a certain

amount of foreign reserves and payments from participants. Whether this will trigger sanctions on China is another question.

It is expected that this issue will be before us and taking our time for the foreseeable future.